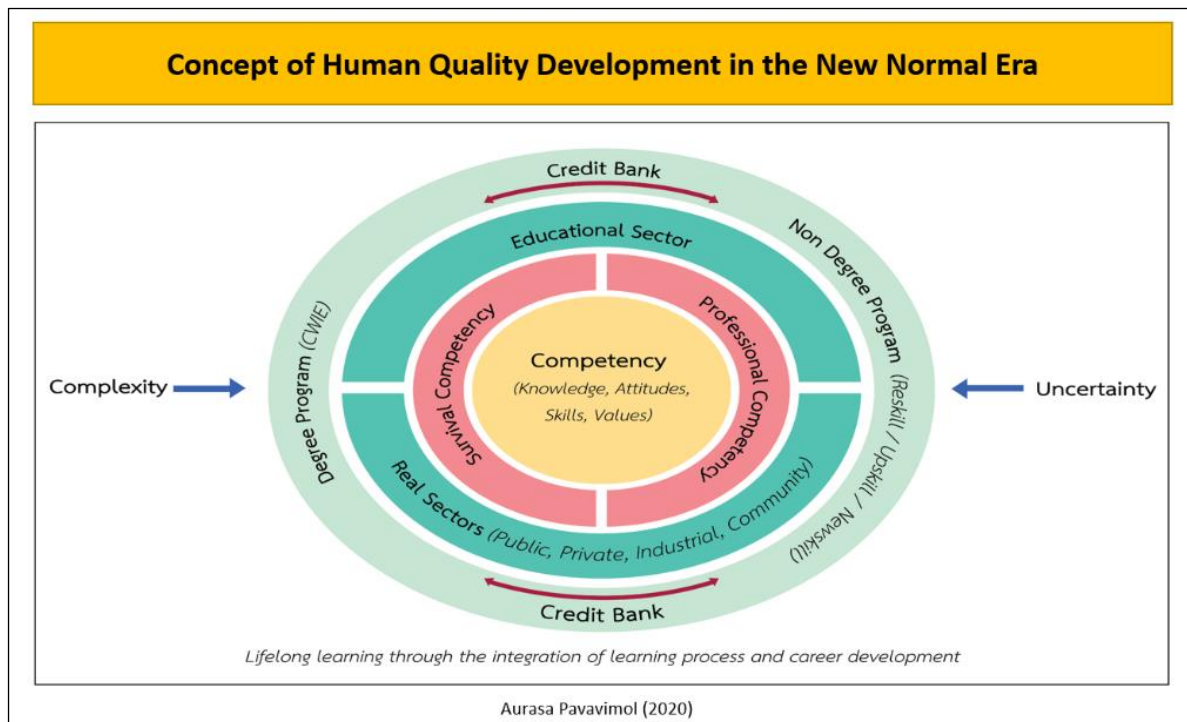


Concept of Human Capacity Building in the New Normal Era: Lifelong Learning through the Integration of Learning Process with Career Development

The concept of human quality development in the New Normal era suggests that “competency” is key to lifelong learning development, which is based on a seamless integration of learning and work experiences, as summarized as a conceptual framework below.



The concept of Human Quality Development in the New Normal Era by Dr. Aurasa Pavavimol is based on the integration of learning process with career development which places ‘Competencies’ as the primary focus, and requires ‘Learning Process’ to be redesigned and ‘Credit Bank’ put in place as a system to support lifelong learning.

Competencies are the key issue for Human Quality Development of the country since they enable manpower to survive and thrive in an increasingly complex and uncertain world. In relation to this, a learning process in the form of degree and non-degree programs should be developed by integrating education with career development based on close collaborations among the education sector and the others. At the same time, a credit bank system should be developed and used for boosting lifelong learning opportunities for all Thais.

Core competencies for human quality improvement consist of survival and professional competencies since both complement each other. Survival competencies are generally considered to be skills for survival in the 21st Century, and the author categorizes them into 4 types; namely, *thinking*, *communication*, *digital literacy*, and *management*. Meanwhile, professional competencies involve skills, knowledge and attributes that are specifically crucial due to their potential for career success.

