

THE DIDACTIC MENTOR'S KIT. THE EFFICIENCY OF THE MENTORING ACTIVITY

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Abstract: *In a mentoring program, two characters are necessarily involved: the mentor and the mentee. In order to achieve an effective, authentic mentoring process, one must start from the intersection of the answers to two questions: What do I expect from the mentor/mentee and What do I bring to the mentoring process? In addition to personality and professional traits, the mentor teacher has to prepare and use a series of working tools, a mentor's kit, which in a general form we will present in this work paper and which need to be adapted according to the needs of the mentee and the school institution. The tools in the mentor's kit were presented and offered for use to the 293 teachers, participants of the Prof I and II course, in two modules. In short research survey we introduce present the views of the mentors who used them.*

Keywords: *mentor; mentee; mentor toolkit; tools.*

Introduction

The topicality of the mentoring issue and the perspectives that we see towards this way of developing teachers are the reasons why we decided to write this work paper. In addition to the resources related to the personality structure and professional training of the mentor, for an effective mentoring process, tools are needed, which we present as a mentor's toolkit. They are the result of improving, refining, adapting to new educational contexts some of the tools used in the mentoring process over a long period of time.

In the dictionaries available to us, we will find a relatively wide range of semantics associated with the term - mentor: spiritual leader, guide, tutor, preceptor, educator.

Bilingual dictionaries - French/Romanian, German/Romanian, Italian/Romanian, English/Romanian - do not add other meanings to the word, at most other formulations subsumable to the same semantic

range, such as: enlightened counsellor, advisor, instructor, teacher. With references to some cultures outside Europe, terms such as guru, sensei, but also the Romanian antrenor or English coach can be added. Some dictionaries refer to the origin of the term, Mentor being the name of a literary character, friend of Ulysses, to whom he entrusted, during his absence by going to war, the task of tutor of his son Telemac. As Ulysses' protector, the goddess Minerva, also known as Palla Thena, goddess of wisdom, lent Mentor the guise of Ulysses, the father, to instruct Telemac.

With the same meaning, of teacher and enlightener, the word 'mentor' is used by the School of Socrates and Plato and the Aristotelian Academy.

Mentor means: "in a broad sense, a person who helps someone develop through learning; in a narrow sense, a professional who works with a person, group or organisation for personal or organisational development".

According to the Encyclopedic Dictionary. Education Sciences for young people, the mentor is, "one who will encourage, advise and support them in their development."

The mentor will provide practical assistance to ensure that young people have the opportunity to achieve their goals in the workplace.

Factors to consider when linking the two actors mentor and mentee are the willingness of the mentor to take on this role and the compatibility of the mentor and mentee personalities.

An effective mentor can be the person who: shows a desire to help, has a high dose of altruism, has a positive professional experience, has a good reputation, shows availability of time and energy to devote to the mentee, shows openness to new things, continuous availability for learning, has the ability to see, to feel the potential benefits of the mentoring process (Popa, C. 2009).

The mentee is the person who is willing to: practice his/her skills, be receptive to new ways of learning and trying out new ideas, accept and act on the feedback received, show a willingness to apply what he/she has learned in the workplace, be persistent in achieving goals and achieving the right results, be willing to ask for support, be willing to perform the assigned tasks on a regular basis, contribute to his/her own development and to the mentoring process (Popa, C. 2009).

The professional and personal motives of the mentor, following an effective process, can be found in the fact that:

he/she carries out a wider activity with the help of the mentee, acquires a crucial subordinate, has an opportunity for self-development, has a new way of enriching knowledge, experience, being each time a sharer in the achievements successes and failures of the mentee, is rewarded

by the development of a new professional, invests in the new disciple, pays off social debts, increases motivation, discovers new perspectives, finds experiences that can increase self-esteem and an opportunity to positively influence future generations, improves communication, has someone to tell their professional stories to (Popa, C. 2009).

In Romania mentoring is an occupation, recognised under COR code 235902, which is becoming increasingly necessary for authentic teacher training.

The project PROFESSIONALIZING TEACHING CAREERS - PROF, carried out at national level, with several components, hopes to achieve a training of mentor teachers and the legal and methodological support that will lead to the development of an authentic mentoring.

In addition to personality and professional traits, the mentor teacher has to prepare and use a series of working tools, a mentor's kit, which in a general form we will present in this work paper and which need to be adapted according to the needs of the mentee and the school institution

Mentor's kit

In order to carry out the teaching mentoring activity in a coherent and systematic process, it is necessary to design the mentoring activity and to create a kit, which includes the basic tools, starting from a comprehensive analysis of development needs, to activity observation sheets, observation sheets focused on various areas of teaching activity, to professional dialogue sheets, progress evaluation sheets, final evaluation sheets of the mentoring activity. The design of the mentoring activity involves a sequence of steps and activities, starting from the needs analysis.

