Work Related Learning

Implementation of work related learning in agriculture, forestry, environment and organismal bioscience.

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Five Key Questions

- What is it?

- Why do we need it?

- When should I teach it?

- Where should I teach it?

- How should I teach it?

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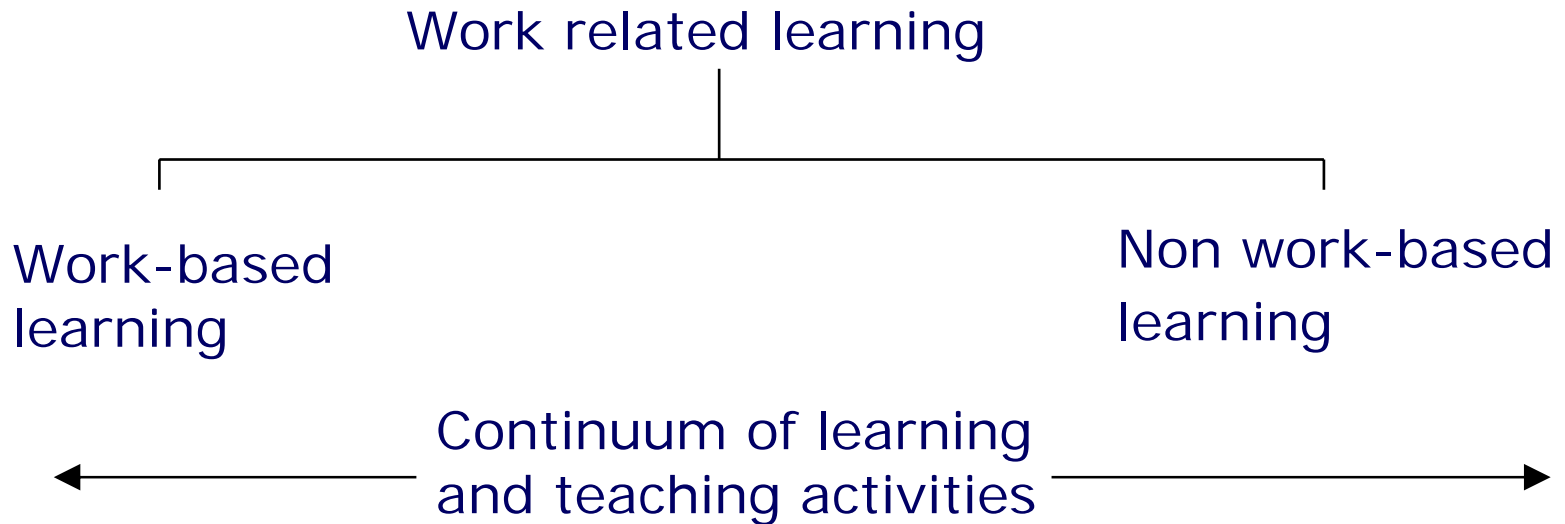# What is work related learning?

"Work related learning represents the learning outcomes achieved through activities which are based on, or derive from, the context of work or the workplace"

What is work related learning?

Work related learning

Work-based learning

Non work-based learning

Continuum of learning and teaching activities

What is work related learning?


Important components:

