

Preparatory activities for delivering a MIT-inspired mentoring system in Israel

WP 1.1. Elaboration of comparative report and recommendations for mentor training based on peer group mentoring and other models

Before the Talpiot meeting, we asked you to briefly describe mentoring in your university and your country. Now we would like to get more information. Please expand your description according to the following points.

Please follow as much as possible the chapters below (1-5) when writing your document.

Report on mentoring system in your academic institution/country¹

COUNTRY: ROMANIA

INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST

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1. Background (Theories, policies, methodologies)

In Romania, the concept of induction and induction mentor is relatively new and has gained recognition since 2011 when the new National Law of Education (1/2011) has been approved. Taking this in consideration, there are a lot of gray areas regarding the implementation of induction at national level. According to the National Law of Education 1/2011 every teacher, after taking a Masters' Degree in Teaching, has to undergo one year of induction under supervision from an induction mentor.

The first distinction at theoretical and practical level is between practice mentors and induction mentors. Practice mentors are the ones who coordinate the practice of student teachers and induction mentors are the ones who coordinate the one-year induction period of newly qualified teachers.

Taking the national policies in consideration and the fact that there is no guideline for implementing a mentoring system and therefore no guideline for mentor education, in Romania there are two possible scenarios for mentor education that we are going to elaborate on in chapter 3: Mentor Education.

Until now, specific mentor preparation has not been regulated. The teachers that want to become induction mentors need to have the didactic degree I (which can be achieved only after approximately eight years of teaching) and must have participated in at least one

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training course in the last five years, approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

Acquiring the position of induction mentor is achieved by promoting a specific competition organized by the county school inspectorates / School Inspectorate of Bucharest. At the level of the county school inspectorates / of the School Inspectorate of the Municipality of Bucharest, the county / municipality commission for mentoring is set up. The county / municipality commission of Bucharest for mentoring is composed of an odd number of members, with the following composition:

- a) president - the director of the teaching staff house;
- b) vice-president - the school inspector for mentoring;
- c) secretary - school inspector;
- d) members (2-6 persons) - school inspectors / mentoring teachers for the professional insertion of teachers / trainee teachers / directors of educational units.

The roles of the county commission / of the Bucharest municipality for mentoring are:

- a) organizing and conducting the selection of induction mentor;
- b) analyzing and solving the requests of schools / consortia that have newly qualified teacher for their distribution to one mentor teacher;
- c) approving the suspension, upon request, of the induction mentor from this position;
- d) withdrawal of the quality of induction mentor.

The recruitment process has two phases:

1. Portfolio:

- CV, supporting documents letter of intent
- ,certificates of the management of the educational unit (the decision to appoint as a holder in the education system / by job, the certificate of obtaining the didactic degree I, a certificate of continuous training, the certificates of the last five years for granting the qualification);

2. A practical test that consists in holding a lesson / didactic activity by the candidate and the attendance at a lesson / didactic activity that the candidate will analyze.

After passing this recruitment process, teachers are enrolled in a body called National Mentor Body that includes all the induction mentors in the country. For example, if a school does not have a mentor, it can look one up in that list and ask for a mentor from another school.

2. Role and responsibilities (for mentors and mentees)

Being part of the teacher mentors body the norm can be reduced by 2 hours weekly, without salary reduction, within the approved budget. The didactic norm is reduced upon the request of the teacher, submitted to the headmaster. (Law 1/2011, art. 261). The induction mentor coordinates the activity of 1-2 newly qualified teachers, depending on the

assignment received from the county / Bucharest commission for mentoring. The induction mentor can guide trainee teachers / teachers from various school units, located within several localities, according to the distribution received from the county commission / Bucharest Municipality for mentoring, ensuring the settlement of transport expenses. The mentoring teacher may request to carry out mentoring activity for the discipline / disciplines that he / she may teach in accordance with the specialization / specializations enrolled in the diploma (s) of studies, but, in justified cases, may be assigned to guidance and trainee teachers / teachers from the same curricular area.

The induction mentor offers 4 **types of support**:

- a) informational support - the mentor teacher is an informational resource for the guided teacher / trainee teacher, offering the latest knowledge in an accessible form, emphasizing its practical-applicative side;
- b) instrumental support - the mentor teacher guides the teacher / trainee teacher in forming the skill to select materials and information;
- c) evaluative support - the mentor teacher provides a substantial feedback through which to train the teacher / trainee teacher the competence of self-assessment;
- d) emotional support - the mentor teacher provides the trainee teacher / teacher with support and understanding when he / she needs it, in order to increase the degree of self-confidence.

Competencies

The induction mentor has social and relational skills, operates with concepts and models of interpersonal and interactive communication.

Role model

- a) is a professional model through scientific and specialized knowledge;
- b) it is a behavioral model through attitude, general attitude, conduct, way of expressing oneself, punctuality and respect for values;
- c) has realistic and well-founded requirements.

