

# **„Work-based learning as a pathway to competency-based education – Research and implementation strategies from a comparative and global VET perspective“**

BIBB/UNEVOC Workshop, Thursday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017, 9:00- 12:00

at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) in Bonn, Germany (Room 1.150)

## **Keynote Speech I:**

### **The global need for competence. Competence-based VET and implications for policy and practice.**

#### **Martin Mulder, Wageningen University, The Netherlands**

Given the grand challenges on the planet, there is more need for competence than ever. Vocational education and training (VET) plays an essential role in developing professional competence. At the level of individual countries and states, initial and continuing VET (ICVT) is organized in different ways. There is a global trend to agree on common tools and frameworks (such as the international and national qualifications frameworks) for the improvement of the access to and quality of ICVT, and the implementation of competence-based VET (CBVET), belongs to that. CBVET as common ICVT framework is not confined to Western high GDP-countries, but is also embraced in many developing societies with a lower GDP, including the global South. As in the wide diversity of ICVT practices at global level, there is variety in CBVET approaches. Started in the early 1900s in the USA to improve the quality of teacher education, competence-based practices have proliferated in motivation psychology, management training and development, human resource management, corporate strategy, sectoral qualification policy, and education at all levels. There are a number of competence trails in VET which follow the past and present working programmes of the various national and international aid and education development cooperation organisations. However, many mistakes have been made with the design, development and implementation of competence-based education (CBE), and it seems that these mistakes are being repeated over and over again. Many researchers have pointed at this. Extreme critics have contented and still contend that CBE is a detrimental educational philosophy, if any. Many CBVET approaches are based on outdated versions of CBE and obsolete competence frameworks, whereas full attention has to be paid to key competencies for the unknown future. What has gone wrong, and what lessons can be taken away from this for the governance of current VET, for the organization of VET, working conditions and career management of VET teaching staff, teaching and teacher professional development in VET, and VET quality assurance?

#### **Professor Martin Mulder**

Martin Mulder is Emeritus Professor of Education and past chair of the department of Education and Competence Studies of Wageningen University, the Netherlands. Mulder is awarded 2016 European Researcher of Vocational Education and Training by the European Commission, is an honorary member of the Vocational Education and Training Research Network of the European Educational Research Association, and edited *'Competence-Based Vocational and Professional Education. Bridging the Worlds of Work and Education'* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer. 1142 pages; DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-41713-4). He maintains his own website [www.mmulder.nl](http://www.mmulder.nl).

## **Keynote Speech II:**

### **Securing occupational capacities through workplace experiences: Premises, conceptions and practices**

#### **Stephen Billett, Griffith University, Australia**

Across human history, the vast majority of occupational capacities have been secured through experiences in workplaces and by quite distinct means from those within educational institutions. Hence, understanding how learning arises through workplace experiences requires explanatory premises for this phenomenon not based on practices within educational institutions. As a consequence, it is also important to articulate a set of concepts that can explain this phenomenon. Proposing these premises and concepts are essential to understanding and appraising these workplaces as environments in schooled societies where the learning processes and outcomes of schooling are privileged. These elaborations also offer bases to consider how the securing of occupational capacities can progress in contemporary times. Drawing on anthropological, historical, psychological and sociological disciplines, considerations of the kinds of curriculum, pedagogic and personal practices supporting learning through the circumstances of practice are advanced. Firstly, models of workplace curriculum are explained and illustrated as pathways along which to progress. Then, some examples of practice pedagogies are elaborated as means of augmenting experiences in work settings and as directed to secure particular kinds of knowledge. All of these are mere affordances and their efficacy in supporting learning is premised on the personal epistemological practices of those who participate in and learn through the circumstances of practice. In these ways, securing occupational capacities through work promoted through this combination of means.

#### **Professor Stephen Billett**

Dr Stephen Billett is Professor of Adult and Vocational Education in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia and an Australian Research Council Future Fellow. After a career in garment manufacturing, he has worked as a vocational educator, educational administrator, teacher educator, professional development practitioner and policy developer in the Australian vocational education system and as a teacher and researcher at Griffith University. Since 1992, he has researched learning through and for work and has published widely in fields of learning of occupations, workplace learning, work and conceptual accounts of learning for vocational purposes. His sole authored books include *Learning through work: Strategies for effective practice* (Allen and Unwin 2001); *Work, change and workers* (Springer 2006) *Vocational Education* (Springer 2011) and *Mimetic learning at Work* (2014) and *Integrating Practice-based Learning in Higher Education Programs* (Springer 2015). His edited books include *Work, Subjectivity and Learning* (Springer, 2006) *Emerging Perspectives of Work and Learning* (Sense 2008), *Learning through practice* (Springer 2010), *Promoting professional learning* (Springer 2011), *Experiences of school transitions* (Springer 2012), *Promoting, assessing, recognizing and certifying Lifelong Learning* (Springer 2014), *Francophone conceptions of Learning through practice* (Springer 2015), and *Enhancing Teaching and Learning in the Dutch Vocational Education System* (Springer 2017). He is the founding and Editor in Chief of *Vocations and learning: Studies in vocational and professional education* (Springer) and lead editor of the book series *Professional and practice-based learning* (Springer) the *International Handbook of Research in Professional and Practice-based Learning* (2014) with colleagues from Germany. He was a Fulbright Professional Scholar in 1999, awarded a 2009-2010 Australian Learning and Teaching Council National Teaching Fellowship that identified

principles and practices to effectively integrate learning experiences in practice and academic settings. In June 2011, he commenced a four-year Australian Research Council Future Fellowship on learning through practice, which aims to develop a curriculum and pedagogy of practice. He has recently secured an Office of Learning and Teaching Development Grant examining students' post-practicum experiences (2015-2018). In August 2013, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Jyväskylä University (Finland) for his contributions to educational science and elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences of Australia in 2015.