Professional Higher Education in Practice: Cooperation with Employers

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Preliminary remark

(Higher) education is the relation between theory informing practice and practice informing theory.

The distinction between academic HE and professional HE orientation is misleading.
Preparing professionals for uncertain futures

“Competences are [...] in principle the dispositional skills to act self-organised in an open, complex and uncertain future.”

(translated from Erpenbeck 2005)

Learning Environments as Laboratories of Reflection

Knowing-in-Action
Reflection-in-Action
Reflection on Reflection-in-Action

Implicit Knowledge
Ad-Hoc Strategies
Development of own Theories of Action

(Schön 1983, 1986)
PHE – An emerging paradigm?
THE HUMAN SUCCESS FACTOR

Employability = THE HUMAN SUCCESS FACTOR = Growth

Competence: T-Shape

Personality, (Multiple-)Specialisation, Interdisciplinary Expertise

Future Scenario

Changed Value Chain

Projet based, Complexity und Specialisation

Broad understanding and deep overarching competences

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T-Shaped professionals

Ability to act successfully across disciplines, contexts and systems
Qualification: Today‘s Scenario

Today

Top Managers

Experts

Senior Managers

Senior Specialists

Managers

Specialists

Operational, Back Office

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Qualification: Future Scenario

Drivers:
- Globalisation
- Changed Value Chain
- Demographic Change
- Growing Complexity

And therefore …
1. **More** higher qualifications
2. **New** academic job profiles
3. **Cross**-Competencies gain importance

PHE is emerging to meet this new demand
Rise of PHE (partly German context)

Advantages:
- Orientation on Needs
- Competent employees

Challenges:
- Terminology
- Typology
  - PHE Institutions
  - Target groups
  - Financing
  - Cooperation btw. Academy and Practice
- Standards
- Quality Benchmarks

Characteristics of PHE
- Alternating Phases of academic study and practice phases
- Coherent approach to curriculum design (academic & practice)
- Contract for Training- and Study with partner organisation
- Practice Partner is selecting the students

Emerging situation: Models from loosely coupled to fully integrated!

HAPHE Project:
Harmoise approaches
PHE –
A successfull example
„Dual“ Studies – How does it work?

**Theoretical knowledge**
6 x 12 weeks of intensive studies at one of the 12 locations and campuses of the DHBW

**Practical experience**
- 6 x 12 weeks of practical qualification
- in one of over 9,000 partner companies
Organisation of Studies

Degree after 6 semesters (3 years)

Semester 1+2 | 3+4 | 5+6

Each semester (24 weeks) is divided into 2 parts:

theory
12 weeks at DHBW

practice
12 weeks at the partner organisation

Work phases are embedded within pre- or post-placement lectures which distinguishes the model from on-the-job training
The Architecture of Studies

A-Levels Abitur → Selection process of partner companies / Admission → Practice (T → P → T) → Bachelor of Arts (B. A.)
Bachelor of Engineering (B. Eng.)
Bachelor of Science (B. Sc.) → Job → Executive Master Degree Programs → Job
Decisions and regulations:
By law partners are **part** of the University
Equal representation in half of all committees
DHBW - FACTs

- 40 years experience
- 120,000 graduates
- 32,000 students in 2013
- 9,000 cooperating organisations

Partners investment: The private sector contributes about 900 Mill €/year in student salaries (& expenses)

- 90 study programmes
- 10 % drop out rate

Efficiency:
10% of all 220,000 university students in BW
25% of all university graduates in BW
Success Factors
Success Factor 1: Joint Responsibilities

- By state law dual partners are members of the university
- Equal representation of dual partners and academia in central committees
- Deep integration of the dual partners into the university (University Council, Faculty Council, Programme Committees, (also: partly represented in Senat)
- Common definition of quality assurance mechanisms/instruments for both learning contexts
- Joint reflection of the achieved quality level and definition of actions for improvement
Success Factor 2: Joint Definition and Assessment of Practice-Parts

Integrated curriculum development:
- The modul descriptions are developed, consulted and agreed upon in joint work groups between academia and dual partners.
- The study and assessment regulations as well as the modul descriptions for the practice phases of the study are defining the contents and objectives for the practice phases of study.

Common assessment of study progress and competence gain:
- Thesis related to practice problems, project reports, reflection reports of student are taken as basis for assessment of study progress and competence gain.
Success Factor 3: Integration of practice context in QA

- The dual partners are subject to an application and assessment process in which their suitability for dual study context is assessed by the head of a programme, the admission to the cooperative state university can be revoked.

- The assessment of the suitability is done on basis of defined criteria, related to equipment, qualification of the supervising personnel, structure of the practice study phase (e.g. learning contracts and the definition of work time regulations).

- The dual partner organisations enter into a standardised study and professional apprentice contract with the students, in which they agree to observe the rules of the framework of the study regulations under which they operate.

- System accreditation: Comprehensive quality assurance process also covering 'studies in practice'
Thank you very much!

- More about DHBW: www.dhbw.de
- More about EFQUEL: www.efquel.org
- More about the HAPHE project: http://eurashe.eu/projects/haphe/
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