

RESEARCHERS SHARE INSIGHTS ON WORKPLACE-BASED LEARNING

26 October 2015 - Workplace-based Learning research conducted by local researchers should serve as a foundation upon which a draft policy on Workplace-Based Learning could be formulated said the Department of Higher Education and Training's Director-General (DG) Gwebinkundla Qonde.

Qonde was talking at an educational and informative meeting held earlier this month

He said that the development of a policy framework brought together experts from different sectors such as the industry, academic, and trade unions.

The purpose of the Colloquium was to engage with researchers on WBL, and to contribute to the development of policy on WBL.

The Colloquium was held under the theme "Towards successful Workplace-Based Learning in South Africa."

In his opening of the Colloquium, DHET DG encouraged delegates to engage in a meaningful way, by sharing best practices from their respective disciplines.

Qonde said that the draft policy to be formulated after all the discussions at the Colloquium should be in line with the National Development Plan (NDP), which is the macro-economic policy of the current government.

Different presenters shared their knowledge on various topics such as: Global perspectives on Workplace-Based Learning, Expectations of Workplace-Based Learning: Lessons from research and practice, Quality and quality assurance of Workplace-Based Learning and State of Workplace-Based Learning in South Africa.

Case studies such as the Overview of current and planned research by DHET and its entities were presented: A case study of learning for work (TVET), Research into work-based learning: implications for pedagogy and practice in South Africa, Status of Work Integrated Learning: A TUT perspective, National Skills Authority "Fast Tracking Workplace-Based Learning Framework, WIL they or won't they? Insights on WBL from case studies in the LMIP and SAPCO research Initiatives: Work Integrated learning.

During the evaluation of the Colloquium, delegates deliberated on a draft policy to be formulated and the urgency it deserves. Most of the delegates also engaged on the difference between Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) and Work-Integrated Learning (WIL).

WIL was described as an integrated learning mechanism that facilitates the identification and utilisation of embedded knowledge, whilst WBL was described as a component of a learning programme that focuses on the application of theory in an authentic work-based context.

Delegates also spoke about the funding mechanism for the students starting from Community Colleges, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and universities in the country.

The delegates also emphasised the need for lecturers to be part of the WBL to keep abreast with the technological development from the industry, and to remain relevant in the curriculum they are offering.