



**MENTOR Guidelines.  
How to implement mentoring model in the  
school - tips for the schools**

**School year 2016/2017**

**MENTOR - Mentoring between teachers in secondary and high  
schools**

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## **Introduction**

The MENTOR Guidelines: “How to implement mentor model in the school - tips for the schools” is the product of the “MENTOR - Mentoring between teachers in secondary and high schools” Project, implemented within the framework of Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership for School Education Program and co-financed by the European Union. The general aim of the project is to encourage and support implementation of mentoring between teachers, and thus to contribute to teachers’ professional progress. The project is implemented by the consortium of six entities from different European countries: Poland, Greece, Spain, Romania, Portugal and Turkey, all involved in education sector and with a special focus on teachers’ skills development.

After the teachers’ needs analysis and desk research about mentoring, joining partners experience, we elaborated the Handbook “The method (model) of mentoring between teachers in secondary and high schools” and the Training Kit “Manual: Training for Teachers Mentors”. Both were tested with the pilot trainings. The mentoring model was also tested in 34 schools by 40 mentor teachers and 50 mentee teachers across the partner countries in the school year 2016/2017. The Guidelines document is the result of the tutors’ reports evaluating the testing phase’s progress after the whole year, taking primarily into account the participating teachers’ assessment of the mentoring experience.

The Tips for schools present practical hints for the school management and teachers – beginning and experienced – to organize successful mentoring cooperation. This document is supplementary to the Handbook and the Training Kit. We decided to divide the Guidelines into the countries’ parts, taking into account experiences that are to some extent different. Yet we believe that the cross-borders practices could be useful for anybody, as it appears that each mentoring relationship is unique and can derive from various examples. The Guidelines include also several testimonies of the teachers who have participated in the testing of mentoring model.

The products of the MENTOR project are available on the project website: <http://edu-mentoring.eu>. We hope the Reader will find them useful for developing fruitful mentoring relationships.



## **TIPS for the school management and schools' headmasters**

The first group of tips is dedicated for the management bodies of the schools. We decided to collect them under two topics:

- 1) How to organize the mentoring in the school.
- 2) How to evaluate the mentoring in the school.

On the next pages the tips are divided according to what was found the most relevant in the partner countries.



## **POLAND**

### **How to organize the mentoring in the school?**

- Treat mentoring as an activity complementary to the required teachers induction (with reference to the specific country situation), and not as a competitive activity or a double job. The official induction processes can be enriched with mentoring and the gaps can be filled. Mentoring can lead to better understanding of teacher's profession, school's specificity, to get to know other teachers and work environment.
- Mentoring is a great opportunity to inclusion into the school life of a teacher who has completed the compulsory induction, but still does not feel comfortable with teaching in your school. Think especially of teachers of vocational subjects, teachers who migrated from other schools, who worked in different school type or in different environment/social context.
- If you know that you are going to hire new teachers next school year, start searching and preparing mentors for them one semester before.
- On the common meetings, inform your teachers about your plans to implement mentoring between teachers. Encourage the teachers to read the Handbook for Mentors. Show them the benefits of mentoring for mentees, school and mentors. Invite them to become mentors.
- If nobody signs up on their own, think of a person from the teaching staff who would fit for the role of mentor, taking into consideration their personal qualities. Propose them to take up this role. Speak to them and try to convince them, remembering that their function would be taken up as volunteering.
- People from the school's management body could be mentors, however it is important to switch from the relation superior-subordinate into the partnership relation, which is not always easy.
- Propose the mentoring to every teacher that starts working in your school, but give them time to think about it and come back to you with their decision. Tell them, who from their colleagues could be their mentor. This may encourage them.
- It would be the best to start mentoring cooperation in the first weeks of the mentee's work, because most of the problems appear just after the start.

**TIPS for the school management and schools' headmasters**



- Try to establish the lessons timetable that way, so that the mentor and the mentee could finish their work at the same time at least once a week, so that they could meet after classes.

### **How to evaluate the mentoring in the school?**

- Consider what additional support you could give to the mentor.
- Matching of the mentor-mentee pairs should always be preceded with a careful analysis of the needs and expectations of the mentee and a reflection who from the candidates for being a mentor would fit them. Take into account, that a beginner teacher would have different needs than someone who already worked as a teacher.
- Supervise the implementation of the mentoring between teachers, but do not require from them reporting of the conducted activities. Contribute to the atmosphere of support, not the control.
- Do not get involved into relationship between the mentor and the mentee, unless they ask you for it.
- Remember that effects of mentoring could be sometimes observed no sooner than after a long time, e.g. in the next years.
- Headmasters of schools where mentoring was tested during the MENTOR project, report that: teachers integrated and collaborated together, new teachers became well oriented in the school environment, mentor teachers strengthened their skills, beginning teachers became more self-confident in their work, the motivation of the teachers strengthened and new ideas and activities were taken up within just one year of mentoring cooperation. Be prepared for such results!
- Do not urge the teachers to continue the cooperation longer than one year, if they think they do not need it. Let the mentors have a break and the mentees work independently. It is natural.



## **GREECE**

As far as the mentoring concerns, it is very important for schools that are involved, to support mentoring in many ways. School principals should encourage new teachers to accept cooperation with mentors and to match the mentor with a suitable teacher.

