



eWBL – Making work-based learning work in an online environment

Case Studies – Ireland (WP1)

27/01/2023

Exploring the challenges met and the alternatives found by WBL providers across Europe in their shift from WBL to eWBL.

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CASE STUDY REPORT 4

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| Name of the case | Case Study 4 - Ireland |
| Organisation(s) | Sporting Organisation, HEI 2 |
| Country(-ies) | Ireland |
| Disciplinary sector | Sports Science |
| Contacts | HEI Lecturer, Sports Manager, Student. |
| Case written by | Momentum |
| <p>Executive summary (summarise the case in 200 words)</p> <p>This case describes the online work placement offered to a Bachelor of Business in Sports with Business student at HEI 2. It was delivered 70% online through the sports organisation The work placement involved the use of performance analysis software, AnalysisPro for game and player analysis. The case demonstrates the different pedagogical tools that were used by the sports organisation, HEI 2 and the student participant in the online work placement such as weekly meetings, mentoring, presentations and feedback.</p> <p>The case also examines the drivers and barriers of eWBL, the learning implications of eWBL, and the recommendations given by case participants for the future of eWBL.</p> | |

| Section | Answer |
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| 1) Organisation's background | <p>HEI 2 is a multi-campus technological university in the west and northwest of Ireland. It currently has around 20,400 students, 86% undergraduate and 14% postgraduate, and approximately 2,250 members of staff. It offers over 600 courses in disciplines such as business, engineering, humanities, and technology. The sports body is a county Irish international amateur sporting and cultural organisation. It is focused primarily on promoting indigenous games and pastimes, which include the traditional Irish sports of hurling, camogie, Gaelic football, Gaelic handball, and rounders. The association also promotes Irish music and dance, as well as the Irish language. The majority of its members are volunteers.</p> |
| 2) Design, delivery, and management. | <p>The variety of placements within the HEI 2 Bachelor program are quite diverse from business aspects to coaching. Pre-Covid-19 most placements would have been in a face-to-face environment. This student placement is on coaching through a digital-based application. The opportunity came up through consultation with one of a work placement partners, The sports organisation who recently increased their use of analysis software for coaching and match analysis. The student preparation was with both The sports organisation and the software provider, AnalysisPro to train the student on the platform before the placement as HEI 2 did not have that expertise in-house. The implementation of the placement for HEI 2 was no different than for students working on site. It was the first time that HEI 2 had a full placement for a student using a digital platform so there was considerable learning for HEI 2, especially in terms of engaging with the software providers and the employer. The audience for the data analysis was a football team (32 members aged 17/18-year-old males) so the interpretation and communication of this data needed a lot of consideration by the student on placement. This was supervised by the student's manager within The sports organisation.</p> <p>In addition to AnalysisPro, the student used Zoom, MS Teams, phone calls, and WhatsApp for regular communication with their manager. For the manager, they would have a preference to run through details face-to-face as it's more personal to building relationships. He feels it is a lot easier to interpret someone's mood, tone, and message in person whereas with technology there is more ambiguity. He felt it would have been easier too for the student if the relationship had started face-to-face rather than in an online environment.</p> |
| 3) Difference and similarities | <p>There was training for HEI 2 students in the general areas of self-motivation and responsibility before work placements. In an online environment, motivation can drop among students so regular communication is key. That does not typically come from HEI 2 but from the employer and manager within the host organisation to provide support. In this case study, the student was given support by their manager and the</p> |



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| | <p>software company but unlike in on-site work, there would not have been the same level of daily communication from all parties.</p> <p>In terms of quality assessment, HEI 2 set out a training log for host organisations to work through e.g. induction, health & safety, etc. The student also receives a visit from an HEI 2 tutor to assess the student's performance and assess the satisfaction of the employer. For this instance, the consultation with the student and The sports organisation was all done online. For HEI 2, the format and the assessment of the work placement did not change as the student had several deliverables to submit: a weekly workplace training log, a duty log, and a presentation with detailed reflections at the end of the placement as well as fulfilling expectations for the employer.</p> <p>Most of the placement management and feedback was conducted online with some over and back to work through any issues with the student until the project was in a position where The sports organisation was satisfied with the outcomes. The output was of exceptional quality, but the manager felt it took two/three weeks longer when conducted remotely.</p> <p>For the student they had to understand the needs of the employer, gather the data using software they had training on, interpret the data, work in a remote environment and then present it back in a hybrid/ face-to-face model to both managers and team players. Apart from AnalysisPro, the student needed to use Excel and PowerPoint programs. The student created a template of statistics in Canva for showcasing the data visually. The student was not compensated for their work in this placement.</p> |
| <p>4) Learning outcomes</p> | <p>HEI 2 confirmed that the student performed exceptionally well and a lot of this was down to the student's own motivation and engagement with the software they were using. As a result of the student's work, the student has gained employment with different organisations to undertake similar work and has been engaging and collaborating internationally in performance analysis. They formed a network of professionals through the employer organisation and the software organisation. The student will work with other organisations during the summer based on their experience. They also want to use their findings in their final year dissertation. Their communication and presentation skills improved, and the student showed growth. The extent to which the student understood the value of the opportunity they were given was also impressive. The student was motivated to learn more about the software and gain further employment.</p> <p>The student learned how to interpret the data and simplify it for players to the most relevant information. He established an open communication process with the players directly and some approached him for further details. He found that sometimes it was not always possible to get his point across online and it required a phone call or face-to-face meetings to do this.</p> <p>The student had access to a group chat network to interact with other members of The sports organisation. He could send useful tactical information in advance of games for preparation and training e.g. opposition goal kick-outs for the goalkeepers. The manager felt that without the limited face-to-face meetings that were 30% of the placement it may not have been as effective as that element was crucial for both the student's and players learning.</p> <p>The student felt before the placement that they were not strong with technology but since the placement, they enjoyed learning the new software and is enthusiastic about pursuing performance analysis as a possible future career option. The student felt they did not adopt the culture of The sports organisation as they felt they were not part of the core team, and the general understanding was that he was there on a short-term basis only. The manager also felt it would take a longer length of time</p> |

