



# Cedefop's work on key competences

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# On Cedefop

Cedefop - the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training - is a European agency that helps promote and develop vocational education and training (VET) in the European Union



# Cedefop's tasks are to:

- compile selected documentation and analyses of data;
- contribute to developing and coordinating research;
- exploit and disseminate information;
- encourage joint approaches to vocational education and training problems;
- provide a forum for debate and exchanges of ideas

# Areas of work on key competences

- Developing, monitoring and disseminating common European tools like EQF and ECVET
- Promoting learning outcomes in curricula and validation of prior learning
- Exploring the labour market's skills needs
- Investigating key competences in work-based settings

# Background to work on KC and WBL

- EU goal: 75% employment rate (20-64 age group) by 2020. Target groups: women, the young, old, low-skilled and migrants
- Unemployed low-skilled adults often lack key competences and relevant or updated working experience
- EU goal: Improve access to training for all adults, especially the low-skilled, to raise skills levels, improve employability, ensure that workers are able to secure sustainable and productive employment over the course of their working lives, enable workers to adapt to changes in the working environment and labour market

# WBL vs WPL

Work-based learning (WBL) is conceived as learning which is intentional, which is organised and which is broader in its setting than workplace learning (WPL). It does not necessarily take place in one's workplace, but generally in work-based contexts.

Work-based learning programmes can be defined as organised programmes that are predominantly based in an authentic, work-based context or in the workplace, and aim at developing knowledge, skills and competences that are relevant for the world of work. Participants do not need to be in employment; work-based learning can also be used for learning programmes that target the unemployed

# New study: Return to Work

Target group: Low-skilled adults = adults who have only basic educational levels (ISCED 0-2). 76 million of the EU-27 working population (25-64 year olds) are low-skilled. This group has the lowest rate of employment, with only 45% compared to 69% for the medium-skilled and 83% for the high-skilled (2010)

Hypothesis: The use of work-based “return to work” learning programmes that aim at the acquisition of key competences may be a promising approach as it helps the target group to develop their competences in work-based contexts and consequently to reintegrate into the world of work

Objectives: To investigate how work-based learning programmes that target low-skilled unemployed adults and focus on the development of key competences can contribute to getting this target group (back) into the labour market

# The study aims to get findings on:

- The existence, spread and effectiveness of such work-based learning programmes in EU member states, and the extent to which they are used as part of national unemployment policies
- The design of such work-based learning programmes, taking particularly into account
  - the key competences that are (to be) addressed,
  - the target group, their specifics as regards teaching and learning and respective consequences,
  - the concepts of work-based learning that are (to be) used
- Future research needs and separate key messages for policy- and decision-makers and for those who are responsible for the concrete design and implementation of such programmes



# Content of study

- (1) a literature-based desk research that sets the context and profound basis of the study;
- (2) a comparative overview of 12-15 EU member states;
- (3) ten case studies of best practice examples;
- (4) conclusions, key messages and areas for further research and development

# Study on the acquisition of key competences

Objectives: to explore strategies and methods that are employed by the Member States to support the acquisition of key and transferable competences in workplaces. This involves:

- a generic analysis of the type of strategies used;
- an assessment of the most successful ones and their success factors;
- a discussion on the types of institutions that are the key driving force behind workplace training programmes;
- an investigation into the challenges encountered by different actors when implementing such programmes and how have they been overcome;
- an identification of the key benefits of workplace training for employers and employees;
- an elaboration on the best strategies to engage non-traditional learners and SMEs in workplace training

# Target group

Low-skilled workers (defined as workers who have a basic educational level (ISCED 0-2). Typically, low-skilled workers work in elementary, operational and sales occupations)

This study did not target the unemployed or workers made redundant

# Content

10 in-depth case studies of workplace training programmes in Europe. The following types of programmes were considered:

- Programmes promoting the development of key competences at the workplace;
- Initiatives broadening access to learning and motivating employees at the workplace;
- Support services for employers to provide learning opportunities to their staff

## Programmes promoting the development of key competences at the workplace

The strategies for the development of key competences of workers fall into two main groups: general and targeted programmes:

- General programmes are those that are available for all, or at least most, employees. They seek to upskill all employees regardless of their occupation or position within a company
- Many targeted workplace training programmes have the goal of training individuals who are seen to be at risk in the labour market. Many members of these groups may, for a variety of different reasons, have difficulties in accessing existing forms of workplace training



# Targeted programmes

- Target groups: Low-skilled workers, older workers and migrants, workers with difficulties in adapting to new technology, SMEs, specific sectors (cleaning, construction, car manufacturers, health care workers)
- Key competences/skills levels and areas addressed: Literacy, numeracy, ICT, basic vocational skills, compulsory education



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