



One-to-one support through coaching or mentoring

Problem statement

Addressed problem: Preventing drop-out at risk points

Ongoing coaching and mentoring can help to maintain a young person’s motivation to learn and can prevent drop-out at risk points, such as when making a transition from one pathway to another and during the initial stages of a new pathway. It can help them to overcome any issues affecting their learning, either related to the course or unrelated.

Beneficiaries

Early leavers from education and training	Learners at risk of early leaving from education and training	Learners with low self-confidence and self-esteem
Learners with behaviour issues and/or frequently absent	Young people with complex needs (e.g. health issues, in poverty, with caring responsibilities)	VET students (school based)
Low-motivated learners	Young people with complex needs (e.g. health issues, in poverty, with caring responsibilities)	VET students (in work based learning schemes)
Secondary education students	Migrants / refugees	
Vulnerable groups		

Young people with a higher level of disengagement and possibly also complex barriers to learning can benefit. Mentoring and coaching can also be used at transition points, such as the transition from lower secondary education to VET, or reintegration from drop-out status to VET. Students are at greater risk of dropping out during these transition phases and during the first year of a new programme.

Addressing the problem

What makes coaching and mentoring effective?

Coaching and mentoring involves one-to-one support for young people on an ongoing basis. But they are not the same. Coaching has more clearly defined goals and objectives. Once these are achieved, it comes to an end. Mentoring is broader, with evolving goals/objectives.

Mentoring and coaching can achieve a range of aims, depending on the needs of the young person involved and the characteristics of the mentor/coach (e.g. if they are internal/external to the learning provider, adults/peers, volunteers/paid staff). The relationship and the communications/activities involved will vary depending on the needs of the learner.

The following tips are given as advice to policy-makers and practitioners involved in the design and delivery of such measures. The information is based on Cedefop research into successful measures.

 **Tip 1: Build a relationship based on trust**

Over time, the coach/mentor and the young person need to develop a relationship based on trust. A key benefit of mentoring or coaching is that through the relationship which develops, the young person can benefit from advice and support from an adult who is (often) 'external' to their learning and home environments, or is seen by the young person as being neutral or 'on their side'. This kind of positive relationship with an adult may be important for young people who are (at risk of) disengaging from their learning. For some, it may be the only adult they feel is supporting them with their learning and/or career.

Tip 2: Agree on goals and activities tailored to the young person

Mentoring and coaching can be used to achieve a range of goals and the activities involved will need to be tailored to the young person concerned. The support should be led by the young person and his/her needs. This means that the activities the young person undertakes with his/her coach can vary considerably and may change as the coaching/mentoring process develops.

For example, mentoring can be a way of identifying problems that may lead to drop-out. With the help of their mentor, the young person may be able to address these problems.

Mentoring can help to empower students to improve their learning habits and formulate goals for the future. It can also be used for students to learn from experienced professionals. It can be an opportunity to discuss technical issues for example, or to help practice for assessments.

Coaching might lead to the development of a project or plan for the future. It can involve identifying and providing extra training or support to the young person in order to successfully complete his/her learning pathway. This is an individualised approach which means that the additional training/support is tailored to the young person's specific needs. The coach may also advocate on behalf of the young person and go beyond learning needs to identify and address other barriers to learning, e.g. issues related to health and welfare.

Tip 3: Choose the right coach/mentor and provide training

Coaches/mentors may be professionals (e.g. guidance counsellors, teachers or tutors), volunteers (e.g. from the business community, students) or peers. If the mentor is independent of the learning provider or the company (for apprentices/trainees), then this may make it easier for the young person to discuss their questions and difficulties. Similarly, peer mentoring brings together young people who are independent of 'the system' and who may have experienced similar issues. For this reason peer mentoring may be useful to address, for example, social issues, motivational issues, sharing experiences of learning, and study techniques, etc.

Training is important for the coaches/mentors, prior to starting to work with young people. This is particularly important for volunteer mentors, e.g. students, or volunteers from the community.

Tip 4: Offer long-term support

In order to achieve a relationship of trust, it is important for the coaching/mentoring to take place over the long-term rather than as a one-off session. The length of the intervention will depend on the young person's needs but in particular for those facing complex barriers to learning, the intensity and length of the coaching/mentoring are important.

