



# 1 Learning in organisations

This text deals with the conduct of learning activities in organizations. It defines work-based learning, workplace learning and on-the-job training and covers methods and models of learning in organisations with the purpose of identifying the most suitable learning approach for training of seasonal workers in tourism and hospitality sector.

## 1.1 Work-based learning

Work-based learning (WBL) is defined as an educational strategy that combines **academic** education with **work experiences** where academic and technical skills can be applied and evolved. WBL is usually integrated in school based programmes - vocational education and training (VET) systems. In academic context, the element of work-based learning facilitates young people's transition to work by providing the knowledge, skills and competences which they need for a successful enter into the labour market.<sup>1</sup>

Work-based learning encompasses a diversity of **formal** and **non-formal** arrangements including **apprenticeships, work placement** and **informal on-the-job learning**.

In more general way, WBL can be defined by three key elements: learning through work, learning for work and learning at work.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 Workplace learning

Workplace learning is **learning by doing** and by **reflecting on experience**. It is mostly an informal process, although line managers have an important part to play in facilitating it. It involves **self-directed learning** usually enhanced by **coaching, mentoring, e-learning** or more formal **planned experience**. It may be delivered in the form of simple observing of more experienced colleagues; conversing, swapping stories, cooperating on tasks and offering mutual support.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.3 On-the-job Training

**On-the-job training** (OTJ) provides learning that happens in the normal work situations. It may constitute the whole training or be combined with off-the-job training.<sup>4</sup> On-the job training foresee teaching the skills, knowledge and competencies that are needed for employees to perform a specific job within the workplace and work setting.

Comparing the definitions of **work-based learning, on-the-job training/learning** and **workplace learning**, a quite small but evident difference in their meaning may be observed. **Work-based**

<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2013): *Work-Based Learning in Europe: Practices and Policy Pointers*.

<sup>2</sup> Gray, D. (2001): *Assessment series* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source:

[http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/database/id11\\_Briefing\\_on\\_Work\\_based\\_Learning.rtf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/database/id11_Briefing_on_Work_based_Learning.rtf)

<sup>3</sup> Armstrong, M., Taylor, S. (2014): *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice*. Kogan page, London.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2018): *EPALE Glossary: On-the-job training* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/it/glossary/job-training-0>



**learning** is evidently connected with school-based education and is set in academic context. Even if the knowledge, skills and competencies are developed in compliance with a real workplace they are meant to be transferable to other workplaces/companies in the industry sector once the student graduates. **On-the-job learning** and **workplace learning**, on the other hand, are more closely linked to a concrete workplace and aren't necessarily connected with academic/school programme or curricula. The knowledge, skills and competencies acquired are relevant for a specific work environment and are tailored to the needs and requirements of the concrete employer. In another words, work-based learning refers to learning from a workplace during an internship as a student and in addition to classroom learning while on-the-job/workplace learning refers to learning acquired as an employee of a company. However, workplace and on-the-job learning can be combined with off-the job elements too. For example, seminars on safety measures for employees in restaurant can take place off-the-job/off-site.

For the purpose of SeasonReady project that aims at training of (1) seasonal employees in hospitality sector who aren't primarily in education and (2) owners/ managers in charge of recruitment, training and management of human resources, the following text will operate with **the concept of on-the-job training** and **workplace learning**.

#### 1.4 Advantages and disadvantages of on-the-job/workplace learning

Many advantages of work-based learning and on-the-job learning can be identified. In the table below, some key advantages for both learner and employer are listed.

### Advantages

Learner	Employer
Development of deep professional expertise	Addressing skills gaps through tailor made training
Development of skills and competencies required to operate in a workplace including hard and soft skills	Positive impact on supply of qualified labour
Improved confidence in learner's work	Positive effect on recruitment and retention
Enhanced learning by feedback given immediately	Improved productivity and performance
Simple and quick integration into the company	Positive effects on continuous staff development
Supported future learning	Cost effective method of imparting skills



When applying on-the-job training in company, there is a risk that the learning process won't be as effective as desired. The quality of on-the-job training delivered at a workplace is significantly dependent on **the trainer's quality** as he/she must be familiar with the concrete workplace, highly skilled at the job/profession, must have strong pedagogical/training competencies and on the top of that a good trainer must have certain soft skills such as communication and interpersonal skills. If the trainer lacks one of those skills, he/she will confuse and stress the trainee without achieving real learning outcomes and the training will be counter-productive for both trainee and employer. Another common weakness is that on-the-job training is sometimes given in rush or in a hasty manner so the trainee doesn't have time to absorb all the information and develop the skills and the trainer doesn't have sufficient time to give feedback. Besides, on-the-job training represents a significant investment (of financial, time and human resources) which can lead to no effect if the company fails in the retention of trained employees or suffers from high turnover.