- Outcomes based
- Involves embedded & work-based approaches
- Context is distinguishing feature
- Spin-off benefit on deep learning and student motivation
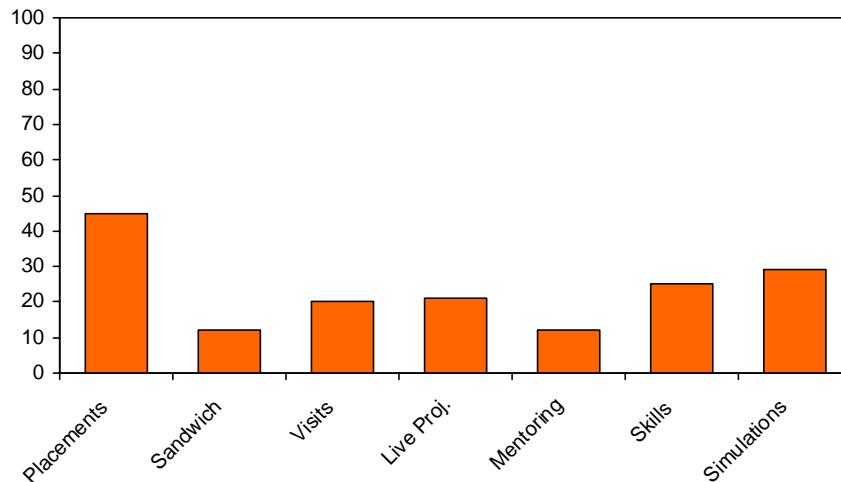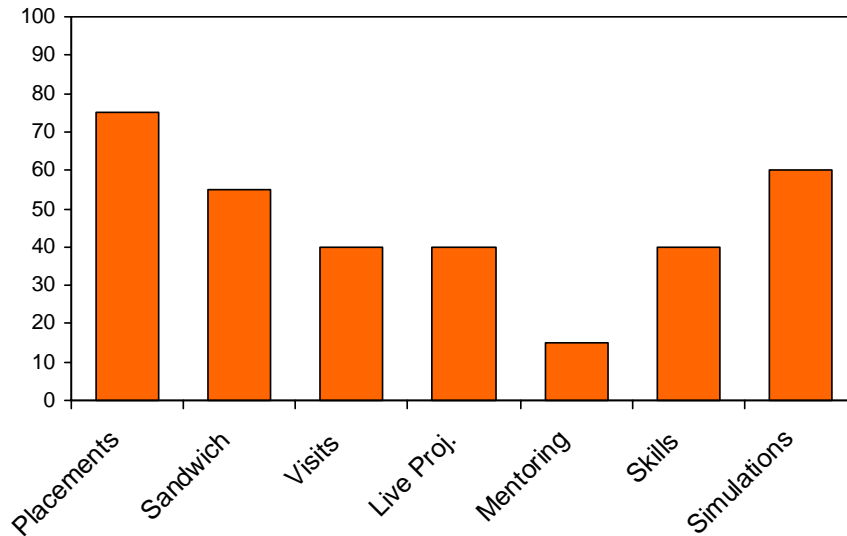
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Why do we need work related learning?

- Dearing, Harris, QAA, Lambert etc

- Traditional placements are great!
  - there are not enough to go round
  - can feel 'divorced' from academic experience
  - mechanisms for capturing and articulating learning are not always in place
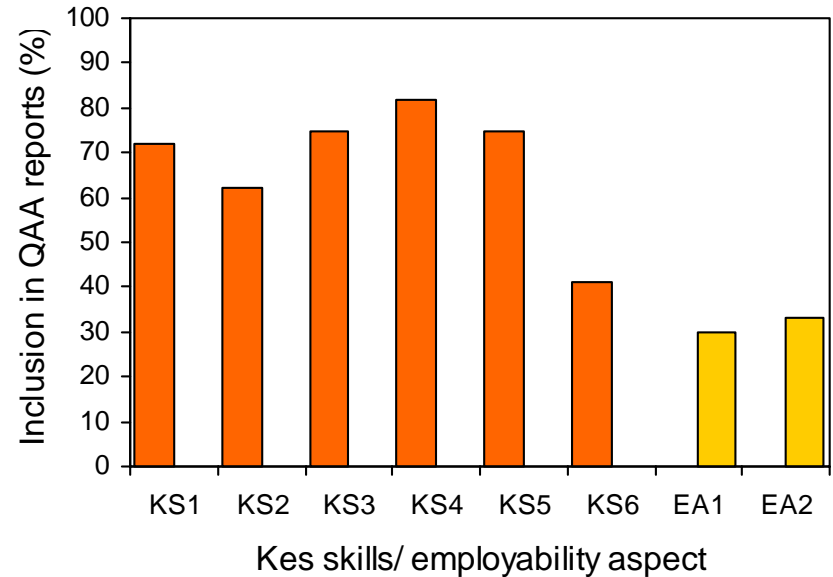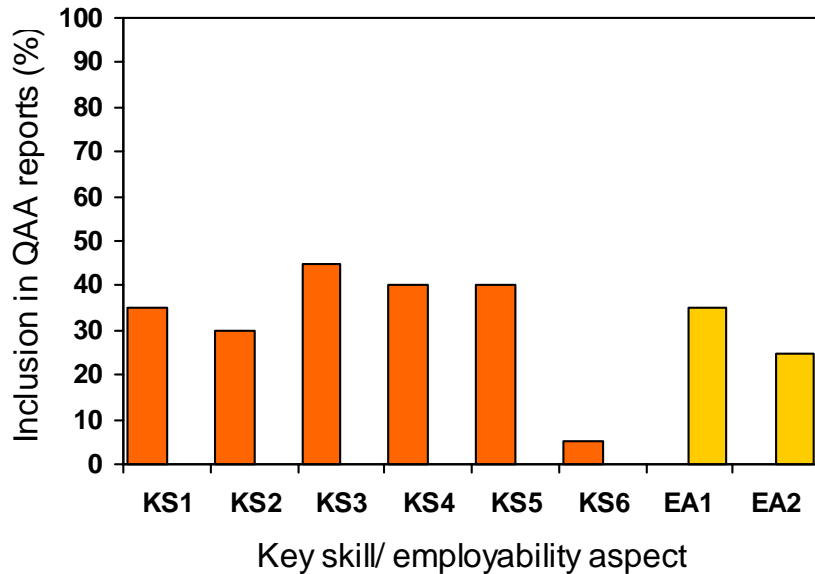
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Why do we need work related learning?