Cross-sector partnership among universities, public, private, and industrial sectors is regarded as an integrated mechanism for Human Quality Improvement. Such partnership could co-define the competencies and co-design manpower production based on demand-driven approach which will make study programs better and more responsive to the needs of learners and employers and to the country development as a whole.

Study programs and learning process have to be delivered extensively and inclusively through degree and non-degree programs for learners in both formal and non-formal systems. A degree program in the form of Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education or 'CWIE' could serve as a vehicle for enhancing qualifications and competencies of students to meet the needs of workplaces and the demand of the new labor market. On the other hand, non-degree programs with the purpose of both reskilling and up-skilling human capital could play a crucial part in enhancing professional competencies of the workforce since reskilling helps workers to learn new things which are different from and beyond their existing expertise while up-skilling is to fill up their skill gaps through equipping them with up-to-date knowledge and skills that keep them competitive in the labor market.

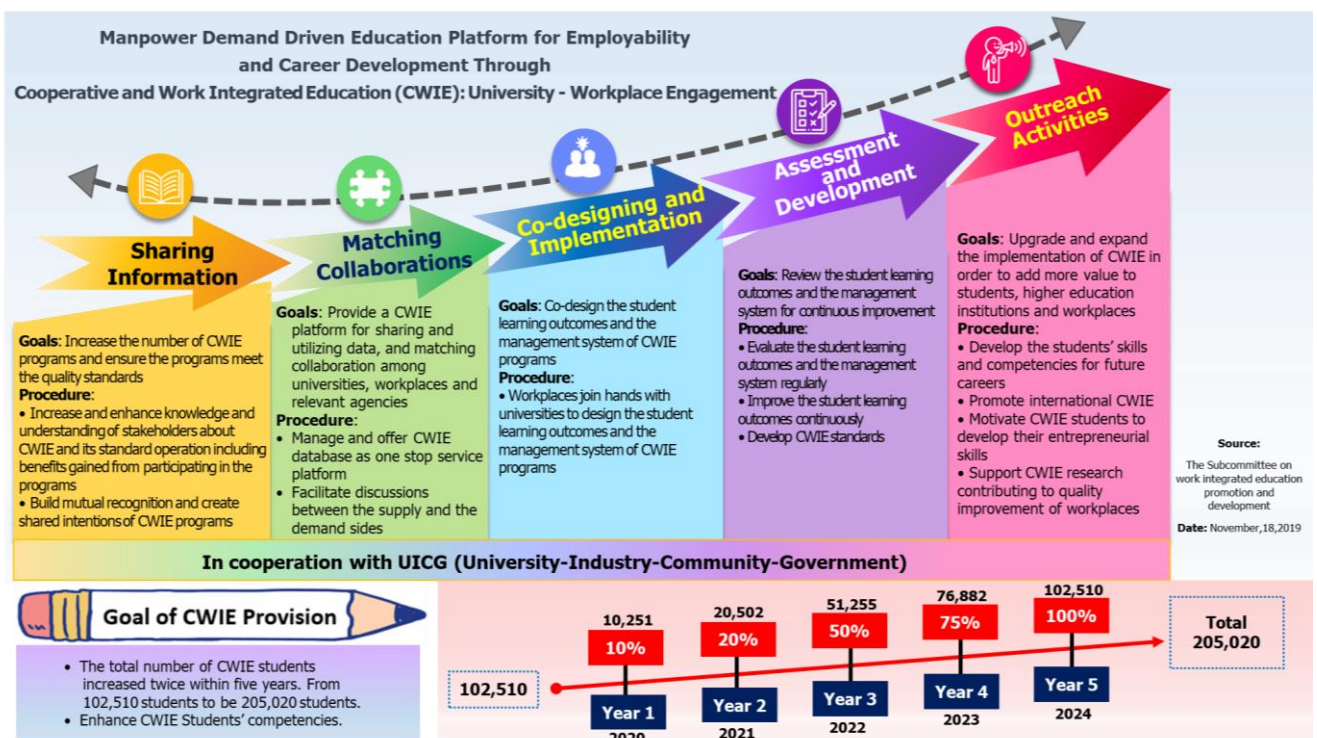
Credit bank is a concept of accumulating credits that can be earned from proof of knowledge or ability derived from skills, work experiences, training or learning from schools, non-formal education institutions, or self-directed learning. This concept therefore helps connect the education sector with the labor market and also promote lifelong learning by allowing everyone to progress on their learning that suits their lifestyles. The earned and accumulated credits can be used for assessment and consideration to receive a formal degree from a higher education institution.

