

WBL-PRO Professional Peer Network: The team talks with the professionals – Stefanka Tomcheva, Shumen, Bulgaria

It is our pleasure to present today **Dr. Stefanka Tomcheva** - psychologist - psychotherapist at psychosocial support studio Selena Ltd., GCDF career counselor from Shumen, Bulgaria.



Please review below what he has shared with us:

"Every time, when I hear the sentence: "learning at work place" first that is coming in my mind is a Chinese proverb: "I heard and I forgot. I saw and I remembered. I did and I understood"

The main advantage of learning at work place is the ability to rotate theory and practice. One popular model of learning process (70:20:10) says that the good career development is result of: 70% learning directly from work experience; 20% learning from people (e.g. role models, coaches or mentors); 10% learning from formal training (e.g. seminars, courses or lessons).

Learning about what "work" is and what "to working" means, helps people to understand what the job is (acquiring practical knowledge and skills, to feel how the workflow is organized, what means to meet deadlines).

Training for the professions at the work place gives people a sense of what different skills and abilities are necessary for different types of professions.

The opportunity to learn how to perform / how to work a particular profession make the vocational training deeper, which will give people chance to implement those skills that are needed for a specific profession.

Moreover, the learning at the work place helps people to understand how to develop his career path.

There are many challenges in front of work-based learning implementation. The first of them is the specificity and quality of the strategic management of this process and the lack of mechanisms ensuring consistency. There is a need for introductory training for both sides (mentors and mentees). The process requires effective monitoring (tracking of results).

The mentor should make sure that the acquired skills, knowledge and competences, working methods, etc., are properly understood by mentees. The mentor's explanations have to be detailed and comprehensible so that the shared experience could be analyzed, systematized and understood as much as is possible by the mentees. The mentor should correct errors and omissions, which the mentees do in the process of their education.

The mentor should encourage the mentees to applying creative approach to learning and making unconventional decisions.

All above make the question: "Is the mentors are prepared for that?" very important! Are they prepared to meet face-to-face lack of confidence, motivation or interest, lack of information about training opportunities? Are they prepared to meet issues related to keep schedule and abilities to follow regulations, or different social and emotional problems of the mentees?

I think that the most important knowledge and skills for WBL professionals are communication skills and skills to motivate, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving skills, ability to accept and give feedback, time management, planning and organizing activities, perseverance, patience, tolerance and empathy, specialized knowledge about the concrete profession."

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