School headmaster has to:

1. Make clear that teachers involved in mentoring should not be involved with other extracurricular activities (at least without their willing).
2. Consider an idea to organize a "Mentoring Office". This office could be staffed by an experienced mentor and by the school headmaster and will be available during the school year (from the beginning to the end). Benefits:
  - a. School would be more focused on mentoring
  - b. It would provide an easy and well organized manner the whole process of mentoring application.
  - c. New teachers would be aware about school's mentoring service.
  - d. The Office would manipulate all mentoring materials (documents, posters, etc.).
3. Moreover, school headmaster, should always keep his/her eyes open to catch any not well formed cooperation between teachers and in such a case to suggest teachers to be a mentee.

Regarding evaluation, it would be very important, at the end of the school year, that school principal organizes an official event with participation of mentor-mentee couples that would have the chance to talk about their mentoring experience over the year. They could speak to their colleagues about problems that they had to face when they had come at school, talking about the way they cooperated with mentors and in which way they as a couple managed to overcome problems. It would promote mentoring and mutual help of the teachers and strengthen the ties between them.



## **SPAIN**

### **How to organize the mentoring in the school?**

- Neither the mentor nor the mentee should feel forced to participate in the program. Mentoring is voluntary and it is important to involve only motivated teachers.
- Present the mentoring proposal to your teachers in a clear and honest way. Explain to them objectives, expected benefits, effort required and eventual facilities (reduction of teaching hours, economics incentives, etc.).
- If you really believe that mentoring can improve the quality of teaching and learning in you school, invest in it. Offer your teachers facilities to participate in this kind of programs. For example you could free them from some teaching hours in order to leave them time for mentoring.
- To be a good mentor needs some training. Offer and promote training opportunities for your mentors. These can also be an incentive for them to participate.

### **How to evaluate the mentoring in the school?**

- Monitor the process, the contents, the relationship and the results. Some areas that could be evaluated are: training of mentors, commitment of mentors and mentees, respect of the schedule, satisfaction of mentor and mentees, benefits in the team climate and in students' results, parents' feedback, etc.
- Schedule the monitoring process. Evaluation sessions with mentors and mentees are motivating and make them feel part of a process for the quality improvement of the school. Moreover they allow detecting and solving problems and difficulties that, if neglected, can affect the whole program.
- Do not use mentoring to evaluate or control your teachers. This could affect the trusting and spontaneous relationship between mentor and mentees. Mentoring support teachers that have been just evaluated and selected.





## **ROMANIA**

- Introduce at the beginning of the school year the buildings and the endowments of the educational spaces, for an easier familiarization with them: the school building(s), the library, the housing and eating areas, the documentation centre (where it exists), the laboratories and workshops etc.
- At the beginning of the school year introduce the strategic and cultural elements of the school organization that you are leading (mission, vision, symbols, norms, values) to the entire teaching collective.
- Introduce to the newcomers the accepted behaviour models, the procedures relating to conduct, records, registers.
- Introduce the new teachers to the teaching personnel and give them the opportunity to present themselves, with their preoccupations, aspirations, personal development objectives etc.
- Develop within the school a “culture of mentoring”, emphasizing the benefits of this activity and encouraging the teachers to take part.
- Develop a project for the development of mentoring in your school, with objectives, deadlines and precise targets and communicate this project to all teaching personnel.
- Name a person responsible for the mentoring programme, who will have a database concerning the unfolding of mentoring programmes, the methodology of naming mentors and the results of mentoring programmes, testimonials etc.
- Rewards teachers who get involved in the mentoring activity.
- Encourage more experienced teachers to become mentors for new teachers.
- Encourage new teachers to accept mentoring and talk to them about the advantages of this activity.
- Encourage teachers to get training to become mentors and explain the benefits of the mentoring programme for them, for the new teachers, for the school and for all those involved - students, parents, community.
- Offer the mentors and the mentees the opportunity to speak openly about the problems they envision and support them in finding solutions to the problems they report.
- Provide within the school an area for mentoring problems and encourage the participants in the mentoring programme to profit as much as possible from this area.
- Endow this area with materials about mentoring, with examples from the teaching design activity (lesson plans, learning unit projects, evaluation files, lesson



observation files, psycho-pedagogical characterization files etc.). Turn this area into a mentoring “workplace”, both in the presence and in the absence of the mentor.

- Introduce among the topics of the meetings of the methodical commissions at least one topic concerning mentoring, its actual means for being carried out, its strong points and the opportunities it can benefit from.
- Encourage the mentor and the mentee to formulate a schedule of their meetings, with topics of high importance and of high urgency.
- Ask the mentors and the mentees to evaluate the results of their work and to bring corrective actions, on their own initiative.
- Suggest to the mentors and mentees to generate a projection of the topics of meetings unfolded within the mentoring process.
- Encourage other teachers to support the mentoring activity to assure diversity of the new teachers’ training.
- Encourage mentors to support the unfolding of teaching activities using modern educational technologies.
- Schedule ‘open lessons’ at the mentor teachers and at those acknowledged as having good teaching and human competences.
- Do not get involved directly in the mentoring relationship, but make them feel confident in a possible help that you might be able to grant.
- Schedule some time so ~~that you~~ to meet once or twice per month with the mentor and the mentee in order to receive directly information about the process’ unfolding. Ask continuously for feedback, without intervening in finding solutions.
- Present the positive results during work meetings with the whole personnel, but also outside the school, during the representation activities that you carry out.
- If one of the problems raised by mentors is related to the lack of time for unfolding the activity, implicate retired teachers – former teachers within the school – in this activity.
- Schedule periodical meetings of the new teachers with the school’s parents committee to know each other and to determine the expectations of each side.
- Ask the mentors and mentees to write at the end of the school year a report on the unfolded activity and to present it as a team, in front of their colleagues.
- Track the respecting of the ethical behaviour code by the mentor and mentee to protect the democratic and human values.
- Promote the obtained results and the benefits of this activity at community level.
- Spread word of the good practices in your school throughout the local and national educational environment.