## 2 Learning methods

On-the-job and workplace training can be delivered through various methods. Major part of the process should be planned and provided by the company; additional self-study effort is required by the trained employee. Bellow, some typical examples of on-the-job training are listed:

### 2.1 Company-managed

#### 2.1.1 Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a method of learning which combines learning in school and training in a company. Normally the company provides an apprentice with a contract and reward. At the end of the apprenticeship, the trainee receives a fully recognised diploma and qualification.<sup>5</sup>

Advantages	Disadvantages
Deep practical experience recognised by a certificate	Apprenticeship is usually low paid and less esteemed within the work team
Opening access to certain careers through an apprenticeship	Time-consuming
Combination of school-based and work-based learning	Suitable for students not employees

#### 2.1.2 Job-shadowing

In general, job shadowing means working side-by-side more experienced colleague. The core of this method lies in spending time with someone who is doing a particular job in order to learn how

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2018). *Employment, social affairs & inclusion: Apprenticeship* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1198&langId=en>



to do it. In academic context, job shadowing is an educational program where a trainee learns about a particular occupation or profession. In job shadowing, a business (partners with an educational institution) provides an experience for a student of what it is like to perform a certain type of work by having them accompanied by an experienced worker as they perform the job.<sup>6</sup>

Advantages	Disadvantages
Learn to do the job and related processes and operation in real work setting	Experienced worker may “waste” time with explaining his job to the trainee which may lead to decrease of productivity and frustration on both sides
Opportunity to observe experienced worker	
Learn more about a concrete workplace and its culture	
Suitable for students and employees	Usually doesn't reflect learning needs of the trainee

### 2.1.3 Coaching and mentoring

**Coaching** is a traditional training method which includes focus on (1) an individual's needs and accomplishments, (2) close observation, and (3) impartial and non-judgmental feedback on performance.<sup>7</sup>

**Mentoring** is training system in which a senior or more experienced individual (the mentor) is assigned to act as an advisor, counsellor, or guide to a junior or trainee. The mentor is responsible for providing support to, and feedback on, the individual in his or her charge.<sup>8</sup>

Advantages	Disadvantages
Support the integration of a new worker to the job and organization.	Dependent on the quality and motivation of coach/mentor
Stimulates motivation through the sense of achievement that comes from feedback	
Development of communication and interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, leadership skills	Risk of mismatched mentor/coach-mentee team
Effective transfers of professional and personal skills	Transfer of “bad” habits or old ways of doing
Adaptable to the learning needs of each trainee	Time-consuming
Effective way of sharing workplace culture and commitment to the organisation	More suitable for training of high-skilled staff

<sup>6</sup> *Job shadowing*. Business Dictionary [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/job-shadowing.html>

<sup>7</sup> *Coaching*. Business Dictionary [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/coaching.html>

<sup>8</sup> *Mentoring*. Business Dictionary [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/mentoring.html>



#### 2.1.4 Demonstration-Observation

It is a simple way of practical training under which the trainer demonstrates an operation while the trainee observes carefully. Such training can be done in a real workplace setting or in a simulated environment.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Simple/time-saving training which doesn't require special equipment	Interpersonal skill are hardly transferred
Trainer doesn't need special competencies – only professional skills related to a specific job	Limited space for trainees' practice
Feasible in small and micro enterprises	Limited opportunities to assess the learning outcomes

#### 2.1.5 Simulation and role-playing

In case of some industries/job positions, simulation may be preferred in order to assure safety of the trainees, clients or public. Role-play simulation is an experiential learning method in which trainees improvise within a simulated scenario. It intends to build first-person experience in a safe and supportive environment.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Expedient in high-risk working environment	Resource-expensive (trainers, setting for simulation, previous preparation of training, materials, time-consuming)
Creative approach stimulating motivation	
Positive effect on team building and the newcomers integration	
Opportunity to prepare trainee for unexpected situations	

Other company-managed methods of on-the-job training might be **induction training, planned experience, job rotation, understudy, instructions** etc.

