

TTT4WBL – Testing New Approaches to Training VET and Workplace Tutors for Work Based Learning

WEB: TTT4WBL-PROJECT.EU

The project supports an innovative approach – tandem training – for the training of trainers in work-based learning (WBL) of the Baltic countries – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. It develops and pilots a sample training program for in-company and vocational education and training (VET) institutions' trainers.

A common competence profile of WBL trainers in the Baltics will promote a common Baltic vision while respecting the needs of each particular country in developing the training programs for WBL trainers. At a later stage each Baltic country develops its own training program in relation to the national priorities, legal framework and the interests and opinions of involved stakeholders in the particular country and based on a common agreed competence profile of a WBL trainer.

A Finnish research institute is providing a methodological support based on the analysis of the opinions of involved stakeholders from all the Baltic countries.

PROJECT PARTNERS:

- National Centre for Education (Latvia)
- The Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia
- The Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Baltic Bright (Latvia)
- Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre (Lithuania)
- Vilnius Car Mechanics and Business school
- Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (Lithuania)
- Tartu Vocational Education Centre (Estonia)
- JAMK University of Applied Sciences (Finland)

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The third newsletter of the TTT4WBL project presents the Tandem Training approach where tutors from vocational education and training (VET) institutions and work-based learning (WBL) tutors in companies are trained together. Further follows an overview of the latest project activities implemented within the TTT4WBL project from April till July 2019.

Tandem Training of Tutors for Work-based Learning

What do we mean by Tandem Training?

In work-based learning a relevant part of vocational training takes place at companies in real work environment. There VET trainees receive guidance from workplace tutors who are experienced professionals in their area. The TTT4WBL project proposes training of **workplace tutors together with VET tutors**, i.e. both sides: host company tutors and school tutors meet at the training workshop.

Why Tandem?

When analysing real traineeships we came to the conclusion that the quality of the traineeship does not depend only on the actions of one or two persons. It usually depends on how good and effective is cooperation and communication of the three involved parties or persons: VET institution tutor, workplace tutor and the trainee. Do they have the same understanding of the goals, learning plan, and steps of WBL process?



Source: Logo of EU Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation Project HansaVET: Hanseatic Tradition for VET: Mobility Strategies for Promoting Entrepreneurship Skills of VET Students (Agreement No. 2011 -1LV1-LEO05-02221), interpretation (text below) by Vita Žunda

The boat picture is made of three triangles. VET institution (tutor) and host company (workplace tutor) both support and guide the trainee through WBL. The lines linking the three triangles (three persons) illustrate communication and cooperation throughout the way. WBL is **teamwork of VET institution** and company. We can say that VET institution tutor and company tutor **work in tandem**.

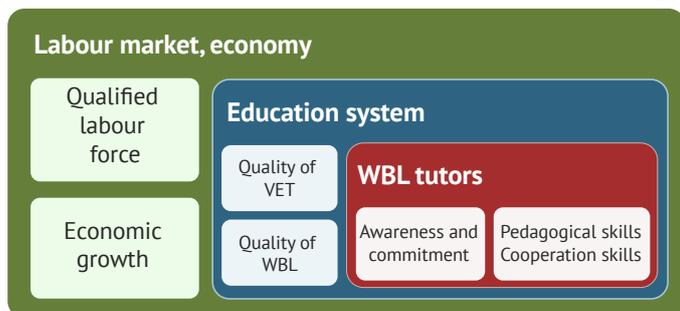
Aims and Policy Context of Tandem Training

Quality of WBL and cooperation between VET institutions and companies are key to quality and attractiveness of VET. Competences and motivation of staff are also a pillar of quality. Thus, through Tandem Training we address several policy priorities of national and EU VET systems:

- ▶ Promoting WBL in all its forms
- ▶ Quality of WBL
- ▶ Cooperation, partnerships, continuous dialogue between VET institutions and companies
- ▶ Continuous professional development of WBL tutors.

The Tandem Training concept rests on assumption that VET institution tutors and workplace tutors are key persons for ensuring quality of WBL and VET. Their skills, understanding of their role, as well as their commitment make WBL attractive for trainees and ensure that VET serves the economy.

Why WBL tutors are so important?



