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DIGITAL LEARNING
IN THE FAMILY

LEARNING PACKAGE FOR MENTORS (IO2)

Profile of a Mentor

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II. Profile of a mentor

- **What skills should the mentors have?**

In mentoring, knowledge is passed on from a specialist (mentor) to a participant (mentee) about his work.

The mentor helps the mentee to understand their needs, limitations and strengths in order to achieve the desired outcomes. One of the mentor's skills is storytelling, the ability to share positive examples with the mentee that he or she, through experiencing emotions, encourages to learn. Since experience has shown that the mentees have little knowledge of the new language, the mentor must try to use the simplest possible language with short sentences. In addition, within the scope of the cooperation, it may be necessary again and again to provide linguistic support and to explain facts simply. Therefore, the ability to build dialogue through customized questions is an important quality to possess in a potential mentor.

Characteristics of the mentors are:
• Willingness to participate in the mentee's personal and professional growth
• Disposition and willingness to communicate, listen, advise and create a climate of trust
• Willingness to evaluate goals and results
• Appreciation of diversity in culture, personality and style.

- **What skills should mentors learn?**

There are many techniques that the mentor uses to track the mentee's development. Here we summarize three of them. The first consists of step-by-step support for the mentee. The second consists in seeding, i.e. not in the direct teaching, but in the preparation for the mentee’s transformation process. The third consists of catalysis.

In fact, through this technique, the mentor impersonates the mentee in a new situation, out of his comfort zone, showing him the situation he is in, as an example and proof of the teachings to make him understand the process put in place.

The most important thing is that the mentor listens to the needs of the mentee and offers guidance to the learner by creating a relationship of mutual trust and respect.

- **A good mentor should therefore:**

• Establish an open dialogue with the mentee by answering all important questions
• Listen attentively and discreetly to the mentee
• Take care of the mentee by understanding their wants and needs
• help the mentee to clarify his true expectations
• Stimulate reflection and engagement in the mentee

• give your own evaluation honestly
• Provide the mentee with opportunities/inspiration to learn through the exchange of work, organizational, cultural and relationship experiences.
• Be committed to being a role model
• ensure that he finds the time and willingness to take on the role of mentor.

- **The assumptions of a mentoring program**

• It is a process that is strategic, organic and holistic because it is focused on the person in all their aspects and on the big picture.
• It is a complex activity that can reward or negatively affect a person, so it must be approached with preparation and utmost awareness, as it brings about a significant and mutual change in the knowledge system, work, skills and mindset.

- **What are the mentors responsible for in our project? / Objectives of the program**

The mentors encourage and motivate the mentee's personal and professional development through the sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences. Special:
• Ensuring knowledge transfer
• Supporting language acquisition
• Create prospects for young people to prove themselves
• Exchange of experiences about working life
• Assistance with social or administrative needs
• Explanation and discussion of European values and experiences
• Explanation of cultural differences
• Development of social skills
• Emotional support and protection
• Promoting a sense of belonging
• Development of the mentee's personality

- **The tools a mentor should acquire and use are four:**

• Communication, both face-to-face and at a distance, by phone, email, social networks;
• Training through case analysis, storytelling;
• Information enriched with documents, books and articles;
• Evaluation with minutes of the meetings held and status report.

- **Conditions for conducting a mentoring program**

• Organizational support
• Careful selection of the mentor (educated, experienced, confident, selected from those who spontaneously offer themselves for this role and are fully aware of the commitment they are making).

• Set goals and purpose from the start
• decide in advance how to communicate
• Discuss deadlines
• to base the relationship on mutual respect

- **The phases of the mentoring process**

• work out the need for development
• Facilitate self-management in the learning phase
• Support of the learning phase
• Help with assessment

- **Ideas for teaching mentors:**

• Principles of mentoring

Mentoring is a process that is strongly tailored to the specific life circumstances and the level of development of the mentee and mentor. It addresses the aspects of knowledge, skills and attitudes, but beyond that, success is anchored in mutual trust between the two. As such, it allows touching on moral aspects such as: "How much do you want to change?" and "How are values such as autonomy and leisure related to time, effort and comfort?"
From the mentor's point of view, the mechanism of "social entrepreneurship" can be taken into account. It focuses on creating social change (“improvement”) and aims for positive social impact.
Social commitment is not only idealistic; social status and economic advantages also play a role. In other words: It is also about the technical side of mentoring.

• Inter/multicultural competence

The ideal process between mentor and mentee is an asymmetrical synergy process: The mentee needs coaching and support in order to acquire additional skills for social integration and to qualify for the next career step. The mentor can have a mix of ambitions that provide the impetus to help a person through this entire process - without losing sight of the fact that human synergy cannot guarantee complete success. Many situational factors determine how the mentee develops formal skills, but especially self-confidence.
There is also satisfaction that a person from a completely different culture is already benefiting from the mentor having a natural bond with all aspects of acculturation faced by the mentee.

• How to define expectations

Since the mentor-mentee process is a multi-dimensional (and not linear) process, it helps if both actors are aware of its sometimes chaotic nature: suddenly, unforeseen positive or negative effects occur, which can even lead to the failure of the mentoring process and the

sudden breaking off of the relationship because one of the two feels desperate or paralyzed by the many things that arise unannounced. Therefore, it is important that neither the mentee nor the mentor need fear: if something goes wrong, it provides a good reason to learn from it and look forward to a better approach with confidence in the near future. It also implies that 'risk taking' is a continuous element in the mentoring process. Mutual honesty about one's own values is important;
Authenticity is more important than trying to conform to an ideal standard. When the mentee finds the mentor genuine and natural, trust and identification will develop more easily. Since the spectrum of mentoring content and processes is very broad, it is understandable that there will be disappointments. This is one of the reasons why mentors need to involve their social network to tackle issues that are completely foreign to them. Only through trust can the mentee finally achieve the situation that he previously dreamed of. Mentors who manage to maintain curiosity about the mentee's cultural background will be most successful. But it is also very important that mentors need to be mentored themselves from time to time as they can develop 'blind spots' even in their 'best practice' moments. It is important that mentors are not only attractive role models for their mentees, but also for others who apply to be mentors themselves. Society needs more and better mentors all the time. That is why good mentors must be retained, nurtured and promoted as much as possible. A well-known success is mentoring for coaching and encouraging entrepreneurial mindsets.

• How to define learning objectives

Learning objectives are important when it comes to formal skills, knowledge and competences such as problem solving, leadership etc. But even more important are the development goals that we presented above. Many learning theories focus on objectivistic goals. Existential perceptions are at least as important for mentoring. The 'learning cycle' below shows six of the more dominant stimuli in adult learning.