PlugInnovation

Description

In Sweden, a website has been developed which offers a central digital knowledge platform for people working in the area of early leaving. It offers information, guidelines, methods, checklists, questionnaires, and case studies in relation to success factors for retention, one of which is 'flexibility'.

Beneficiaries

Focus: general upper secondary education

Target group: actors involved in the work with at-risk students or early school leavers

Countries

Sweden

Country/ies or organisation that developed the tool

Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sweden)

Date of creation of toolkit and periodicity of updates

2012. The Plug In project was updated in 2015.

Purpose of the toolkit

Guidance on wbest practices (to improve the design of policies and practices)

Guidance on how to identify and monitor early school leavers or those at risk of early school leaving (ESL)

"Plug Innovation is a part of the Plug In project, Sweden's largest European Social Fund (ESF) project to prevent drop-outs in upper secondary education. The website is developed to become a central digital knowledge platform for people working in this area. The objective is for stakeholders to take note of the success factors and the research, and become inspired by how participating municipalities in the project are working to reduce absenteeism, and support young people in their return to education or other activities."[1]

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[1] See: http://pluginnovation.se/

Description of each of the tools

- Research materials:
    - filmed lectures
    - literature about ESL, incl. studies, reports and research about ESL

- summaries of important international studies about ESL translated into Swedish.
- Information, guidelines, methods, checklists, questionnaires, and case studies in relation to success factors for retention:
  - <u>Positive relations:</u> this section explains the importance of positive relations between the students and teachers, adults and friends around them.
  - <u>Flexibility:</u> this section includes a description of and case studies on the importance of flexibility at an individual and organisational level. Each case study also includes an evaluation report with a list of questions. The section also includes an example questionnaire (pdf format) for school leaders, project managers, teachers, study/career counsellors and students about their participation in the Plug In project.
  - <u>A holistic approach to the individual:</u> this section includes information on the importance of focusing on several aspects of the students' individual situations, such as academic results, school attendance, learning abilities, and psychological and emotional dimensions.
  - <u>Tracking and follow-up:</u> this section explains the importance of systematic follow-up with students. It provides case studies at individual and organisation levels. This section also provides an example checklist for transmission of information about at-risk students, when students are switching schools, which is important to ensure consistent follow-up and guidance to the students.
  - <u>Collaboration:</u> this section provides information on the importance of good collaboration between actors around the students. As at-risk students and early school leavers are often in complex situations, many people inside and outside the school tend to be involved, which may be confusing for the students. But with good collaboration, the number of people around the students may be reduced. This section includes case studies at both individual and organisational levels.
- Follow-up and monitoring – this section describing the potential use of statistics:
  - <u>National statistics:</u> these may be used to track completion rate trends. However, these statistics have a three-year delay and can thus not be used as an indicator of the current status of dropout.
  - <u>PlugInnovation's statistics</u> (prototype): PlugInnovation has developed a statistical tool, based on data from the Göteborg region (these statistics only exist for this tegion so far). This allows to track drop-outs when they happen. The statistical tool shows for example the share of students with different periodical lengths of study interruption, as well as their sex, their age, the share of students who graduated, and the number of students who have dropped out but have entered education or employment or are doing other activities (there is quite a detailed list of activities; the student may e.g. have moved or be looking for a job). The five participating regions in the Plug In project have produced a mapping of the needs that would need to be addressed if it's decided to move forward with the production of a system for immediate tracking of early school leavers. The new system should for example integrate data from the schools and municipalities (but not replace the schools' and municipalities' own existing systems), and be easily accessible online.

Type of indicators used in the identification of learners at risk of early leaving

- In the filmed lecture "What are the risk factors?" ("*Vilka är riskfaktorerna?*"), the following factors were stressed among others as having an importance for the students' status, with regard to drop-outs or completion:
  - the parents' socioeconomic status
  - the socioeconomic status of the geographical area
  - sex (more boys than girls drop out)
  - the increased risk of drop-outs when there are several shifts between schools;
  - being from a minority group, and/or language barriers

Type of guidance given to users

Case studies and descriptions within the section of success factors provide ideas on how to work with ESL:

<u>Positive relations:</u>

- at individual level:
  - development of mentorships
  - other students or resource persons may act as a strong relation for at-risk students
  - coaching and motivation meetings
- at organisational level:
  - development of clear procedures and systematic approaches to ensure the development of positive

relations
  - competency development among teachers

<u>Flexibility:</u>

- at individual level:
  - targeting the students individual needs in terms of studying, teaching methods, time and space
  - support provided outside of school may help provide structure to the students' everyday life
- at organisational level:
  - flexible organisations, such as the introduction of a resource centre and other organisational functions which can provide students with support when needed
  - some schools have introduced a 'health talk' in the first year of study to identify students with needs for early support, and the period for mentorships has been extended
- at municipal level:
  - support networks for early school leavers, for example via visits, social media and SMS
  - for those who have been absent from education and training E(T) for a long time, initiatives such as study visits, motivation talks, study techniques and practical support in everyday life have been introduced

<u>Holistic approach to the individual:</u>

- at individual level:
  - extra student support
  - motivational work and strengthening self-confidence
  - coaching, guidance
  - development of positive relations, e.g. through mentorships
- at organisational level:
  - follow-up work
  - development of study and career counselling
  - development of relational work
  - development of teaching forms e.g. multidisciplinary teaching
- at municipal level:
  - for young people who have completed and/or left ET, the municipality has been instrumental in finding employment solutions

<u>Tracking and follow-up:</u>

- at individual level:
  - systematisation of follow-up work
  - development of structured plans which fit into the students' short and long-term situations
  - focus on documentation of the work and development of the students, to enable a systematised approach
- at organisational level:
  - at this level, identifying and mapping risk factors is key to ensure systematic retention
  - systematisation of routines and structures for the transition phase between lower and upper secondary education
  - mapping students' needs through interviews with students, teachers, managers and other staff involved

<u>Collaboration:</u>

- focus on creating a continuous collaboration between all actors involved with the students, both at and outside the school, for example by creating new structures and routines facilitating this.

Source of information of the different tools

PlugInnovation

Link/s to the toolkit and further information

http://pluginnovation.se/ and http://webbutik.skl.se/sv/artiklar/plug-in.html

The toolkit is available as an online platform (case studies are for example available to read online), pdfs,

filmed lectures.

Related intervention approaches

Flexible education and training systems

Downloads

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Source URL: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/lv/toolkits/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/resources/pluginnovation