



## Peer Learning Club 3 position paper Work-based learning and standards (QA and curricular dimension)

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## **Peer Learning Club 3 position paper Work-based learning and standards (QA and curricular dimension)**

One of the Riga objectives aims at promoting work-based learning (WBL) in all its forms assuming WBL as a powerful leverage against youth unemployment and skills mismatch. Building strong business-education partnerships becomes strategic to bridge the gap between the world of education and business, to improve the relevance of education and training to labor market needs and to raise excellence. Moreover, rapid evolution of the labor market due to impacts generated by the so-called twin-transformation (green and digital), have been exposing millions of low-skilled adults to the risk of losing their job. Besides young unemployment, business-education partnership represents a way to answer the increasing need of upskilling and reskilling of adults. On the other hand, COVID pandemic has had strong impacts also on WBL practices, forcing remote training. At international level, a challenging debate is emerging focused on how digitalization can support the design of new forms of WBL and, finally, of business-education partnerships. This question is quite crucial for TVET systems, for which dual training programs and apprenticeships constitute the spine of the training and learning offer.

### **SKILLMAN NETWORK: AN ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENCE IN TVET**

Since 2014 Skillman Network has worked to design and develop curricula for the advanced manufacturing sector. The network, counting n. 480 members in over 80 countries worldwide, is working to innovate the TVET sector, inviting different stakeholders all around the world to adopt a participatory approach to innovation for the continuous improvement of Technical and Vocational Education (TVET).

In 2019 Skillman launched the Peer Learning Clubs, thematic groups of discussion, involving stakeholders, such as researchers, Vet professionals, companies, public administrators, industrial leaders, for knowledge sharing and peer improvement, with the aim of identifying the prior challenges for a "future-proof TVET", able to contribute to the development of a knowledge-based, sustainable and inclusive society.

### **COOPERATION FOR COMMON APPROACHES TO WBL IN 21 CENTURY**

We believe that joint action for a common approach to WBL in 21 century can be the following:

- **Rethinking WBL after the COVID emergency:** digitalization represents a leverage to improve and innovate WBL traditional practices, exploiting the new opportunities given by digital tools themselves, over the emergency to a new sustainability.





- **Valorizing “immersive learning”:** immersive methodologies are able to prepare workers in a customized, safe and “quicker” way. Immersive learning environments through virtual/ augmented/mixed reality can make proper designed learning environments effectively, engaging and inclusive. Immersive technologies can help in the creation of complex scenarios, experiences, and experiments that are difficult to implement even in real conditions and allow cooperation also with others at distance. Embedding these methodologies in the new curricula can reinforce their responsiveness, speeding up the learning processes for all.
- **Upskilling teachers and trainers:** a “digital mindset” for teachers and trainers is needed to exploit the potential of digitalization combined with WBL practices. In this regard, availability of updated training opportunities for trainers/professionals at system level is advisable.
- **Redesigning business - education partnerships:** a better equipment for all, against digital divide and for inclusive learning environments is necessary. Besides infrastructural investments by governments as well as shared access to study areas, and resources provided by public stakeholders, a strong cooperation between TVET providers and companies should foresee also the sharing of resources and equipment, fighting the digital divide.

In conclusion, work-based learning is inclusive for all, both youngsters and adults. New ICT-based methodologies can help to strengthen the on the job training, towards effective and sustainable blended learning environments. Digitalization can foster the innovation process of WBL, reshaping its forms and inviting stakeholders to adopt common approaches to maximize the impacts on beneficiaries in terms of individualized learning and its success.

