

Using data to identify at-risk learners

Description

A VET school in the Centre Region of Portugal has created an internal electronic monitoring system to monitor truancy.

Countries



Germany



Portugal

Why is this approach useful?

Data collection and analysis can help VET providers and practitioners to answer a fundamental question:

- Which of our students may be at risk of early leaving from education and training?

The earlier these learners are identified, the easier will it be to engage and encourage them to continue their studies.

Why is it a quick win?

A lot of information that is useful to identify learners at risk of early leaving is already available to VET providers. They usually register data on absenteeism, grades and grade repetition. Practitioners also often note information on other aspects such as disruptive behaviour or lack of positive involvement in classroom activities, and have further insights on the learners' health, well-being and family circumstances.

Organising this information and sharing it among the concerned practitioners – where data protection legislation permits - can be done at a relatively low cost.

How to make this approach successful?

Data related to the risk of early leaving can be useful to VET providers if:

- Information is based on observation and discussions with students.
- Quantitative data (e.g. number of absences) is complemented with qualitative information (e.g. health problems).
- Information is used as a basis for discussions between practitioners and learners, and informs decisions on the appropriate measures to support the learner to continue in education and training.
- The VET provider and staff comply with data protection. For instance, only practitioners working with a certain student should have access to his/her data.

Also, more sensitive data should only be accessible to a very restricted group of practitioners.

Examples of measures using this approach

School absenteeism electronic monitoring system. An example from a VET school in Portugal

A VET school in the central region of Portugal created an internal electronic monitoring system in 2011, with the objective of being more efficient in monitoring truancy and in transmitting the information between the pedagogical and psychological staff.

When a student is absent, the teacher enters this information into the software system by selecting the student's name. After this, a note is registered in an electronic student profile and an SMS is sent to the parents/guardian to notify them of the student's absence. School counsellors and psychologists follow up with the absent learner, and provide support where necessary. Parents are also requested to attend a meeting at the school to ensure that they also follow up on their child's attendance.

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Software to track absenteeism. An example from the State of Hesse (Germany)

Project QuABB (Capacity building for students, companies and vocational schools involved in apprenticeship-training) has field tested software to track absenteeism. It consists of a web-based application where teachers can register students' absences from their lessons.

The teacher has the possibility to look at absences per student and act on them. The software allows for templates making it easy to send e-mails, text messages or letters to the students' apprenticeship company trainer or parents. It is up to the teacher to decide when to inform these different parties.

This tracking device was piloted with positive outcomes, and is expected to be mainstreamed in the near future.

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Related intervention approaches



Identification of learners at risk of early leaving

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