**TIPS for the school management and schools’ headmasters**



## **PORTUGAL**

### **How to organize the mentoring in the school?**

Concerning the actual schools' mobility among teachers in Portugal, it is important that schools have programs designed to help new teachers in their integration. This contributes to a better environment between teachers and accelerates new teachers' adaptation to their new context, contributing to their professional achievements and, subsequently, improving students' outcomes.

At the end of the school year it may be useful to define clear rules for implementation, as well as give training to teachers-mentors. This training can include some relevant topics for mentoring, such as: empathy in mentoring relationship, the importance of school's activities, how to receive and give feedback.

This way, in the beginning of the next school year, everything can be ready to receive the new teachers.

The program should be presented to new teachers in their first month, for example, in a welcome session where they are introduced to the program's objectives and when they can meet their mentor for the first time.

It's important that school management is open to support the program and to help in problem-solving along time. Teachers may need help to find a room to meet or support to organizing small events. In general, these appear to be their main needs.

It may be useful to name a tutor, which is a person who facilitates the communication between mentors, mentees and the school management.

In order to ensure that nobody feels overloaded with mentoring responsibilities, it is important to find a period in work schedule for these activities (for example, some hours of the non-teaching period can be used to that). If we cannot do that, it may happen that teachers have to meet in their free time, which may damage their motivation to the program.

If it is needed, you can decide it is possible for a mentor to have more than one mentee. This allows new interesting dynamics; for example, it is possible to have group meetings as well as individual meetings. The individual ones seem to be mainly important when there is a problem or a more complex situation that needs some privacy to be exposed. In the Testing Phase, one school decided to do that way. We believe that having more than one mentee didn't affect the program in a negative way. Moreover, we think they were able to create a

### **TIPS for the school management and schools' headmasters**



great environment between the group and mentees established a good relationship between each other.

One mentor reported she felt she did not have enough time as she wanted to do all the activities. However, some mentors with only one mente (from other schools) said that too. Maybe the feeling of lack of time is more related with other responsibilities than with the number of mentees per person. In this specific case, it seems that the school management support was really important. They were strongly involved in the program's dissemination. They had meetings with teachers aiming to present the program's guidelines and objectives. This way, school management showed teachers they believed in mentoring program and in its importance.

### **How to evaluate the mentoring in the school?**

It is important that someone supports both mentors and mentees. As we said before, if you have a "tutor", it may be easier to follow the process, acting as moderator or mediator if some difficulties show up.

Besides this evaluation along the program, it is important to have a final evaluation, in order to understand the main accomplishments and also the main difficulties participants felt.

Some dimensions interesting to evaluate may be: mentees' perception of integration in school context, sense of belonging, perception of pairs' cooperation and professional satisfaction of both mentors and mentees.

It is possible to evaluate these points through questionnaires' implementation. The questionnaires should be anonymous, in order to catch participants' real feelings, less influenced by social desirability factors.

Also, it may be interesting to have a final meeting, where everyone can openly share their perspectives about the experience. This can help the school management to identify the main difficulties teachers in that specific context have to face and these topics should be highlighted in the training for next mentors.



## **TIPS for the mentors**

The second group of tips is dedicated for the experienced teachers who are going to be or are already performing the role of mentor to their colleagues. We focused especially on two topics:

- 1) How to prepare for performing the role of mentor?
- 2) How to be an effective mentor?

On the next pages the tips are divided according to what was found the most relevant in the partner countries.



## **POLAND**

### **How to prepare for performing the role of mentor?**

- It is very important to get to know the needs of the mentee and his/her expectations towards you as a mentor.
- Think of what specific elements of the teachers' job may the new teacher have to face. Propose to take them into consideration in your mentor-mentee conversations. Remember, that your mentee is just entering a new working environment, so s/he may not be aware of some of its elements.
- Propose to the mentee signing an agreement, but do not push, if s/he does not feel it is necessary or is afraid of a too formal relationship. Remember that decision about signing the agreement and of its contents must be taken by both of you.
- Agree with the mentee on the means of contact and terms of the meetings, taking into account that your contacts will mostly take form of a direct conversation, during which you will discuss the current problems in the daily work of the mentee. You will need sufficient time and concentration.
- Accept the fact that in the mentoring relationship crises can happen. The most important is to overcome your fears and discuss them with the mentee.