The needs analysis of the mentee, whether we are talking about mentoring for students (training) or for junior teachers (development), can be carried out using several types of activities: direct observation of the mentee's work, interviews with the mentee and several tools: questionnaire, needs analysis sheet. Each of these activities and tools provides a certain type of useful information in order to make a diagnosis, a clearer picture of the development needs of the learner.

The Needs Analysis Sheet is useful in establishing training needs at the beginning and during a mentoring phase. The mentee will establish their strengths and areas for improvement and then set their personal menu and personal targets, which they will pursue during the mentoring activity. Professional development needs will be prioritised based on the Professional Standards, specific to their level of work.

The mentoring needs analysis will be carried out by the mentee, with the support of the mentor, in the first mentoring activities and may be reformulated during the mentoring process.

Depending on the development needs identified by the mentor or mentee, depending on the diagnosis carried out at school level, the areas/units of competence of the Occupational Standards or any of the areas, specific to the teaching activity, may be addressed. These may include: Instructional design, Classroom management, Conflict management, Instructional communication, Instructional assessment, ICT, European projects, Teaching-learning methods, Methodical activity, Nonformal activity.

The following reflective questions can be used to support the learners in carrying out the needs analysis:

What are the areas in the Professional Standards in which you feel you are well prepared?

Which areas do you feel you need to improve?

What are your professional development goals?

Which of the professional targets set have been achieved?

What will be your next professional target? What will be the work to be carried out?

Through dialogue, based on the targets set in the needs analysis, the mentor teacher together with the mentee will establish an Activity Plan. The activities, tools, resources needed, time, place and way of implementation will be mentioned.

The following reflective questions can be used to support the mentee in developing the mentoring plan:

What are the activities needed to achieve the proposed targets?

What are the necessary tools?

The mentoring plan may include some specific activities:

1. Observation of teaching activities
2. Support of teaching activities by the mentee
3. Completion of the professional dialogue sheet
4. Completion of the Professional Progress Sheet
5. Completion of the Final Evaluation Report

Observation of teaching activities, can be:

Observations in the mentor's class made by the mentee;

Observations in the mentee's class by the mentor;

Observations focused on specific teaching aspects;

Observations of extra-curricular activities, parent meetings, methodological activities, pedagogical circles.

During each observed activity, in the mentor's classroom, the mentee will complete a sheet, Appendix 1. The observation sheet is designed in such a way that the mentee's notes can become a reference for their

own design. At the end of the observation, the mentee can clarify possible concerns or find other ways of intervening in the educational situations observed. Throughout the mentoring activity, reflection and self-reflection is encouraged, providing reflective questions to help the mentee identify the degree of success and alternatives that could improve the teaching performance.

For the observation of extra-curricular activities, methodical activities, meetings with parents, the mentee will use as tools specific journals for the activities. Annex 2

After the period of observation of the mentor's work, the demonstration activities are followed by the mentees, initially in partnership with the mentor for immediate and punctual support and then in partnership with a colleague, if this is possible.

This stage involves:

Supporting activities in partnership, mentor - mentee;

Supporting activities in partnership between two mentees;

Supporting activities by the mentee;

Supporting activities focused on specific teaching aspects;

Supporting extra-curricular activities, meetings with parents, methodological activities, pedagogical circles.

For each learning activity the learner designs the activity, Appendix 3.

At the end of each activity the mentor and mentee will use the Activity Analysis, Self-Assessment/Descriptive Assessment and Measurement Sheet to record the results of the mentee's self-reflection and the mentor's observations, Appendix 4.

The recommendations will take into account areas of low scores. These areas, for example: use of teaching aids, classroom management, organisation of interactive learning, differentiated learning, become topics/themes for professional dialogue.

Professional dialogues can be recorded on the Professional Dialogue Record Sheet, Annex 5. This can be used by the mentor to analyse and reflect on different experiences: supporting activities, producing products (activity projects, learning sheets, assessment tests, learning support materials), individual study, personal development plan, reviewing development needs.

At the end of the professional dialogue, conclusions will be mentioned, targeting progress and areas for improvement, for the next steps and activities. The mentor makes recommendations on bibliography, self-study, ways of documentation, etc.

The mentor can also support teaching activities focused on observing these practices and then the mentee will support activities in which they demonstrate the targeted behaviour. In these circumstances,

Activity Observation Sheets will be used, focusing on the issues identified (Appendix 6).

At the end of the mentoring process, an Evaluation Sheet will be used, in which the mentee's activity is self-evaluated/evaluated in descriptive terms (Annex 7).

