

## WBL-PRO Professional Peer Network: The team talks with the professionals – Neli Kalova, Dalgopol, Bulgaria

It is our pleasure to present to you **Neli Kalova** – a pedagogical advisor at St. Kliment Ohridski Secondary School in Dalgopol, Varna region, Bulgaria.



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

“I have graduated Pedagogy and Psychology at St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University. At school I work with pupils from preparatory group to the 12th grade. I started working as a pedagogical advisor back in 1994... and still do the same. In my work I have challenges every day – pupils trying to get to know themselves succeed to provide me all the time with surprises unexpected and not planned and thus the greatest challenge for me is that I never succeed to have the right plan for the day. The challenges include children’s emotional problems and crises solving, aggression prevention or learning the lessons from a crisis situation and most importantly to provoke children to think and plan their future. Many of the children at school are with Roma background. Working with these children and their families is also a challenge because of the different perception in the Roma family of education and training as values. When I started working in the 90s Roma families were trying to get their daughters married at 6th – 7th grade and the boys attended school at maximum till the 8th grade. My colleagues and I are happy that since 10 years ago there is a change in the attitude towards education in many Roma families. Many children with Roma background successfully graduate secondary school and continue their education in universities.

I personally love travelling around Bulgaria, Europe and the world and making pictures of the unique nature beauty as well as the unique achievements of humankind since ancient time till today.

My other hobby is gardening and I grow many flowers. In spring I have more than 3 000 tulips. In my home garden I try to grow exotic trees, Magnolia, Bougainvillea, Indian Syringa, many Roses, Horetnsia and Chrysanthemums."

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

According to me work-based learning advantages are time saving and possibility to be flexible in learning time planning - it can be even after the working day or during days off.

Work-based learning provides me with possibilities to use internet resources related to my profession as a pedagogical advisor - I can immediately implement shared idea, best practice, test, interactive game, etc. The prompt implemenation of new knowledge among colleagues, partners and pupils - thus the new knowledge brings practical benefits right away.

Another advantage is the possibility to study more than one topic and in different fields I am interested in.

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

The challenge is to organize your own time - when you are not in a regime or training schedule and make your own training program. Sometimes there is no one to monitor or advise you so that you can understand what you have achieved. You can also have difficulties to validate the knowledge acquired through non-formal learning.

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

The solution is the establishment of a network, group, virtual school where people with similar interests can exchange expereince and ideas. It will be good if there are specialized courses that can be completed with a test or thesis and lead to certification.

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

According to me the most important things are to want it and be motivated to learn, to learn how to learn, to be convinced that lifelong learning is equal to high quality professionalism and competence.

The needed skills are flexibility, organizational skills, self-discipline, commitment to own development. Competences require to know what training you need at the moment, to be able to recognise your strengths and weaknesses -to know yourself, to be able to leave behind something that is no longer valuable for you and to discover the trainings that will help you be a good specialist in the next 10 years or in other words to predict the future changes."

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!

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