Expected outcomes

Mentoring and coaching on their own cannot provide a solution to all the problems faced by young people. However the one-to-one relationship that develops through mentoring/coaching can be an important part of a comprehensive support package for the young person. It can provide them with a positive role model, support them with their learning, offer opportunities to discuss and find solutions to challenges they may be facing, and provide them with an individualised response to their support needs.

As a result, mentoring and coaching can bring about a range of benefits for young people, including for example improved relationships, increased communication skills and resilience. It can lead young people to change their behaviours, for example helping to reduce absenteeism and/or improve pass rates. On the whole, mentoring and coaching may increase the young person's chances of continuing with and completing their education.

The following outcomes can be expected at different levels:

INDIVIDUAL	INSTITUTIONAL	SYSTEM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved well-being • Social / economic / psychological challenges being tackled • Improved work habits / social skills • Improved capacity to deal with one's learning difficulties • Lower absenteeism • Developing a positive attitude to learning and education and training • Defining learning career goals • Gaining a better understanding of education options • Raising aspirations - formulating long-term career plans • Making informed choices • Improving self-awareness - understanding of own abilities, aptitudes and interests • Gaining a better understanding of job roles • Improved 'work readiness' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced risk of early leaving among students receiving support from a coach or mentor • Increased support to teachers and trainers to work with learners with complex personal, social and / or family issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced rates of early leavers among learners receiving support from a coach or mentor • Increased rates of young people returning to education or training after receiving support from a coach or mentor • Increased rates of young people attaining an upper secondary qualification after receiving support from a coach or mentor

Related protective factors

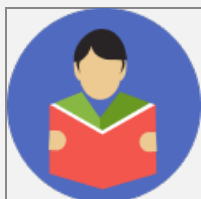
Health and well-being



Positive future vision for oneself and positive career choices



Positive self-perception linked to learning ability



Related resources

Good practices



Youth Coaching Scheme

Jugendcoaching

In Austria, the Youth Coaching Scheme offers high quality coaching and input from other services to ensure participants are provided with support to meet their individual needs.



Austria



VerA - Prevention of Training Dropout

Retired trained professionals volunteer their time and experience to support apprentices as part of a mentors scheme in Germany.



Germany



Orienta4YEL

Supporting educational and social inclusion of young early leavers and those at risk of early leaving through mechanisms of orientation and tutorial action.



Spain



Portugal



Romania



United



Germany

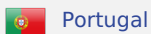
Kingdom

Tools



Work Guidelines for EPIS mentors

The Entrepreneurs for social inclusion (EPIS) guidelines, offer support to mentors and educational staff who work with learners or groups of learners at risk, including psychologists, social workers, and other educational staff in school education. The guidelines include a 'how to do' list for intervening / providing individual support to learners and families.



Guide for Roma school mediators/assistants

Involving Roma mediators in the school can serve as a powerful tool to facilitate relations between teachers, other school staff and parents of Roma children. This Guide for Roma school mediators/assistants provides a wide range of tools and practical guidelines that can be adapted to different contexts.



DIDO - Dropping-in the dropouts toolkit

The DIDO toolkit contains practical tools aimed at preventing dropout in adult education.



Publications



Invest in Talent

In the Netherlands, the 'Invest in Talent' initiative provides practical advice on how to bring together partners from the worlds of employment, education, housing, coaching and mentoring to offer support to young people in dealing with the challenges they face in everyday life.

Read the initiative [flyer description](#).



Evaluation of mentoring disaffected young people

An evaluation of the Mentoring Plus Programme in the UK examined the process by which vulnerable young people become involved in the programme. The study examines their experiences as well as the experiences of staff who work as volunteer mentors.

Read the report [here](#).





PUBLICATIONS

Natives and immigrants enrolled in Spanish intermediate vocational education and training: a comparative study

Antoni Cerdà-Navarro, Francesca Salvà-Mut, Rubén Comas-Forgas & Mercè Morey-López

This article looks at the differences and similarities between Spanish-born and immigrant students enrolled in the first year of Intermediate Vocational Education (IVET) programmes in Spain.



Spain

Quick wins



QUICK WIN

Create opportunities for informal interactions between students and VET provider staff

Creating opportunities for informal interactions between learners and staff can help build trust and create positive relationships.



Poland



Portugal

Source URL: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/toolkits/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/intervention-approaches/one-one-support-through-coaching-or-mentoring>