

WBL-PRO Professional Peer Network: The team talks with the professionals - Werner Drasch from Germany

"I am **Werner Drasch** from *Germany* and work as a trainer in adult and vocational education. My professional background is a master's certificate as a carpenter. I have also attended further trainings in social pedagogy and working with young people. One of my main tasks is working with young people, among them refugees, migrants and school-dropouts, while they are transitioning to the labour market."



Please find below what she shared with our team:

1. Please share with us what the main advantages of work-based learning are.

I use work-based learning activities, related to working with wood and all the machines of a carpenter's workshop, for different reasons:

- making (young) people aware of different professional fields;
- supporting them in identifying their strengths and weaknesses in practical work;
- assessing their knowledge, skills and competences when dealing with a given task;
- assessing their dexterity and helping them to find a suitable profession;
- assessing their preciseness, their patience, their attitude towards work, their persistence;
- motivating them to work with their hands;
- motivating them to conduct a project from planning to finalization.

2. Please share with us what the main challenges of work-based learning are.

Work-based learning is complex since it includes not only the technical part of the learning, but also interaction with the boss, trainer/instructor, the colleagues and the clients. This is the reason why learners require support from a mentor, especially in the beginning, in order to become familiar with the tasks as well as gain self-confidence to attempt more challenging activities.

3. Please describe any solutions to challenges and/or weaknesses related to work-based learning.

This means that there should be an adequate ratio between learners and mentors in work-based learning so that mentors can oversee all the work and the activities of their trainees. Such kind of ratio is given in the German regulations for the professional trainers/instructors in the dual system. In case he/she solely works in the field of mentoring of trainees in work-based learning, a mentor should not work with more than 16 trainees, if they work with dangerous tasks, such as our carpentry machines, it should be even less. If the mentor will have additional tasks other than mentoring, the number of learners will also be lower.

4. Please share what the most important knowledge, skills and competences for the work-based learning professional are according to you. What kind of trainings are necessary to acquire them?

When working with young people, with migrants and low-educated trainees, I feel that it is important that there is a good relationship between trainer/mentor and trainee which is characterized by confidence, mutual esteem and respect. A work-based learning professional is not training them only for certain tasks but sometimes for their lives (e.g. when they find out that this the professional field is the one they want to go for).

Work-based learning professionals have to develop knowledge, skills and competences that are far beyond those of a person instructing (young) people how to perform a single task. The training for becoming an apprentice master (e.g. for carpentry) in Germany comprises of learning units on how to train, motivate and guide young people in the dual system."

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