Promotion of Cooperative and Work Integrated Education (CWIE)

Cooperative and work-integrated education (CWIE) program is a co-designed educational program that asks workplaces to participate in the design of the student learning outcomes and the program’s management system. The objective of CWIE program is to provide an opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience through working as full-time staff in actual workplaces. This will enhance their potential and competencies to effectively meet the rising and ever-changing demands of the workforce and labor market.

In response to the national strategy on developing and strengthening human capital, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MHESI) launched the CWIE promotion policy as one of the key flagship programs with an aim to produce qualified and competent graduates who meet the future workforce requirements. Therefore, commitment and collaboration among higher education institutions, public and private sectors as well as community to promote CWIE implementation and raise CWIE standards are of great importance. To make this initiative move forward in a sustainable manner, MHESI deemed it crucial to introduce and establish “*The Manpower Demand-Driven Education Platform for Employability and Career Development through Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education: University-Workplace Engagement*” to be an important mechanism for standardizing and systematizing CWIE provision.

This platform is composed of 5 procedures implemented under the quadruple-helix collaboration (higher education institutions, public and private agencies, and local communities) which are as follows:



I. Sharing Information

Information, knowledge, as well as best practices on CWIE will be shared in order to build mutual understanding and assist in effective implementation. This includes CWIE concept, standards, benefits gained from participating in the program, and program management guidelines for all stakeholders in the hope that it will create a mutual intention and a collective efforts to enhance CWIE provision and increase the number of quality CWIE graduates who meet the labor market needs.

II. Matching Collaborations

Matching collaborations between the demand and the supply sides can be done through the CWIE platform and CWIE database provided by MHESI. The platform facilitates sharing and utilizing data among universities, workplaces and relevant agencies, which includes information on the curricula, the number of students in CWIE programs, and the student competencies. Workplaces will assist in supplying to the CWIE database their data such as job openings and positions, the student's competencies needed, work placements, rights and obligations, remuneration and welfare for the students, safety and health system, as well as a follow-up on the CWIE graduates' employment status. This database will also yield valuable input for policy formation and strategic planning towards CWIE management.

III. Co-design and Implementation

Since enhancement of the student competencies is the heart of CWIE, workplaces, therefore, are encouraged to join hands with universities to design curricula, the student learning outcomes and competencies, as well as CWIE management system. Additionally, both parties have to clearly identify their respective roles including preparing students for work placement, assigning workplace and job supervisors, putting in place a monitoring and evaluation system along with clarifying rights and obligations, remuneration and welfare for the students, safety and health system, etc.

IV. Assessment and Development

Assessment of the student learning outcomes has to be mutually carried out, and at the same time the solutions to the obstacles or problems that occur during the implementation process have to be identified for further improvement through using PDCA model as a tool.

V. Outreach Activities

CWIE could be upgraded and expanded in order to add more value to CWIE students, higher education institutions and workplaces by supporting outreach activities through several forms such as developing future careers for the students, promoting international CWIE, encouraging entrepreneurship, and conducting CWIE research, etc.

Expected Outcomes

- i. The total number of CWIE students will increase two fold from 102,510 to 205,020 within a period of five years (2020-2024).
- ii. The students participating in the CWIE programs will be able to improve their skills and competencies to effectively meet the demand for skilled workforce of workplaces and the labour market. They will also be able to achieve their career and professional goals within domestic or international contexts, or become productive entrepreneurs contributing to the country's socio-economic growth.

Next Step

In order to promote and strengthen the implementation of CWIE, MHESI is in the process of setting up the Standard Framework for CWIE Program as a major tool for standardizing and systematizing CWIE implementation.

Compiled by:

Life-long Learning Promotion and Qualification Recognition Group 2
Division of Higher Education Management Quality Enhancement
Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Thailand

Edited by:

Assistant Professor Dr. Issra Pramoolsook