### **How to be an effective mentor?**

- Remember that the most important in mentoring relationship are mutual trust and acceptance, and the mentor and the mentee are equal.
- Remember not to leave any of the questions and problems without answer. If you cannot solve something at once, tell it frankly to the mentee and come back to the topic on the next meeting. Feedback is the key in the mentoring.
- Be flexible. Accept the fact, that mentee's expectations reported in the beginning might change with time.

### **TIPS for the mentors**



- Show to the mentee different ways of solving a certain problem. Do not suggest one and only solution.
- If you work with more than one mentee, do not meet with more than one at the same time. Remember that they may have different problems and require different help. You can encourage them to make a group for supporting each other and meet without you.
- Treat mentoring as an opportunity for your professional and personal development. On the one hand, try to use your experience, and on the other hand try to be open to look at the same case differently, maybe even to question your attitude and to make refreshing changes. You will always have the occasion to get to know newest methods and materials available for education, knowledge of which could be shared with you by the mentee.
- Have fun thanks to mentoring! Enjoy the fact that you can contribute to the growth of your colleague, help him/her and work in common for something new and interesting. Feel appreciated and take note how rich in experience you are. Enjoy also your interpersonal relationship with the mentee, the opportunity to get to know a new person and find new interests thanks to him/her.
- Thanks to the mentoring relationship you also have a chance to learn about your strengths and weaknesses, reflect on them and introduce changes. It can enrich your other interpersonal relationships, too.



## **GREECE**

Actually, preparation for someone to be a good mentor is a “long distance” preparation. It is something that has to do with mentor’s personality and his/her ability to solve problems, to protect mentee, to advice mentee, to make another colleague (mentee) feel more confident and secure at his/her new working environment. Having all the above in mind, a good mentor at school should be a good mentor at life. Should be capable of organizing his/her job in a good manner, used to cooperate (meet, teach, work together) with mentee in a regular basis, to keep tracks of any activity and for mentor dissemination to get some statistics on mentor program progress.





## **SPAIN**

### **How to prepare for performing the role of mentor?**

- To have experience and a large career is not enough to be mentor. Mentor training is essential to be a good mentor. The training should concern: mentoring definition and methodology, communication skills, creativity, school culture, etc.
- There are many aspects of the teaching practice that became routine after many years. You never think about them until a mentee questions you about them and you guess you really do not know why you act that way... Mentoring is a mutual learning process in which both protagonists learn, teach and stimulate new learning.
- Share your experience with other mentors, participating in Forum or in sessions for mentors. It can help you to solve doubt and uncertainties, find ideas, revise your mentoring style, etc.

### **How to be an effective mentor?**

- Make a plan with the mentee: define objectives, select topics, schedule sessions and try to respect the plan as much as possible.
- Choose the mentoring activities with the mentee, taking care to respect his/her needs and spaces. If you perceive s/he can feel uncomfortable in some activities (such as your assistance in one of his/her lessons), do not propose them or discuss it very honestly with him/her.
- Use an assertive communication: never disqualify or judge. Respect your mentee's personality, professionalism and style of teaching.
- Be curious and interested in your mentee as a peer and as colleague that want to learn from you and from whom you can learn. Try to understand his/her point of view and generate ideas and knowledge together with him/her.
- Do not think you must have an answer for everything. You are a resource, a facilitator, a generator of ideas, a stimulator of creative processes; you have your experience and your knowledge... but you do not have to know everything and your role is not to tell another person what to do or how to do it.

### **TIPS for the mentors**



- Use open questions in order to allow the mentee to express his/her needs, opinions, values. Let him/her time to explore concepts and ideas and to analyse the situations before offering your contribution and opinion.
- Avoid advises and help the mentee to come to his/her own conclusions. By doing so, you help him/her to learn to think through issues him/herself and trust his/her own judgement, increasing his/her self-confidence.
- Do not focus only on problems but help the mentee to see what s/he does well; his/her strengths can be used to compensate or transform a weakness.
- Be generous: share resources, networks (books, articles, websites, associations, etc.) and tools that have been useful for you and that can help the mentee to construct his/her own toolkit.
- Close the meetings: when you come to the end of a meeting review the agenda with the mentee, resume your progresses and plan the next meeting sharing ideas about what you might discuss.



## ROMANIA

- Ask the school management (headmaster and school board) to agree to the unfolding of the mentoring activity in your school.
- Get the support of the headmaster and of the school board for the mentoring activity.
- Discuss with the school management about the main elements that they would like to be transmitted to the mentee.
- Create a competence profile that you can present to the mentee, comprising both professional and human elements, emphasizing the strong points and the competence areas of interest for the mentee.
- Set up, together with the mentee, for the mentoring activity, a set of rules that would prevent the dysfunctions that could occur.
- Determine, together with the mentee, his/her professional needs and, based on them, determine together the objectives and the general activity strategy.
- Help the mentee to set realistic expectations.
- Make sure that you do not start the mentoring activity with prejudices regarding the relationship or the mentee's profile.
- Approach the mentoring relationship in an open and honest manner.
- Support the new teacher in identifying his/her learning needs, in setting own goals and methods by which he/she could evaluate the achievement of these goals.
- You can suggest to the mentee to sign a partnership agreement, if you consider that in this way the mentoring relationship could be at a gain.
- Organise the meetings with the mentee within a timeframe set by mutual agreement.
- The meetings with the mentee can unfold within the school, but in an area that would be protected from intrusions by other colleagues, or outside the school, in an informal setting, chosen by mutual agreement between the two actors of the mentoring relationship.
- Allow and grant the mentee access to teaching and educational activities that both you and other colleagues unfold.