Source: Vita Žunda

When and where Tandem Trainings have taken place

In TTT4WBL project, through cooperation of several partners, national trainings for 800 WBL tutors in the Baltics have been organised - 300 WBL tutors (plus 50 more through other initiatives) in Latvia, more than 300 in Lithuania, more than 200 in Estonia.



Tutor training in Klaipeda

Content of the Tandem Training program

The workshop program addresses 3 main groups of competences of WBL tutors from VET institutions and workplaces:

- ▶ Organization and planning of WBL
- ▶ Guidance, communication involving the trainee

- ▶ Communication and cooperation between VET institution and company.

Training of 2 days (16 hours) is organized as an interactive workshop, setting up small groups in which informal communication between VET institutions' and workplace tutors can take place.

The content is based on in-depth step-by-step examination of the WBL process, starting with planning and preparation, learning at workplace, evaluation and assessment. The whole process is being viewed through the eyes of each of the 3 sides: VET institutions' tutor, trainee, workplace tutor.

Way through WBL process:



Tandem Training methods involve analysing practical examples, real-life cases contributed by companies or trainees, role plays, simulations, problem solving, brainstorming.

In the case of Latvia, 16 hours of classroom workshop were combined with independent work (home tasks or e-learning) to complete a program of 32 hours. It complies also with the legal requirement in Latvia (currently not in Lithuania and Estonia) for company tutors to have the respective pedagogical competence to work with apprentices.

In ideal case, VET tutors and company tutors are potential partners in forthcoming traineeships. It is important that VET and company tutors represent the same sector.

Target groups of Tandem Training

The training course is primarily designed for tutors from VET institutions and workplaces directly involved in leading traineeships of VET students. However, since the program includes planning and organization of WBL and has much focus on cooperation between VET institutions and companies, the course may be useful for middle management of VET schools (e.g. WBL coordinators) and human resource managers and WBL coordinators from companies.

Tandem Training can also work well for transnational WBL (international mobility projects of VET trainees): for instance, in strategic partnerships under activity "joint staff training", it is possible to bring together VET tutors and workplace tutors from different countries.

Why VET tutors need this training?

Sometimes it has been difficult to convince VET tutors to take part in the training. Usually they say, "Oh, but we do not need any training. We have pedagogical skills and diplomas." Many of them have not considered how to use pedagogical skills specifically in WBL context. Tandem

Training links pedagogy with an action plan through WBL process. And the most important gain for VET institutions' tutors – Tandem Training is an opportunity to start planning and organization of WBL together with company representatives. It is not just training, it is partnership-building, learning to communicate between school and company.

Impact of Tandem Training

Almost all tandem workshops have been highly successful: it can be seen from the atmosphere of trainings and, most of all, from the participants. The main results are:

- ▶ A common vision of high-quality WBL;
- ▶ Overcoming stereotypes (school vs company);
- ▶ Learning from each other, making personal contacts;
- ▶ Building trust between VET institution and company;
- ▶ Learning to work in team, creating a community of WBL tutors.

Participants' feedbacks – "What I gained from Tandem Training workshop":



For more feedback from Tandem Training participants see on the project website the TTT4WBL Newsletter No. 2 and project videos which show the viewpoint of tutors from VET institutions and WBL trainers in companies (<https://ttt4wbl-project.eu/publicity/>).

Impact from Tutor Trainer's perspective – insights of Vita Žunda, co-author of the Tandem Training programme

As a trainer of WBL tutors I work in tandem and also in non-tandem approach – with groups of workplace tutors from companies who need certificates to start WBL. I can compare the two approaches and I can see how much more effective Tandem Training is. When workplace tutors are alone in the group, they tend to be in opposition to VET institutions and blame schools for all VET failures. When workplace tutors and VET tutors are in a workshop together they gradually come to respect each other's arguments and in the end they agree - it has to be teamwork. The greatest result of Tandem Training is the feeling of group synergy, willingness to continue working together.

It is much easier to be a successful trainer in a tandem workshop: I have to work less as a trainer, but more as a moderator guiding the dialogue between VET and company representatives. Several times in the trainings of workplace tutors they have asked: why are schools not here? Do they know all this? **Indeed, I believe that Tandem Training is not only a tool for developing skills. It is also a tool to introduce common WBL standards and establish the same understanding between VET institutions and companies about VET and WBL.**

What could be the future of Tandem Training?

