



The Story of Florist Trainees

Topics: Individual approach, adapting learning plan, "learning to learn" competence

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Part 1.

Heidi (Estonia) and Sofia (Sweden) are learning to become florists. Their apprenticeship was in a regional town in Latvia at the Florist's workshop.

About the workplace tutor.

The florist Agrita owns this workshop and works mostly for corporate customers: they prepare flower arrangements and decorations for municipalities, education institutions, big events, etc. She also makes home interior objects using plants and nature materials. Agrita is the master of crafts in Latvian Chamber of crafts. She organizes trainings for would-be florist masters. She follows the newest trends in floristics and tries to use them in her work. She has her own big garden where she grows flowers and other plants for her workshop. On daily basis, she works together with one more employee.

What happened in WBL

After the 2nd day of WBL the school tutor received an e-mail from Heidi and Sofia. They were complaining that learning in the florist's shop is not possible, because Agrita's English is poor. The other florist does not speak English at all.

They feel isolated in the small town because people do not speak English here, it is not possible to communicate in shops and cafes.

What VET Tutor learns from WorkplaceTutor

School tutor immediately telephoned Agrita. Agrita did not suspect any problems. She was satisfied with trainees. The girls are involved in making flower arrangements, they are working hard, they do a good job. They even have their own ideas and suggestions for better solutions.

Yes, it is not easy to talk, her English is not very good, but Agrita tries to demonstrate everything, uses body language and Google translate.

The girls are offered additional possibilities: to visit florist's garden, to visit other florists' shops in Riga, to attend the trainings organized by Agrita for Chamber of crafts, flexible working hours on some days, etc.

Part 1. Questions for Discussion

1. What is the problem of trainees? One problem, several?
2. Is there something that has not been done before WBL?
3. What should be the response or reaction of VET tutor?

Part 2. School Tutor's E-mail Response

Dear Heidi and Sofia,

Thank you for informing me about your learning problems. I would like to help you. So, I plan to visit after a few days. Meanwhile, here are some tasks for you.

Please provide information about the learning approaches which you were able to use:

1. Learning through Observation:

- List and describe the routines, processes and techniques regarding the work with plants/flowers (your professional area);
- Compare these routines with your current knowledge;
- List and describe the routines, processes and techniques of the business of management used by the company:
(For instance, relations between the staff and management, logistics, marketing);
- Visual material which you have prepared about the work and the company

2. Learning by doing; Participation, Involvement

- Please list tasks which you performed at the company;
- In which cases did you offer help? Were you offered help?
- What skills did you use?
- Did you improve any skills?

3. Learning through communication with the manager and the staff

- I have tried to ask the following questions to the company manager/ staff, but did not receive an answer:
 - 1)
 - 2)
- After observing the work of the company for several days, I would like to ask the following questions to the company manager (business owner) – at least 3 questions:
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)

4. Cultural knowledge and experience:

- What did you learn about the town?
- What are the cultural differences and similarities?
- What visual material did you prepare?

Part 2. Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you think of the tasks above? What competences are they aimed at?
2. What do you think was the situation when VET tutor visited the company in a few days?

Part 3. Conclusion.

When VET tutor came to visit the girls were busily working. The school tutor had a small meeting with the girls first, then with the master florist (workplace tutor).

The meeting with the girls was very positive. They did not have any complaints. They said: we understood that we can learn.

After the WBL all trainees had a meeting in Riga where they presented their WBL results. Florist girls Heidi and Sofia had one of the best presentations. They had brought with the some "products" which they had made: Sofia brought a hat of maple leaves, Heidi – a wedding bouquet made of separate rose petals. They were proud of what they had learned. Their FB pages were full of photos showing unusual decorations which they had made.

During their time in WBL they had invited their parents to visit them in the small town.

Part 3. Question for Discussion:

1. What lessons can you as VET and workplace tutors learn from this situation?