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Why do we need work related learning?

- Diversity of employment market

- UK biology graduates, year 2000 cohort:
  - 55% in employment:
  - 12% discipline; 34% general science & 54% non-science

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Why do we need work related learning?

- Consequently we need something to fill employability gap which:

  - Represents a more functional framework reflecting the working life of graduates

  - Is comprehensible to stakeholders: graduates, QAA, employers etc

  - Maps onto curriculum design and delivery

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When should I teach work related learning?

What is good practice?

5 elements

- Rationale
- Learning outcomes
- Assessment
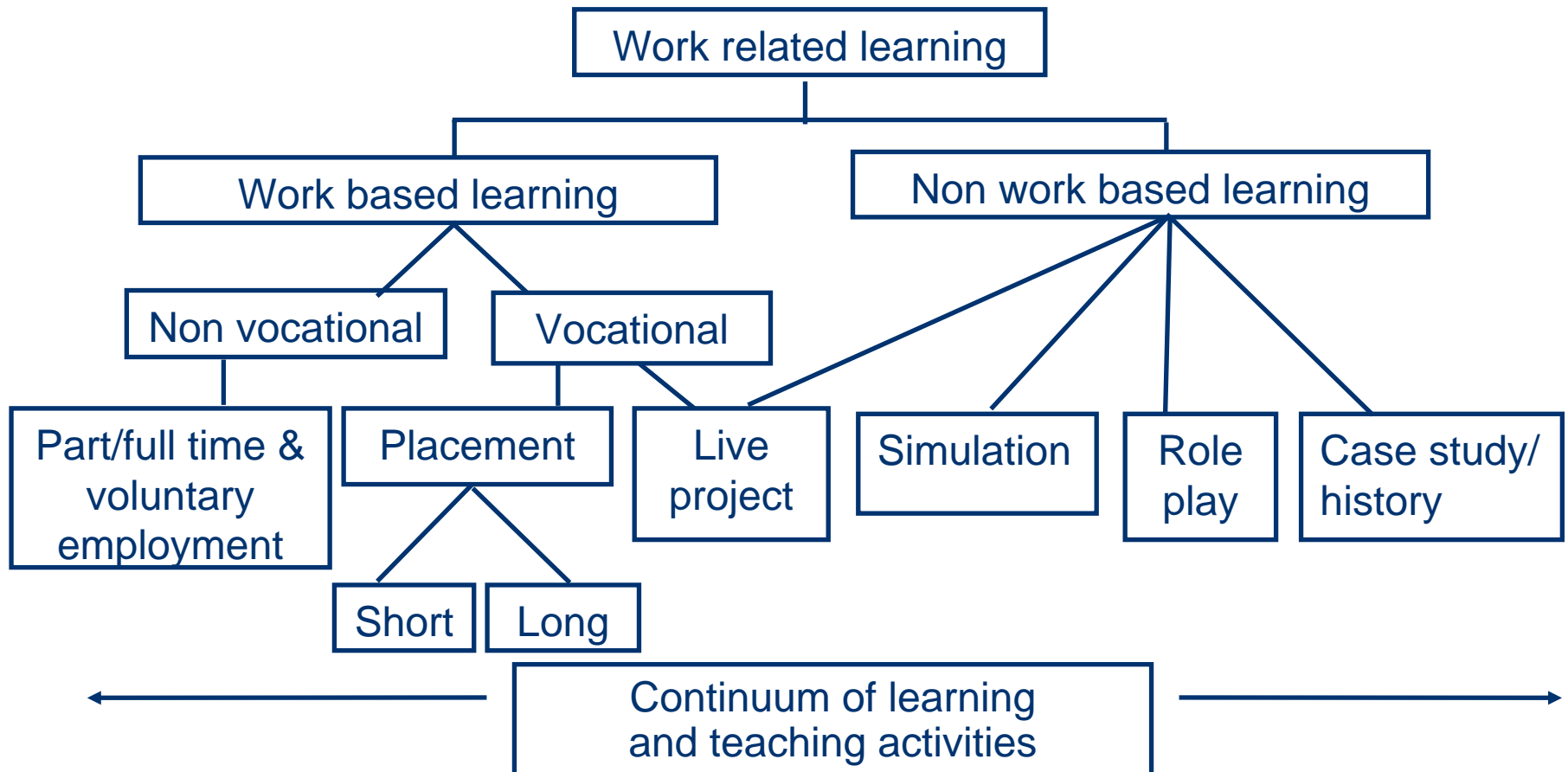- Appropriate activity
- Reflection and evaluation