### TIPS for the mentors



- Present in the first mentoring meetings information on the school, on its ethos, culture and climate.
- Invite the mentee to take part in extracurricular activities that you organize with the students.
- Invite the mentee to take part in activities that you unfold with the students' parents and with the local community.
- Suggest to the mentee to take part, alongside you, in unfolding teaching activities as a team and afterwards discuss these lessons.
- Ask for the mentee's permission and record the teaching activities unfolded by the mentee, in order to discuss later about what he/she set out to do and what he/she achieved.
- Help the new professor to cope with the educational means, to learn to use them.
- Encourage him/her to create educational means that would be helpful for the teaching of his/her subject.
- Consider you do not need to substitute to the mentee's effort, but you need to support him/her when he/she does not succeed alone.
- Do not offer ready-made solutions, help the mentee to find his/her own solutions.
- Explain to the new professor the importance of the own observations and of their summative written records – psycho-pedagogical files and evaluation files and scales.
- Offer active attention and listening to the new professor, so that he/she feels encouraged to speak, to ask for your advice, to follow you.
- Help the new teacher to create a competence profile, based on which he/she can then design the own professional development direction.
- Do not tell the mentee "Do it this way, because this is how I did it!", let him/her find his/her own way.
- Do not create a dependence of the mentee on you, encourage him/her to make his/her own decisions related to his/her own person.
- Do not replace the mentee's judgement, do not consider yourself – and do not let the mentee consider you – a "walking stick" for the unfolded activity.
- Do not forget that the mentoring relationship does not mean only one-directional support and experience sharing, from you, the mentor to the

**TIPS for the mentors**



mentee, but the finding of joint solutions, that could ensure the mentee's success.

- Do not share the mentee's failures or small non-achievements with other colleagues, not even with the school management, until these things have been changed for the better.
- Offer a communication that can encourage the mentee, do not show superiority and show respect for the mentee. You too were once like him/her, it's an unavoidable beginning stage.
- Create a climate of trust between you and the mentee and allow him/her to see the trust that you invest in him/her.
- Through all your behaviour in the mentoring relationship, be a model for the new teacher.
- Strive to maintain and increase the motivation for a well done job in the mentee's mind, so that he/she wishes to surpass him/herself.
- Generate intermediate reports and the final report on the new teacher's progress and activity for the school management.
- Familiarise the new teacher with the basic documents for quality assurance, with the quality standards and provisions of the laws regarding the quality in the educational domain.
- Offer encouragement signals and show the consolidation of the relation with the mentee, in order to help him/her surpass the own inhibitions.
- If the mentoring relationship does not unfold as you wish or if you consider there are incompatibilities between the personalities of the mentor and of the mentee, stop the relation in mutual agreement, informing also the school management of this situation.
- Respect the professional ethics, do not harass and do not create frustrations;
- Use the mentee's positive experience for similar situations in future, but do not consider it a standard recipe for success.
- Be aware that the mentoring experience will mean for you too a learning experience and reflect on the manner in which the mentoring relationship changed you.
- Talk about the success of the mentoring relationship to the new teacher, in front of your colleagues and the school management, disseminate the positive aspects.

#### **TIPS for the mentors**



## **PORTUGAL**

### **How to prepare for performing the role of mentor?**

It is important to think about your own experience as a teacher in order to understand others feelings when they came to a new context with different rules and different population/ students/ colleagues.

You should analyze your schedule and figure out where you can include these mentoring activities. It is not expected from you that you feel overloaded with the role, so you should clarify expectations with your school management.

### **How to be an effective mentor?**

It is not expected that you know everything or that you can solve all problems. Mentoring focuses more on your own experience than your technical skills.

You should be open to mentees' needs and help them to find the better solution. Empathy, active listening and positive communication are important skills to be a good mentor. These soft skills are even more important than the kind of the activities you chose to do with your mentee.

Your investment during the process can vary. Probably in the beginning it will be more demanding than in the middle or at the end of the process. It is normal that in some period of time your mentee may have more doubts and therefore he/she requests more support from you. On the other hand, it is also possible that sometimes your mentee is more occupied with work or family responsibilities and therefore shows less availability to mentoring activities. Mentoring should respect these movements, because the program should fit the participants (and not the opposite).

Another important thing is to ask for feedback. You can ask your mentee if you are helping him/her according to his/her needs. You can also share your doubts or questions with other teachers-mentors and also with the program's tutor.

### **TIPS for the mentors**



## **TIPS for the mentors**

The last group of tips is dedicated for the beginning or new to the school teachers who are going to be or are already mentees cooperating with their more experienced colleagues. We focused on the hints that can help answering the question:

How to make the most of the cooperation with the mentor?

On the next pages the tips are divided according to what was found the most relevant in the partner countries.