## 2.2 Self-managed

Self-managed methods of on-the-job learning represent an additional tool which can support the whole process. Company/trainer should provide the trainee with necessary materials (such as worksheets) and instructions. Trainee is supposed to accomplish the work alone, follow-up meeting with trainer is recommended in order to give feedback and answer eventual questions. Typical examples of such methods are:

- Self-assessment questionnaires
- Guidelines



- E-learning
- Homework
- Learning diaries

As mentioned before, methods of on-the-job learning can be combined with each other and with off-the-job elements. The success of each method depends on well-set learning objectives (reflecting learning needs), character of the job and the working environment as well as on the trainer's competencies and the trainee's motivation. Learning process can be supported by applying both company- and self-managed methods together.

### 3 Models of work-based learning

Models of work-based learning are based on combination of school education and experiential learning in a workplace. European Commission identifies three main models of WBL:

#### 1. Apprenticeships schemes

Apprenticeship (known in Austria and Germany as the "dual system") is defined as education or training combining periods in an educational institution or training centre and in the workplace.<sup>9</sup>

#### 2. School-based VET

It is school-based VET which includes **on-the-job training** periods in companies. On-the-job training periods typically cover internships, work placements or traineeships that are incorporated as a compulsory or optional element of VET programmes leading to formal qualifications.

#### 3. WBL integrated in a school-based programme

Elements of WBL can be integrated through on-site labs, workshops, restaurants, junior or practice firms, simulations or real business/industry project assignments. The aim is to close to real life or real life working environments.

### 4 Models of on-the-job training

There are many models of on-the-job training which differ according to the sector, company and workplace where applied. Models combine on-the-job training with off-the-job elements and non-formal ways of learning with formal education. A specific model of OJT should reflect learning/training needs identified by **gap analysis** (identifying the gap between what people know and can do and what they should know and be able to do) including a review of **corporate, collective and individual needs**.

In following text, some models of structured workplace-based OJT are explained.

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<sup>9</sup> European Commission (2013): *Work-Based Learning in Europe: Practices and Policy Pointers*.



## 4.1 Four Steps OJT Model<sup>10</sup>

One of the first structured on-the-job training programs was launched during World War I in the shipbuilding industry by Charles R. Allen.

### Step 1: Preparation

Show workers what they are required to do.

### Step 2: Presentation

Tell workers what they are required to do and why they are required to do it.

### Step 3: Application

Let workers perform the required tasks.

### Step 4: Inspection

Provide feedback, informing workers of what they have done right and what they have done wrong.

## 4.2 Seven Steps OJT Model<sup>11</sup>

### Step 1: Introduction

Discuss and agree on learning objectives.

Discuss the acceptable standards of knowledge and performance.

Answer any questions.

### Step 2: Trainer shows and tells

Trainer: explains and performs each step.

Trainee: observes each step and questions the trainer.

### Step 3: Exchange of roles

Trainee: explains each step and responds to questions.

Trainer: performs each step and questions the trainee.

### Step 4: Trainee shows and tells.

Trainee: explains the step, gets permission and then performs each step.

Trainer: give permission and observes each step, ask questions as the trainee performs.

### Step 5: Conclusion

Recognize accomplishment.

Discussing the performance.

### Step 6: Documentation

Training documentation: an attendance sheet, learning objectives achieved, certification document etc.

### Step 7: Validation

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<sup>10</sup> On-The-Job Training. *Reference For Business* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source:

<http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/encyclopedia/Oli-Per/On-the-Job-Training.html#ixzz58xnmdoRa>

<sup>11</sup> Seven Step OJT Training Model. *Occupational Safety & Health Training Academy* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <https://www.oshatrain.org/courses/pages/703ojt.html>



Observe and question the employee to validate that the training has been successful and that the employee has developed the required competencies and attitudes related to the work.

### 4.3 Social Workplace Learning Models

Social learning concept is based on learning through knowledge sharing among employees.

It is a new trend in on-the-job training that offers a complement or alternative to the traditional expert-driven content-focused approach to learning. There are 4 main models of Social Workplace Learning<sup>12</sup>.

**Directed Social Learning Model** – social approaches are used to reinforce or test understanding in the expert-driven content-focused approach to learning. Trainer's/manager's role is limited only to ensure that people participate and keep on track. MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) is an example of this approach.

**Guided Social Learning Model** – is based on collaborative working focused on building a framework for the sharing of ideas and knowledge in order for individuals to learn from one another.

**Team Social Learning Model** – teams and groups share their knowledge and experiences as part of the daily flow of work.

**Individual Social Learning Model** – the individual builds his/her own professional network of colleagues and contacts (Personal Learning Network) to exchange ideas and experiences outside the organisation.

