

WBL-PRO Professional Peer Network: The team talks with the professionals – Tania Soares from Portugal

It is our pleasure to present to you **Tania Soares** from Escola Profissional Gustave Eiffel, Portugal



Please review what she has shared with us below:

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

Trainees acquire new skills about working methods, such as organizing tasks during a working day, and also acquire new tools to help them within their training area. It is when they can put into practice what they learn during class training and when they have to adapt themselves to the working context where they are placed. They become more responsible and develop their sense of professionalism.

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

I believe that one of the main challenges is related to the lack of responsibility of the trainees and the image they pass to companies. Over the last years, it has become increasingly clear that when trainees begin their training course they miss sense of responsibility and do not think much about the consequences of their attitudes. During the training, this thinking and behavior is worked out, but we do not know how they will adapt when going through the WBL experience. It is also unknown how the trainees will be received, how the tutors will teach them and if companies will always have a person available to guide them. Complying with company rules, such as schedules, is not easy for some trainees either. Another challenge is to find entities that accept trainees.

Although we have a database of companies, sometimes they are not enough or when we have new courses we have to find new entities that fit the training areas.

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

I think it would be important that trainees could have more moments of WBL. Even during training, they should take the role of professionals and carry out simulations. It is necessary to instill a sense of responsibility at an early stage and to make them accountable for their actions, so that they perceive its consequences, such as when they arrive late or show lack of interest or willingness to work. This is related to lack of motivation, which is also a very important aspect to work on. In addition, it is essential to provide differentiated learning, focusing on the characteristics of each trainee, as well as to increase the exchange of experiences with professionals in their training areas, because that is what motivates them. On the other hand, these early professional contacts can help us, as a vocational school, to strengthen the connection to the surrounding business environment.

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?

First of all, WBL professionals must have very good interpersonal skills. In addition, they must have a good knowledge of the technical area of the course, whether they are trainers in the vocational school or tutors in the companies. Tutors must be able to pass on knowledge appropriately. You also have to be very patient and have a great ability to solve problems.

5. Please share information about work-based learning projects you are involved in - the name, the funding program, the main aims, the target groups, the intellectual outputs, link to website, facebook group, etc.

I have been working in this vocational school for 11 years. I started in the area of adult education and training and I worked in the resource centre and with different types of courses for young people. I am now involved in education and training courses for young people (CEF), which have started with the objective of helping students to finish compulsory education [back when they were created it corresponded to the 9th grade] in flexible and well-adjusted courses that allow them a qualified entry into the world of work or to pursue their studies. They are aimed at young people who are at least 15 years old and less than 18. The training course duration depends on the educational qualifications that students initially present. In the case of the courses that I am coordinating, the students who already had the 7th year of schooling complete a two-year course and those who had the 8th year of schooling take a one-year course. I coordinate two courses of bakery/pastry, one of IT operative and another of technical photographer. At the end of the training, they must take an individual final assessment

test before an external jury, where they carry out one or more practical works, based on the expected professional profile, that demonstrates the knowledge, skills and competences acquired. These courses are a joint responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Economy and Employment.

You can get to know our school better at <https://gustaveeiffel.pt>

Please feel most welcome to like our facebook page and join the linkedin group to get acquainted with many best practices and other useful materials, tools and resources supporting the high quality performance of work-based professionals around Europe and beyond its borders!

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