

## WBL-PRO Professional Peer Network: The team talks with the professionals – Valia Dankova from Sofia, Bulgaria

Today it is our pleasure to present to you **Valia Dankova** from Sofia, Bulgaria - Manager of training and consultancy company (Bimec) and experienced trainer in personal skills, sales, leadership, including trainer of trainers and mentors.



Please review below what he has shared with us:

“Work-based learning is a continuous process that happens with, or without us realizing it. Work-based learning is the most practically oriented learning process, because it equips us with competences, which are needed for the particular job. Since it is a continuous process it provides for durability of the learning results and long-term retention of the gained knowledge and skills. That is why I believe it is extremely beneficial for both employers and employees if the learning process on the workplace is deliberately structured and implemented instead of relying just on sharing between colleagues and good-will.

My company (Bimec) together with 5 other organizations from around Europe implemented a project about work-based learning a few years ago (IGTRain project). We made some research and gathered tools for training of people who take the role of trainers and mentors on their workplaces. On our website (<http://www.bimec-bg.eu/?cid=67>) can be found the Trainer's Guide (containing the training materials) and also the shared experiences of the on-the-job trainers/mentors and their trainees/mentees that took part in the on-the-job trainings during the project.

During the project we found out that the main challenges towards WBL are in our heads. Employers don't realize its importance and benefits. People, who act as trainers/mentors underestimate its role or are unconfident about doing (but don't get training and support from their employers) and trainees/mentees are often not motivated or believe that they know and can do everything without training. Well, that

is mainly true about Bulgaria but similar patterns were discovered also in the other partner countries.

In order to overcome these challenges we focused on 2 main aspects:

- Careful work with the employers: to discuss about the importance of WBL, to help them structure the process, to track the results in order to be able to motivate with good practices;
- Training of the trainer/mentors, including confidence-building and development of intergenerational competencies and skills to motivate.

The question about the competences of the on-the-job trainers was the most difficult to answer during the IGTrain project. Actually we believed that our research would show some specific results and specific competences that are required for WB trainers and mentors, but to our surprise all types of trainer's competences were included in the survey results. But the main were:

- communication skills;
- knowledge about how adult people learn and understanding adult learners;
- group dynamics and motivation;
- be able to give constructive feedback;
- organizing the training content;
- intergenerational awareness."

Feel most welcome to like our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/wblpro> and join our linkedin group <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13505202> to meet more of the professionals we talk with, learn more about our project and follow our progress!

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