## **TIPS for the mentees**



## **POLAND**

- Do not fear to be a mentee, even if you work as a teacher for a couple of years. Remember that each school has its own specifics, that you will get to know easier and faster with the help of the mentor.
- The mentor is not your teacher or superior. The relationship of mentoring is a partnership. Remember that you are not only a recipient, but a giver, too.
- Make use of the knowledge and experience of the mentor, but remember that s/he is a volunteer. Do not overload him/her with the work.
- Try not to adapt the scheme of looking at the mentor as at a person who plays the smart guy or looks down on you. However, if you have a justified impression that s/he does so, speak with him/her sincerely about it.
- You do not have to make friends with your mentor, but you must have confidence in him/her. Do not be afraid to tell him/her about your problems at work. Only full openness can give you a chance for quick solutions.
- Do not expect that the mentor will give you a ready solution to the problem. His/her role is to show you means and ways that you could follow. Try to involve to the maximum your knowledge, experience and creativity in problem solving, and the mentor should be your companion and advisor.
- Do not fear of making mistakes, unless they are effects of your deliberate neglect. Remember that the mentor is not there to judge you, but s/he is for you. Thanks to him/her you can spot the mistakes that you could hardly pay attention to on your own. Together you can cooperate to learn from the mistakes.
- Do not have the objections to ask questions and ask for help. Try to break your barriers, and you will see that the mentoring relationship will help you with it.
- Try to treat mentoring as a starting point for the further development. When you have learnt something, do not stand still, but increase your curiosity and search new sources of knowledge.
- Realize that in your work problems you are not alone. The fact that you are not coping with something does not mean that you are a loser – many teachers before you had the

### **TIPS for the mentees**





same problems and most of them found the solutions. You have the mentor to help you, so you can feel more confident.

- Note that mentoring could help you in integration with other teachers, headmasters, other school's staff, students and their parents. Use the mentor's connections.
- Be happy with the good results and celebrate bigger successes. Let yourself be proud of yourself, when you improve. Appreciate also your students.



## **GREECE**

It is very important for mentee to meet mentor on a regular basis. Even he/she has nothing important to talk with mentor, it is a good practice to meet anyway, as some interesting cases may appear. In this way, a mentee feels more confident on his/her role and makes him/her to be more comfortable to trust mentor. That helps building a stronger relationship between them.



## SPAIN

- Make a plan with the mentor: define clear objectives, select topics, establish the communication channels, schedule sessions and try to respect the plan as much as possible.
- Be open to learn new things and to see another perspective. Take into consideration mentor's opinion, even (and especially!) if they are different from yours or question you. That is really what mentoring is about: share different points of view, question and analyse situations from different perspectives and find new solutions or strategies.
- Be clear about your needs and your expectations with your mentor, in order to help him/her in his/her role and to build a clear and effective collaboration.
- Remember: mentor will support and help you, but s/he will not solve problems for you. All the decision and the actions rest your free choice and responsibility.
- Discuss with your mentor how do you prefer to receive feedbacks (written, verbal, direct, highly critical, etc.) and how s/he can be most helpful to you. Be active in the relation and ask for what you need with sincerity and transparency.
- Use your mentoring session well. Be prepared, think about and share with the mentor the topic(s) in advance, take note constantly of questions and doubts you want to discuss and, if possible, focus each session on a topic.
- Try to translate each session in a concrete result: a change of attitude, a new action, a new strategy, the implementation of a new resource... a big or small evolution of your professional practice.
- Do not be impatient and do not frustrate... the mentoring relationship is not a magic wand that can solve all your difficulties. You are starting your career (or a new phase of your career) and you are adapting to a new situation. Beginning phases always take time and patience.

### TIPS for the mentees



- Express appreciation and let your mentor know when s/he has helped you. Mutual positive feedbacks feed the relationship.



## ROMANIA

- Enter the mentoring relationship with trust and openness and show your availability openly.
- If you think it gives you more assurance, sign a cooperation document with the mentor and show it and inform the school management.
- Create a full profile of your own person and present it at your first meeting with the mentor. Present clearly your personal and professional needs and communicate them to the mentor.
- Set up together with the mentor a schedule dedicated to the mentoring activity and try to stick to it! Do not miss the meetings with the school management, with the mentor or with the school's personnel.
- Be aware that the mentor does this activity of his free will and that he/she is guided by the best intentions and show respect towards him/her.
- Set your goals and think about how to achieve them. Discuss these goals with the mentor and request feedback on their opportunity and on the possibility to achieve them.
- Create, together with the mentor, an action plan that would touch the points of interest for you. Be mindful of the available time both for you and for the mentor.
- Focus on discussing and using the available time with the mentor for the essential matters, not for small-talk that would be of no consequence for your evolution.
- Show explicitly when you do not understand something and paraphrase, reformulate so that you can be sure that the message is understood correctly.
- Do not say you understood when actually you did not understand.
- Pay attention to both the non-verbal language and to the para-verbal one. Learn to listen actively. Do not talk too much, learn to listen.
- The mentor cannot solve problems instead of you, so honour your obligations.
- Accept criticism and the less favourable comments with care and not with anger. They are meant to improve your activity, not merely to criticise.
- Offer yourself periods of progress evaluation and offer/request feedback.