Communication and relational competencies

- a) uses appropriate means of communication for concrete situations in order to achieve educational goals and in relation to the content of communication;



- b) permanently communicates with the teacher / trainee teacher and with all the factors involved;
- c) has an open, stimulating and positive attitude towards the activity to be carried out and supports the awareness by the teacher / trainee teacher of the importance of the internship activity for the future profession;
- d) shows empathy in understanding the point of view of the teacher / trainee teacher;
- e) the language used is specific to the workplace, for receiving and transmitting information correctly, and the way of addressing is concise and polite;
- f) proves substitute imagination, availability of self-regulation of behavior depending on the context;
- g) respects the learning particularities of the newly qualified teacher and applies the principle of confidentiality.

Group management competencies

- a) establishes together with the newly qualified teacher, at the beginning of the internship period, a set of rules to prevent malfunctions that may occur at a given time;
- b) anticipates possible difficulties and / or dysfunctions and finds solutions to remedy them;
- c) creates situations in which the newly qualified teacher reflects on the cause / causes of the problem / problems and to find the solutions for their remedy;
- d) has the capacity to support the identification of solutions to reach a consensus between him and the newly qualified teacher;
- e) demonstrates flexibility in the relationship with the newly qualified teacher;
- f) adapts the communication modalities to concrete situations and to the individuality of each newly qualified teacher;
- g) communicates openly with the newly qualified teacher and creates a relationship in which honesty and mutual trust are essential.

Planning, organizing and analyzing competencies of the induction period

- a) identifies the elements necessary for the planning of the induction period
- b) familiarizes the newly qualified teacher in connection with the use of teaching aids and guides him / her in order to complete the curriculum

- c) supports the development of extracurricular activities by the newly qualified teacher
- d) encourages the newly qualified teacher in forming the capacity for self-evaluation as a form of self-reflection on the teaching activity

Specialization and didactic competencies

1. designs and logically structures the contents of the discipline, according to the curricular documents:

a) provides a variety of teaching activities for the teacher / trainee teacher (teaching-learning hours, practicing skills, analysis, recapitulation, elaboration and presentation of projects, various extracurricular activities);

b) aims for the lesson / activity project to include all specific components; assistance in project development gradually decreases as the teacher / trainee teacher gains experience;

c) guides the teacher / trainee teacher in improving teaching techniques;

d) encourages the initiative and creativity of the teacher / trainee teacher in designing the instructive-educational activity;

2. uses feedback as a way of regulating teaching activity, as follows:

a) formulates objective observations, without prejudices, focused on the didactic activities of the teacher / trainee teacher;

b) negotiates with the teacher / trainee teacher the concepts used and guides him / her in order to clarify them.

For the induction mentor, continuous training and development is a right and an obligation.

The **responsibilities** of the mentor teacher are:

a) establishes the action plan for the internship period;

b) discusses with the teacher / trainee teacher the attributions incumbent on him, according to the job description;

c) offers practical and efficient models for school and extracurricular activities;

d) observes the curricular and extracurricular activity of the teacher / trainee teacher and performs activities from both categories with him / her;

- e) ensures a constructive feedback for all aspects of the professional activity of the teacher / trainee teacher;
- f) facilitates the access of the teacher / trainee teacher to the resources available to the school in order to support the professional activity and for its integration in the organizational culture of the respective educational unit;
- g) ensures the necessary support for the realization of the personal professional portfolio of the teacher / trainee teacher;
- h) ensures the advice of the teacher / trainee teacher in order to prepare school documents;
- i) permanently monitors the results of the actions and the progress of the teacher / trainee teacher in relation to the proposed objectives.

Each induction mentor elaborate an **annual portfolio** that will contain the following components:

- a) the annual action plan which also includes the schedule of activities planned within the mentoring program, targeted by the mentoring inspector;
- b) the annual calendar of the activities of the mentor teacher and the internship program;
- c) the record sheet of the observed lessons / activities;
- d) the monitoring sheet of the assisted lessons / activities;
- e) professional dialogue sheet;
- f) the final report on the activity of the trainee teacher / teacher, on the basis of which the recommendation will be made for the enrollment of the trainee teachers / teachers in the final exam in education;
- g) the (self) evaluation form of the annual activity of the mentor teacher;
- h) copies of the recommendations for enrolling trainee teachers / teachers in the final examination in education;
- i) the feedback form on the activity of the mentor teacher, completed by the teacher / trainee teacher, after he / she obtains the recommendation to enroll in the final exam in education.

The newly qualified teacher benefits from the assistance of the mentor teacher until obtaining the finalization and acquiring the title of teacher with the right to practice in pre-university education, according to the provisions of art. 241 para. (4) and (5) of Law no. 1/2011. There are no clear responsibilities for the mentee, he/she will have to carry regular

activities as teachers (as any other teacher) and the aspects that are discussed and agreed with the induction mentor.