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How should I teach work related learning?

WRL environment:

How should I teach work related learning?

Case studies:

- Campus based (ug)   - showing progression
- Mix on/off campus (ug)   - mini conference
- Off campus (ug)   - short placement
- Campus based (pg)   - simulation
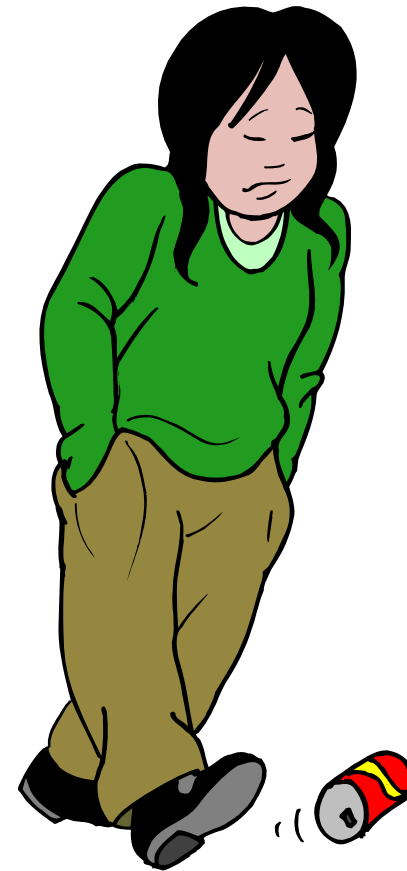
Challenges for work related learning?

- Increasing numbers
- Increasing diversity
- Appropriate assessment
- Ensuring progression
- Sustaining partnerships

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Work-Based vs. Non Work Based

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Work-Based Learning

- Spend some time in the workplace
  - Culture/ethos/etiquette
  - Teamwork/timekeeping
- Engaged in learning at an appropriate level
- Usually requires significant independent learning

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Non Work-Based Learning

- Based on campus
- Delivered by campus staff
  - or external "practitioners"
- May take a variety of forms
  - related to the world of work
  - simulating the world of work

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Pros and Cons WBL vs Non-WBL (1)

WBL(+)

- Context
  - "Imponderables"
- Relevant context for learning
- Activist learning style
- Encourages autonomy

Non-WBL(+)

- Control of learning experience
- Clarity of learning outcomes
- Integration into the curriculum
- Flexibility of assessment
- Organisation/cost

Pros and Cons WBL vs Non-WBL (2)

WBL(-)

- Difficult to control
- Identify all the learning outcomes?
- Assessment
  - who/when/where?
- Difficult to arrange

Non-WBL(-)

- Limited context
- Development of the "imponderables"?
- Less immediate relevance
- Less autonomy in learning

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Conclusions

- Evidence for employability gap
- WRL is a vehicle for filling this gap
- Definition of WRL is learning-centred and wide ranging
- Elements of good practice have been determined