Considering the future of Tandem Training one should remember its double role:

- 1) **Way of training workplace tutors** who need to be certified for WBL provision;
- 2) As a **WBL governance tool**: a partnership-building mechanism; a format in which regular communication between VET institution and its partner companies is being implemented.

In the context of training workplace tutors, the next step should be a validation system for those who have acquired the necessary competences through experience (prior learning). Validation system in its turn should rest on competence profile for a WBL tutor (at this stage it would be too early to speak about a qualification requirement, but not impossible in the long-run). If these requirements place sufficient emphasis on cooperation skills, planning and organization of WBL, Tandem Training would be the most effective way to acquire these skills.

In practical terms Tandem Training can be organized easily when schools bring their partner companies and school VET tutors together for a workshop. In that case VET and workplace tutors represent the same sectors, and the workshop serves as the 1st step towards starting WBL together. The main benefits are as follows:

- ▶ Getting to know each other (school - company; VET tutor – workplace tutor)
- ▶ Planning WBL process together, agreement on who does what
- ▶ Common understanding of guidance and assessment
- ▶ Both sides improving guidance skills
- ▶ Updating and sharing knowledge about industry/sectoral developments, etc.

Tandem workshop could be a regular school event each year or once in 2 years – to follow up on changes at VET institutions, changes in companies and related industries; updating WBL process, bringing in new tutors, experienced tutors sharing their stories, updating guidance skills, discussing specific difficult cases and motivation mechanisms.

The material has been prepared by Vita Žunda - lead trainer and co-author of the Tandem Training programme.

Review of selected TTT4WBL project activities /April – July 2019

Promotional videos on Tandem Training approach have been prepared. Videos show the impact of training for various participants and target groups in 3 Baltic countries. Each country prepared one or several videos featuring feedbacks on the impact of tutor training from trainers, VET tutors involved in training, workplace tutors involved in training, managers of VET schools, managers of enterprises, other stakeholders. The videos are in national languages with English subtitles. They are published on TTT4WBL website (<https://ttt4wbl-project.eu/publicity/>) and social media.



In order to test the Tandem Training approach the **research** constitutes a crucial part of the TTT4WBL project. The Finnish research partner, JAMK University of Applied Sciences designed the experimentation methodology to collect experiences from WBL tutors, VET students, VET school managers and company managers. The quite massive **data collection** in the experimentation process is now finished. Data includes altogether 1294 responses to several questionnaires. In addition to that, there is a lot of qualitative data collected during the process. Next step for the researchers is to do final analyses and interpretation of all this information. It includes statistical, quantitative and qualitative analyses. According to preliminary overview, interesting results can be foreseen for the further development in the project.

The 5th partner meeting of the TTT4WBL project was held in Kaunas on June 10-11. The aim of the meeting was to review the accomplished tasks and to plan the activities for the final year of the project. The main topics discussed on the first day comprise the 2nd Progress Report with the feedback from EACEA, preliminary research results presented by JAMK, and the methodology of mapping SMEs clusters around VET schools. Baltic Bright reported on the elaborated training programmes and materials, a toolbox of methods will be put together and made public. The second day was mainly dedicated to project quality assurance issues, dissemination

activities and planning the final conference in Riga in January 2020.

The dissemination of the TTT4WBL project has continued at different levels, in this period the tandem training approach was also presented at various events. Here are just some of them:

- ▶ On April 25, the project team from Vilnius Car Mechanics and Business School arranged a round table meeting with representatives of business companies that are not yet involved in WBL. They discussed the tandem trainings and WBL as one of the possibilities for cooperation between VET institutions and business companies.
- ▶ The TTT4WBL research partners from JAMK University of Applied Sciences participated in the NORDYRK2019 conference and presented the TTT4WBL project and the research results. The Nordic Research Network on Vocational Education and Training organized its annual conference this year in Helsinki, Finland in June 12th-13th. The conference is a meeting place for those who are involved in research and development work in the field of vocational pedagogy and didactics.
- ▶ On June 17, the project partners from the Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (Kaunas CCIC) – the general director Olga Grigienė and Head of Education and Science department Aušra Misonė had a meeting with the Lithuanian Minister of Education, Science and Sport. The TTT4WBL project and its potential to influence VET policy was presented to the minister. He was surprised by the amount of trained tutors and expressed interest in Chambers activities regarding apprenticeship. The tandem training approach and TTT4WBL project impact on the new law of apprenticeship were discussed in detail.



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