

## **WBL-PRO Professional Peer Network: The team talks with the professionals – Daniela Speranta Robota from Iasi, Romania**

We are very happy to present to you today **Daniela Speranta Robota**. Daniela is psychological counsellor of the VET Technical High-School of Mechatronics and Automation in Iasi, Romania and has a wide experience in education for more than 15 years. She is involved for over 8 years in European and SEE projects and gained expertise in subjects such as: developing learning/teaching material, promoting and implementing non-formal educational methods, social psychology and social pedagogy. She is a trainer for both, teens and adults and she has implemented programs and trainings such as: school for parents, training for teachers, training for adults with low skills, preventing drop outs, career coaching, etc.



**Please find below what she has shared with the WBL-PRO team:**

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

In my opinion, the main advantage of the work-based learning programs is that offers a real and strong solution for the skills gaps that are increasingly appearing in vocational and technical education in the last five-ten years. Students in VET need the real experience in work-place in order to learn the new technologies from the beginning and increase their chances of employability after graduating from school. There are many other advantages for both sides, the future employees but also employers: the students will learn in a practical, applied way, their motivation for work will be strengthen and will be solid, while employers will sort out problems related with recruitments and retention, staff development and increasing productivity and performance.

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

There are many challenges for creating sustaining and solid programs for work-based learning: funding, staff, organisational aspects and finding the appropriate target groups for participating into the programs.

The present reality for work-based learning programs is that there are far too few available for those who would benefit the most: low-income young people and adults without the connections and formal support services to help them find the internship that will give them a leg up in the labour market.

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

I would suggest integrated big-scale solutions such as: supporting legislative contexts are needed at macro-level, then solid and mid-long terms programs created. Then using the newest technologies in order to maximize the access and the opportunity for those who would benefit the most (such as mentoring programs, dedicated platforms, involvement of private training entities and NGOs).

**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?**

In my opinion, transversal skills are more important than theoretical knowledge. So the most important knowledge, skills and abilities of professional should be related with their capacity of linking the theoretical background with practical approaches in which learner should be considered with his specific needs and particularities. Communication skills and cognitive general skills (including the pedagogical ones, solving problems, team-working, coaching and mentoring skills) are, maybe, more important than technical skills.

**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.**

There are several Structural Fundings running at the present in Romania which encourage and sustain the development of work-based learning programs. My school is involved in 3 such projects:

- Electronic Internships - Elemente Locale de Educație și Competențe Tehnice Readaptate la Ocupațiile și Nevoile din Industriile Competitive" - EMPLOY ELECTRONICS (implemented by the County School Inspectorate)
- Multiplicarea metodelor de Educație și a Competențelor prin Adaptarea la Nevoile Industriilor Competitive - EMPLOY MECANICS ((implemented by the County School Inspectorate)
- Project for Secondary Education - ROSE, „PROgram for school performance (PRO-ȘCOALA)”, where an entire activity is dedicated for developing and implementation of internship programs for students.

Also, the Erasmus+ Program offers us the opportunity to implement 2 projects where the work-based learning is analysed from different perspectives in order to strengthen the link between the school and the companies/employers:

- Robotics Automation Careers in Engineering for the 21 Century (RACE21) 2016-1-UK01-KA202-024423 (Erasmus+ VET Partnership): The project aims at developing and supporting vocational and technical education by creating robotics clubs in each participating school in which students develop their technical skills at the highest level. The project also supports partnerships between technical schools and companies / businesses in which these students could pursue a technical career. Thus, students and teachers conduct case studies on local businesses and the robotic solutions they implement. Within the project, case studies from companies are discussed, workshops on robotics and automation are organised, local business are visited and students work in cooperation with companies in order to implement new ideas and improve the existing technologies. More information about this project can be found on the project website: <http://race21.epa.edu.pt> and facebook page: [RACE21 Project](#).
- Flip your classes through multimedia enriched apprenticeship simulations and develop e-skills for VET teachers and students to enhance youth employability (Erasmus+ VET Partnership) 2017-1-RO01-KA202-037344, coordinated at European level by LTMA Romania, aims at implementing the flipped classes methodology in teaching VET subjects, including STEM classes. Also, students and teachers will involve companies and employers in order to create various complex educational materials for promoting work-based learning, in order to increase employability and motivation for working in technical industries. More information about this project can be found on the project website: <http://e-classes.eu/> and facebook page: [E-CLASSES Project](#)."

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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