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# ENHANCING EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUTH THROUGH A WORK-BASED VALUES APPROACH

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# INTRODUCTION

- High unemployment and poor labour market absorptive capacity
- Need to improve effectiveness of TVET student preparation for working life
- Prepare current students and graduates to obtain, retain employment and also to regain employment
- Aim to improve chances of employment in a sustainable quality job
- *Introduce a work-based values program together with exposure to the workplace based learning enhance employability*
- *A pilot project: work-based values curriculum component linked to a workplace based learning (WPBL) program*
- *Share current work on pilot in two colleges: one in the Free State and one in Gauteng province*





# OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- Workplace exposure
- Human values
- Work-based values
- Pilot program
- Teaching and learning approach
- Selection of values
- Program outline
- Capabilities
- Concluding observations

# POLICY ON WORKPLACE BASED LEARNING (WPBL): LINKS TO EMPLOYABILITY

- The Department of Higher Education and Training of South Africa has highlighted the strategic importance of exposure to WPBL
- Principle of including compulsory work experience of WPBL in the programme of activities on offer in TVET colleges
- A great deal is learned through participating in the world of work. But students do not necessarily realise the full value of experience in a workplace
- The main purpose of the TVET colleges is ‘to train young school leavers, providing them with the skills, *knowledge and attitudes* necessary for employment in the labour market’ (DHET)
- Attitudes – & underlying values – are a dimension of employability (soft skills)
- Enabling young people to become familiar with their own values and work values that are associated with enhanced employability.



# PEOPLE'S VALUES

- *This project focuses on in particular values related to work that we term “work-based values”*
- All people have a set of values that in some way inform their attitudes, intentions and behaviours.
- Values are building blocks of individuals identity
- Values reflect what is important to individuals and human groups and inform how they live and work; define for them good or bad, desirable or undesirable.
- Values are acquired directly or indirectly from many sources and via many different types of interaction in and outside of education institutions, whether formally or informally.



# VALUES IN WORKPLACES

- Values are expressed in occupational tasks and practices; through working relationships of members of a business unit, & across the whole organisation
- Private sector enterprises and public sector organisations reflect values in how they operate
- In some enterprises/businesses values are openly advocated – in others values are tacit
- Individuals each have their own unique set of values
- Inevitably differences between values (at different levels) can contribute to conflict, sub-optimal business performance and poor financial outcomes
- Therefore it is important for individuals as to understand values...



# A WORK-BASED VALUES APPROACH: AS A PILOT PROGRAM

- We argue that it is important for students, graduates and work-seekers to:
  - understand their own values as drivers of their own behaviour and
  - adopt an open approach to understanding the behaviour and underlying values of various participants in the workspace,
  - especially engaging with co-workers, supervisors, and immediate managers
- We have developed a pilot program or learning component based on a set of work-based values
- It is structured around *selected values* and based on a workshop interactive process that encourages self-reflection and awareness.



## LIST OF VALUES (EXEMPLAR)

These values may include

- **work ethic;**
- **dependability and responsibility;**
- **positive attitude;**
- **adaptability;**
- **honesty and Integrity;**
- **self – motivated;**
- **desire to learn;**
- **self – confidence;**
- **professionalism;**
- **loyalty;**
- **diligence;**
- **perseverance;**
- **(self) discipline;**
- **(customer) service orientation;**
- **respect;**
- **dedication; and**
- **ability to collaborate.**

(Loretto, 2015):



- Selection of which values given careful consideration.
  - necessity to take an interactive approach owing to the importance of sharing and discussion within the group.
  - time needed in clarifying values.
- Four values: *accountability, perseverance, respect, reliability and self-development*
- The process of selecting involved: an internet search of the literature for sources of values and work-based values; creation of a set of twenty frequently referenced values; followed by blind panel based selection with input from a facilitation perspective.



# WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES



## "A" Stands for Accountable While Boarding the Bus

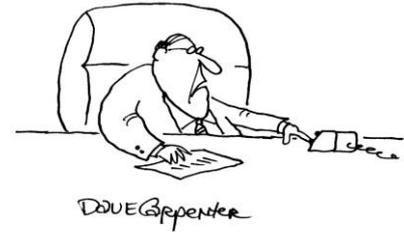
Examples of Accountability

\*Following all bus rules



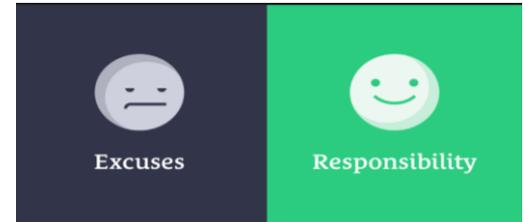
Non-Example of Accountability

\*Not following rules of bus



"MISS WILCOX, SEND IN SOMEONE TO BLAME."