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| | to absorb the company culture and that the onus would be on The sports organisation to define and drive that to future new members. |
| 5) Pedagogical innovations | <p>The student had to adapt their communication skills and style to present data to the target audience in a clear, objective, and understandable way.</p> <p>The data is the most impressive part, and the student was able to analyse the data and present it in a workable format that would affect change for the managers of the football teams. The student presented several factual online presentations. Every week the student would brief the manager on the information for the manager's one-to-one, face-to-face meetings with players on their performance. This was a more sensitive area that the manager wanted to handle face-to-face rather than giving criticism or feedback online.</p> <p>The student also has a Level 1 coaching qualification and was available for substitute coaching work when required. The student was also given additional games to assess and interpret by his manager. The student gained such an interest in the area that they are committed to following their study through to master's level.</p> |
| 6) Technological innovations | <p>Initially, the student was doing the analysis by hand but then reviewed and suggested the adoption of AnalysisPro software.</p> <p>AnalysisPro provides performance analysis solutions and training to help teams and coaches enhance the feedback and understanding within a team and their environment; to improve effectiveness and overall performance. The video analysis can be used in both sports and non-sport environments (staff training, flight simulation), to give users the benefit of getting the most out of their workflow.</p> <p>As a result of the placement, HEI 2 will be purchasing an educational license for the AnalysisPro software to embed it in their learning modules.</p> |
| 7) Drivers and barriers to eWBL | <p>For The sports organisation, they identified the non-face-to-face communication elements as hampering collaboration and being a bigger challenge. Once they were operating in a post-Covid environment, the student could become more ingrained into the team. They suggested building a contingency in terms of time, expectations, and delivery for any future remote work placements. The student identified the lack of understanding of the software initially made the communication aspects a little difficult. The ethos of the host organisation being voluntary was not going to be the same as a private sector one. He said it was difficult as a new person to bring in a new concept and new technology and that needed a certain degree of understanding and open-mindedness from the host organisation.</p> <p>If there is a lack of motivation on a student's part during a placement this could cause a problem, particularly in terms of the way HEI 2 set up the placements with the onus for support being on the employer. The student felt that there is an onus on the student to also go for it and embrace their placement fully.</p> <p>One of the drivers is new and quality technology and the need for performance enhancement for winning and improving people's knowledge. The positivity from HEI 2 also was a driver based on the opportunity that was presented by the host organisation and that is now informing their learning and knowledge about the role of technology in sport. For HEI 2, this case study is a positive experience but not all students had that experience.</p> <p>Where there are specific responsibilities given, where training is at a level that is needed, and where the tasks are clear it can be a high-quality learning experience. If those ingredients are not in place, universities will have to do a lot more monitoring of remote workplace learning. The work placement manager is a strong advocate for a hybrid model with a focus on planning for clearly defined outputs.</p> |
| 8) Long-term impacts of eWBL | <p>This technology and type of work on performance analysis are still in their infancy, it's rapidly evolving and there are probably greater opportunities to come for digital work-based learning and placements as a result of the industry changes. The nature of the sports environment is that the placements will be hybrid in the future. There is a reality that eWBL is happening and universities will have to examine it more closely and coordinate it on a macro level. It's going to be a resource issue as eWBL students will need more support and someone has to provide that. The motivation of students is not universal like in a normal work environment but because</p> |

of the team basis a lot of people can be developed and brought along but with eWBL, this is a lot more challenging. Some students will request this way of working for the future.

Economic and time-saving benefits have already been identified. Socially there is an impact on the relationships that can be established and maintained. There is wisdom in finding the right balance and seeing the relevance of eWBL to a particular scenario depending on your required outputs.