### TIPS for the mentees



- Ask clarification questions when you are not sure of the manner in which you perceived the information/actions.
- Be willing to learn new things, to see from another perspective and to accept constructive criticism. Better try to learn about them with the mentor's help.
- If you are not familiarised with the usage of educational means, insist for the mentor to facilitate your learning.
- Even if the mentor is there to help you, you are the only one responsible for your positive evolution.
- If you need to reschedule a meeting with the mentor, do it in due time not to disturb the mentor's schedule.
- Express appreciation for the mentor's work. It will be a good reward for him/her.
- Keep the discussions and the analyses made during the meetings confidential.
- Do not abandon the work with the mentor, even if he/she criticises your performance. Consider it as a step forward because you know what needs to be improved.
- If you use email for contacts, answer the messages, if you use the phone answer or call back as soon as possible.
- Invest honesty in the relation with the mentor.
- Even if at first you await the mentor's advice to do something, in time learn to take the initiative and initiate actions on your own.
- Learn to learn from any colleague, watching him/her and evaluating the quality of his/her performance. Learn on the go the routines and procedures within the school.
- "Scan" from time to time your limits and the strong points and discuss them with the mentor.
- Remember that you, and not the mentor, are responsible for your personal development.
- Remember the rule of the 3 R's: be respectful, responsible and ready for action.
- Inform the school headmaster and the school management about the mentoring relationship evolution and about the benefits for your personal development.



- Even if the mentoring relationship has given you courage and trust and you regarded it with pleasure, be aware that it will have to come to an end.
- Do not put the mentor in the situation to solve your own obligations of the current activity and do not request for the mentor to substitute in carrying out the current tasks.
- Nobody asks of you to become a copy of your mentor. Use him/her only as learning resource, not as a model to copy.
- If you consider that what the mentor says does not fit you, you have the possibility to follow your own ideas. The mentor is human too, with his/her own strong points and limitations.



## **PORTUGAL**

The most important thing is that you are open to support and suggestions of your mentor. If you are not open to change, probably the process will not be positive.

Besides that, when we arrive to a new context every information is useful to improve our integration and our outcomes.

The relationship with the mentor should be open, empathic and positive. This way, it is important that you can give and receive feedback.

It is also critical to be honest along the process. If somehow, in some moment, you feel overloaded and you do not have as much time as you would like for mentoring activities, you should let your mentor know that.

Finally, it is also important that you know you are an important part of the process: if you have suggestions or new ideas for activities, you should share them with your mentor and even with your tutor or with school management.



## Testimonies

These testimonies were collected from the mentors and mentees participating in the testing phase of the mentoring model in the school year 2016/2107.

| Mentors   | Mentees  |
|---|--|
| Grażyna, Poland: <i>"The mentoring relationship is time-consuming, but at the same time beneficial for both sides. It helps to build interpersonal relationships, self-development and paying more attention to the problems appearing at school, that new teachers face. It stimulates creativity of both mentor and mentee"</i> . | Marta, Poland: <i>"Mentoring is very important for the people just starting their first job. Thanks to that they can count on support from the mentor's side in making decisions and analyze the performed actions, increase the strengths and decrease the weak points"</i> .   |
| Sylwia, Poland: <i>"I found out that I have expectations towards the new teacher, but I must demand also of myself"</i> .   | Kinga, Poland: <i>"Mentoring is an interesting form of support and learning. It helps to have a look on the difficulties at work from a distance. I am convinced that despite the difficulties I like my job. I realized that my problems are the same as those of my colleagues, and thanks to the cooperation, support and talks we can help ourselves, and commonly solve the problems"</i> . |
| A mentor, Romania: <i>"In this test phase I realize that mentoring is extremely important because it makes you look with new eyes at things already tested and learned and to understand the approach of beginning of a teaching career"</i> .  | A mentee, Romania: <i>"Activities carried out with mentor in this period was very useful for me. Due to the opportunity that I had, I learned many practical and beneficial things for teaching careers. The warmth and love that we have received during this period from the mentor and my colleagues made me to want to continue my path that I have chosen in education"</i> .               |
| A mentor, Romania: <i>"Mentoring activity held during this period encouraged me to keep being available to those who need support to start teaching career. The mentee</i>  | Daniela, Romania: <i>"For me, mentoring has been and will remain a wonderful activity, an activity that has changed my thinking about school activities, about the</i>   |

## Testimonies

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><i>opening, her desire to do everything better and more efficiently foster cooperation and joy to share, determine experiences, knowledge, materials and much love. Through our work with mentee, we noticed visible progress in the quality of the educational activity of the mentee".</i></p>         | <p><i>student's activity, teaches me to take new attitudes, think positively, solve problems that appear, to respect for being respected".</i></p>  |
| <p><i>Dana, Romania: "Mentoring activity is more than a collaborative and cooperative activity, it is a link of the souls formed during an open collaboration, based on respect and understanding, with the aim of training and equipping for the most important job of the society - the teacher".</i></p> | <p><i>Teolinda, Portugal: "The support, orientation and help are the major benefits I can take from the cooperation with my mentor.</i></p> <p><i>I learnt that it's easy for me to integrate in a team. My positive attitude and the good cooperation with my pairs were influenced by my mentor, as she gave me good examples of cooperation, communication and affectivity.</i></p> <p><i>I am really glad working in this project. I feel completely integrated in school and I have been really cherished by my mentor, colleagues and the other school actors."</i></p> |
|   | <p><i>António, Portugal: "This project is very important, basically in two moments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1- When a teacher has a few years of teaching experience, to understand the rules of the schools in general</i></li> <li><i>2- When a teacher is new in the school, to get to know the reality of that specific context."</i></li> </ul>  |

### Testimonies



## Case studies

Partners from Greece and Portugal identified interesting case studies to share as example of good practice:

### Greece:

#### 1. All teachers cooperate

Students at VET schools in Greece considered being “second class” students. That causes students not to be cooperative enough within the classroom making noise talking to each other. A mathematician as a new teacher at 1<sup>st</sup> EPAL Makrakomis was in real trouble. A well experienced mentor offered to help him. She took the initiative to talk about that as a general problem into the teachers committee. Then every teacher agreed to be less tolerant against such behavior and that was really effective. The mentee confessed that since then things got better.