ACTIVITIES IN THE WORKSHOP FOR EACH VALUE
• Introduction to the Value
• Provide a conceptual point of departure: definition
• Discussion of importance of respect to individuals with examples
• Workshop activity on this value in the workplace
• Discussion from the workshop activity
• Synthesis of discussion ( effort to capture perspectives)



# WORK BASED VALUES (WBV) PILOT PROGRAM PLAN

Phase	Activities	Duration
Phase 1 Introduction to work-based values and preparation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Interactive workshop process,</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 4 x 2hours over one week</li></ul>
Phase 2 WBE phase at participating employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Activities as guided per employer, &amp;</li><li>● Individual student tasks to be completed as part of WBV program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 9 days of work exposure over two weeks</li></ul>
Phase 3 Consolidation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Two workshops to be held with student participants and facilitator to share experience and to integrate with values.</li><li>● A joint stakeholder meeting with students, employers, students, college team</li><li>● Pilot closure and award of certificates of completion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 2 workshops of two hours</li><li>● stakeholder workshop to discuss WBV process 3hrs</li><li>● A pilot closure 1.5hr</li></ul>

# PROGRAM DESIGN AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

- In the pilot design, the pilot phases are conceived as complementary activities
- The aim is to expose TVET students to a structured programme with an embedded process based on work-based values that takes place in conjunction with the schedule of WPBL work placements of students in active businesses. The intention is to achieve a conceptual synergy between the activities of the complementary programme and the actual work-based experience.
- The pedagogy is based on respectful sharing and free exchange of opinions about value positions and the implications of taking such positions.
- Students should be accorded the right and encouraged to voluntarily take a position on their values choice and that, as a result of the process, students might shift their positions, rather than simply accept or retain received sets of values.
- Emphasis is on a student-centred process, encouraging values clarification.
- Accepts that students acquire values from different sources (Faith, youth culture, parents...)



# EMPOWERED TO ENGAGE IN THE WORKPLACE AND LABOUR MARKET

- Students and graduates more conscious that in addition to the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies, expression of particular work values is appreciated, not only by employers, but by co-workers and supervisors
- A work-based values program would involve providing young people with the opportunity : upon reasonable reflection to internalise values that will guide their choices and behaviour as individuals and as work-seekers.
- To reflect on and understand values they do not necessarily subscribe to
- The programme is structured to empower to work and engage optimally in the workplace, and to navigate the labour market.



- The ‘capabilities approach’ offers a useful conceptual framework that captures work-based values clarification as a means of
  - increasing young people’s personal resources to successfully achieve their goals, develop their own occupational skills and identity and secure the skills to successfully maximise their employment time over their careers.
- ‘...a form of education is proposed that would enable students to become aware of the values they hold, and develop them further through fostering critical thinking, practical reason, and access to knowledge, *rather than directly imparting values to students*’



# VALUES IN THE WORKPLACE

- Work-based values of the employer can be juxtaposed with the job-seeker's or employee's work-based values
- Perceived complementarity between the values of the new appointee and the new employer before actual engagement can be different to the actual experience of employment
- Lack of congruence is inevitable the important thing is to be able to bridge manage revision
- Where differences in values are identified, the capacity and willingness of either or both employer and employee to accede to or negotiate their 'work-based' values must be explored.
- For young entrants to the labour market, the risk of misunderstanding is high
- Differences in work-based values expand widely beyond the employer-employee relationship: age, gender, status and other characteristics



## CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

- Values differences emerged in the work-experience phase pilot in relation to: gender, competition, authority, knowledge, seniority, occupational values, socialisation, sub-cultures.
- Needed to support developing student confidence in the workshops
- Values can be complex concepts – more time needed for further exchange, and facilitator home language capability and high skills in interactive group facilitation
- Ranking of respect as the most important value
- New entrants to the labour market in particular may need time in employment to clarify their personal work-based values and to practise their values in real situations
- The project involved developing a theory of change, made provision for monitoring and evaluation activities,
- Is developing a measure of change in workbased values with the view to exploring impact





**Thank you**