3. Mentor Education

As mentioned before, there are two possible scenarios for mentor education.

The first scenario we propose is a centralized and highly regulated system for training induction mentors. It implies a central institution with multiples roles - Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports through its National Authority for Qualifications – that generates a singular route at national level.

The roles that the institution stated before must undertake range from establishing the objectives and accreditation process to coordination, evaluation and finance of the training programs for induction mentors. In this case, the professional route is limited in what both providers and types of programs are concerned.

The training programs are standardized and take the form of long term academic programs (Master in Education, Professional Doctorate) and the only providers are universities.

Given their duration, this kind of programs will not be able to respond to schools' immediate needs of induction mentors, as there will be a gap of minimum two years until the first induction mentors are certified. This centralized system may facilitate consistency between training needs identified at national level, beneficiaries (teachers that want to become induction mentors), schools and training providers (universities), but may overlook specific training needs in different communities. Taking this in consideration both overlaps in training courses and unsystematic allocation of resources can be avoided. This type of scenario with a high level of professionalization offers the possibility of developing resources for induction mentors (e.g. guidelines, working materials).

Example:

Master program: Mentoring in Education, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest

Duration: 2 years

Credits: 120

Description: The "Mentoring in education" master program aims to put into practice the intention and the desire to train teachers with a thorough scientific training doubled by a very good psycho-pedagogical, methodical and managerial training and who will take over, lead, monitor, evaluate the pedagogical / professional practice of the students and students and to coordinate / regulate the evolution in the teaching career of newly qualified teachers. The master's program "Mentoring in education" aims to contribute to the process of developing and consolidating the national system of training the following categories of mentors: mentors for newly qualified teachers, trainee mentors, mentors of professional / pedagogical practice.

Examples of courses: Fundamentals of mentoring, career development, coaching and mentoring, Communication strategies, SEN, human resources management, qualitative research methods, partnerships in education



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The facilitators or the coordinators of courses in this case are both academics from the University of Bucharest and professionals (other teachers with experience, researchers, school inspectors etc.)

The second scenario we propose is a flexible and moderate regulated system for training induction mentors. It implies a regulation of policies and design of the framework for training programs at County School Inspectorates level and decentralization at school level regarding training strategy. Accordingly, schools are the ones that regulate the offer for training induction mentors based on the needs of the employees (teachers that want to become an induction mentor) and of the workplace (schools). This approach is specific to in-service training systems. Unlike the first scenario, both the providers (e.g. universities, NGOs, private organizations, professional associations) and types of programs (e.g. short academic programs, lifelong learning programs, mobility programs) may vary. • Explicit focus on training needs of beneficiaries and immediate needs of schools to train induction mentors may constitute an advantage of this system. Concurrently, being known and assumed implies a greater accountability both for future induction mentors and schools as workplaces. This moderate regulated system enables the development of sustainable partnerships between training providers and the workplace of the induction mentor (school). Thus, arises the possibility of creating communities of practice through intensification of formal (at institutional level) and informal (at individual level – transfer of good practices) information exchange.

Examples:

Training course: Mentor

Duration: 89 hours (6 modules, face to face and online)

Credits: 23

Description: Target group: teaching staff from pre-university education, which they have didactic degree II. The offer is addressed to persons who want to follow a program of continuous training specifically for the activity of "mentor" or those who have practical mentor experience (guidance on pedagogical practice, supervised of beginners) and want certification the competences acquired. Competencies: methodological competencies, Communication skills, Psychosocial competences, career, assessment competencies management.

The facilitators or the coordinators of courses in this case are mainly professionals (other teachers with experience, researchers, school inspectors etc.) and this courses are outside university.



4. School level impact

At this point in Romania there is no national wide research on school level impact of mentoring taking in consideration the fact that is not fully implemented. Anyway a number of small scale research has been done. Data from the research done in the Proteach Project (aprox. 140 newly qualified teachers) will be presented together with colleagues from Israel, Estonia and the United Kingdom later in the project.

Another Erasmus + European project entitled "MENTOR - Between Mentoring teachers in secondary and high schools " tackled the same topic. According to Duse and Duse (2016, p. 4) the majority of teachers consider mentoring will help “them to improvement teaching practices and pedagogical methods (21, 3%) and next will be increased the efficiency in teaching (17, 2 %), and will help them for a faster inclusion into the school life (16, 3%)”. Even though this is not directly related to school level impact, indirectly will contribute to improved school climate, not only for newly qualified teachers, but also for all teachers in school

5. Future plans

There are some main areas that UB will focus on the next period:

1. Implementing a Master in Education
2. Accordingly developing further mentor education
3. Developing more connection with schools in order to increase school level impact of the programs offered