#### 2. More practical lessons

A mentee could not make his lesson more attractive. Students did not like mathematics at all since they believed that this was something useless at their life. He discussed that problem with his mentor. Then, the day after they had come at classroom together. Since the mentor was aware that students’ parents are farmers, she proposed students to learn about a way to measure their lands! That was very effective and everybody was enthusiastic about that. That was a good example of mentor and mentee co-teaching case.

### Portugal:

In this case, mentor is a teacher from elementary school (general teacher) and her two mentees teach English to elementary students. Mentor is helping new teachers in their integration, since they are new at school, showing them new methods through co-teaching. On the other hand, mentees are also helping their mentor to improve her English. Besides co-teaching, they developed some activities to school. In Halloween they did some small bags with candies to students and their parents to let them know the mentoring program among teachers. Due to this cooperation (between the three teachers) they did some other activities in school, such as the science day

(focused on peace and development). They prepared a small exposition with scientific experiences and with drawings made by students. On Christmas, they also did some works related to cooperation themes. The last activity was related with creativity and they used some materials from the MENTOR Training Kit applied to students. You can see the mentor's testimony below. She also wanted to share some photos of the activities she did together with mentees.

*"During this school year, since September 2016, teachers participated in the Implementation Phase of Mentoring. The participants were volunteers and they decided to sign up.*

*In order to facilitate the implementation, the Project Partners represented by ISCTE-IUL gave us a set of materials that made the implementation of the mentoring among teachers easier. During this time, we received the support of a Tutor, Mariana Mendonça, from ISCTE-IUL, Lisboa.*

*With the general agreement, everyone assumed their roles and responsibilities: School, Mentors, Mentees, Partners, School Management and Tutor.*

*We organized meetings every two weeks, of one hour length, between Mentor and Mentees and, every time it was needed, with the School Management. There was face-to-face contact and communication by email, cellphone and, in other cases, during school breaks.*

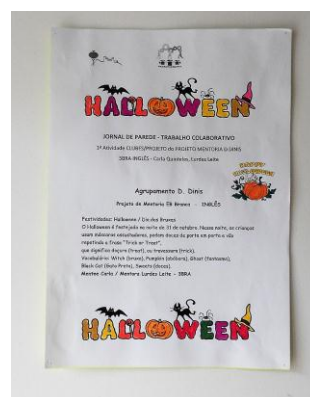
*The School Management made the process easier and monitored the Mentoring relationship. They helped Mentor and Mentees in implementation and they had meetings to help planning activities.*

*All the achievements were the result of a strong perseverance and cooperation between the teachers involved. The contents of meetings between mentors and mentees relate with the planning of activities of cooperation.*

### **1<sup>st</sup> Session – Halloween, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016**



Bags used in Halloween.  
Dissemination of Mentoring Program to  
Parents.



Halloween – Wall Journal

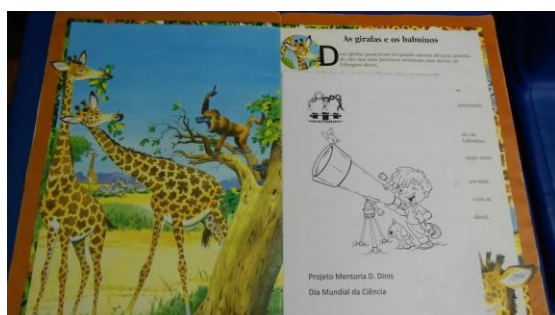
### **Case studies**



**2nd session – Science Day (Peace and Development), 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016**



Expositor: Raise awareness in school



Collaborative work – Science Day (Peace and Development)



Works made by students (Science Day)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Session - Christmas Day, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016**



Collaborative work - Christmas Day



**Case studies**

Colaborative work-“ The hand of the students in paper. Christmas is giving hands”!

#### 4th session - Creativity



“Creativity is intelligence having fun” Einstein

*In conclusion, the similar working styles and learning contributed to the mutual enthusiasm. The similarity of interests made the connection easier. The topics were the mentees’ needs, school rules and documents, ceremonies, planning sessions, classroom management, students’ evaluation and innovative teaching methods, such as co-teaching.*

*Mentoring relationship was reciprocal, dynamic and reflexive. I believe mentor and mentees feel more satisfied, engaged and motivated than before.*

*Regular communication, formal and informal meetings contributed to support, friendship and to increase the knowledge of both mentor and mentees. Frequent contact increased the trust, the work consistence and the progress with students and school!*

*The mentoring program is a success and a good strategy to support the social, personal and professional development among teachers.”*

Mentor Lurdes, Portugal