### 4.4 Types of on-the-job training

Training programmes in companies can be concerned with different roles and for them required skill and competencies including:

- manual skills, including apprenticeships;
- IT skills;
- team leader or supervisory training;
- management training;
- interpersonal skills such as leadership or team building;
- personal skills, e.g. assertiveness, coaching, communicating, time management;
- training in organizational procedures or practices such as induction, health and safety, performance management, equal opportunity or managing diversity policy and practice.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Hart, J. (2014). *Learning in the modern workplace: 4 Models of Social Workplace Learning*. [online]: [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://www.c4lpt.co.uk/blog/2014/06/12/4-models-social-workplace-learning/>

<sup>13</sup> Armstrong, M., Taylor, S. (2014): *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice*. Kogan page, London.





## 5 Training in tourism and hospitality

Certain kind of learning happens in every workplace if only in simple unstructured non-formal way. However, to ensure effective and efficient learning, provided training should be well targeted and tailored to the needs of individual employee, work position and company.

### 5.1 Training for seasonal staff

The sector of hospitality and tourism has many specifics that must be respected when designing a training programme for employees. In this sector, a significant number of **seasonal staff** is hired to cover few months long season. Considering the length of their contract and the frenetic character of the peak periods, seasonal workers face quite difficult task – they must familiarize with the workplace, learn to do all the operations and represent well the organization in very short time and usually under stressful circumstances. However, providing the temporary worker with a well-planned training is necessary to ensure the quality of services. Even if some professional skills can be transferred in a short time, other key elements of quality service such as employees' commitment to the organization are very difficult to share in a hasty manner.

### 5.2 Training for trainers

Besides a well-planned training for workers, another decisive factor can't be overlooked - **the quality of the trainers**. In many SMEs, it is the **manager** who is in charge of the staff training. Even assuming that the manager/ trainer is an expert at his/her own job, the ability of delivering knowledge to the trainee is not a natural thing. Moreover, managers who are responsible for the business and at the same time have to carry out training, encounter some serious challenges that can lead to elevated stress levels, frustration and subsequently to decrease in quality of both management and training.

For that reason, trainers and managers should have the use of training materials and procedures as well as at least basic course for trainers.

### 5.3 Recommendations for on-the-job training in tourism and hospitality

According to the research conducted within TTRAIN project<sup>14</sup>, on-the-job training in tourism should be **short, work-related** and **practical**. Flexible structure is also a huge advantage. The training programme should be designed as easily adaptable according regional, sectorial and company context. In order to facilitate the implementation of training, it should be easy to understand for non-professional in-house trainers and managers who will take over the training.

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<sup>14</sup> TTRAIN – Tourism Training the Trainers - GAP analysis (2015). Available online: <http://trainingfortourism.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/TTRAIN-Gap-Analysis.pdf>



**Blended learning** structure seems to be the best compromise for effective and time-saving training – for example a combination of off-the-job and online training together with suitable methods of on-the-job training.

Considering the short period of employment of seasonal workers, some training methods seem to be more convenient than others. Reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages of different OTJ methods showcased above, **demonstration-observation** with some elements of **coaching** or **mentoring** can be evaluated as a favourable blend for training of seasonal workers.

- **Demonstration-Observation**

Simple and time-saving way of practical training – the trainer demonstrates an operation while the trainee observes. It doesn't require any special resources so it is applicable also in small and micro enterprises. On the other hand, limited opportunity of interaction between trainer and trainee prevent transmission of interpersonal competencies, adequate feedback and sharing commitment to the company.

To balance the weaknesses mentioned, coaching or mentoring features can be applied together with the training based on demonstration and observation.

- **Coaching**

Training approach focused on the individual's needs and accomplishments, close observation, and impartial and non-judgmental feedback on performance provided by the coach.

- **Mentoring**

Training system in which more experienced individual (the mentor) acts as an advisor, counsellor, or guide to a junior or trainee.

The individual-oriented approach included in both coaching and mentoring supports the development of interpersonal competencies, supports commitment sharing and stimulates trainees' motivation.

As mentioned above, this method is a resource-expensive therefore inconvenient for the purposes of seasonal staff training. However, it doesn't mean that coaching/mentoring should be abandoned for good. In seasonal staff's training some elements of these methods can be applied – for example feedback sessions of group mentoring (1 mentor providing individual support to more mentees). Coaching/mentoring approach can be adopted also in the combination with self-managed learning, for example self-studying followed by an individual/group meeting with trainer in order to discuss the material and answer eventual questions.

**Specific combination of training methods/adoption of a training model within SeasonReady is to be decided based on the research results.**