From the mentee's perspective the mentoring process ends with a reflective journal (Annex 8), in which he/she analyses and records the impact it has had on his/her own development and the ways of intervention, should the mentoring continue, in a new phase.

Each of the attached instruments will have a section with identification data, depending on the specifics of the instrument and the signatures of the two actors.

Each activity in the mentoring process has an integrated reflexive exercise, giving the mentee the opportunity to identify effective practices that have met the mentor's expectations and aspects that need improvement. The reflective exercises are an opportunity to provide feedback for subsequent activities.

Research presentation. Results obtained

The tools in the mentor's toolkit were presented and offered for use to the 293 teachers participating in the Prof I and II course, in the modules Designing Mentoring Activity and Managing Teaching Practice Activity. Of the participating teachers, 35, 12%, responded to a questionnaire expressing their opinion on the usefulness, advantages and issues that may create problems in using these tools.

During the 10 series, 13 hours each, two purposes were permanently pursued: to go through the contents and the training of specific competences related to the modules and to present and analyse the tools in order to convince teachers to use them in the mentoring activity.

85% of respondents rated the quality and coherence of the tools presented very highly and 13% to some extent.

100% of respondents rated the consistency of the tools in the mentor toolkit very highly.

92% of respondents used the tools presented in the mentoring activity.

85% of respondents asked mentees for their opinion on the usefulness of the tools used.

Of these 100% appreciated the usefulness of the tools in the mentor's kit.

Participating teachers found the idea of teaching in partnership with mentees new and interesting.

Among the aspects that pose some problems in using these tools were mentioned: their complexity, which requires a good theoretical psycho-

pedagogical training to understand the terms and the existing connections, a lot of time to use them, sustained effort from mentors and mentees for demanding reflective exercises.

Conclusions

The tools proposed in this paper are the fruit of twenty years of mentoring. The tools have been designed and continually improved according to the specifics of the institution, the discipline and the mentee.

Starting from the needs analysis, the effective mentor is the one who, through his actions, is moulded to the mentee's needs, with the permanent objective of supporting him in his professional development.

Each activity in the mentoring process, as a mentor, practice coordinator or mentor training, ended with satisfaction questionnaires and measurement of the impact, usefulness, coherence and problems of these tools.

In each setting, satisfaction was provided by the usefulness of the tools received.

Working with these tools is not easy, neither for mentors nor mentees. It requires time, commitment, concentration, reflection but the results lead to an authentic mentoring process.

The way mentoring is now organised requires efforts that only passionate mentors and mentees are willing to make.

We hope that the restructuring of the mentoring process, the repositioning of the mentoring institution on new foundations, will provide the opportunity to use the tools to mainstream the conduct of authentic mentoring.

Annex 1.

| Specific skills (Explicitly record the competencies, as they appear in the syllabus) | Operational objectives |
|---|------------------------|
| S.s.... | O1 O2. ... |
| S. s... | |

Table 1. Activity observation sheet

| Content details | Specific skills | Teacher's activity | Learning activity | Resources (Methods Teaching aids Ways of organising learning) | Ways of Assessment/ Assessment methods continuous |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| | | | | | |

Annex 2

| Reflective questions | Examples |
|---|----------|
| What news have you learned? | |
| What were your most successful experiences during the activity? | |
| What do you think made it successful? | |
| What did you participate in the activity with? | |
| What did you get out of the activity that you carried out? | |
| What changes would you make to improve the quality of your participation? Refer strictly to yourself. | |
| What are the new things you are taking forward in your teaching? | |
| What would you change if you resumed participation in this type of activity? | |
| Questions you would like to clarify with your mentor | |

Table 2. Reflective diary for extra-curricular activity/ Reflective journal for methodical work/teaching circle

Note:

You can fill in any aspect that you think would enhance the quality of self-reflection.

Annex 3.

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Specific skills (Explicitly record the competencies, as they appear in the syllabus) | Operational objectives |
| S.s.... | O1 O2. ... |
| S. s... | |

| Content details | Specific skills | Teacher's activity | Learning activity | Resources (Methods Teaching aids Ways of organizing learning) | Ways of Assessment/ Assessment methods continuous |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| | | | | | |

Table 3. Activity project

Note: Attach to the activity project Appendices: worksheets, clippings from the collections, application notebooks, the digital manuals that you use as support in the activities.

Annex 4.

| Domain and aspects assessed | Self-reflection of the learner* | Appraisals/ Mentor's recommendations | Maximum score | Self-assessment | Assessment |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| Activity design | | | 24 p | | |
| 1. Correlation - Content Details. Skills. Learning activities. Resources. Assessment | | | 4 p | | |
| 2. Logical sequence of teaching sequences | | | 4 p | | |
| 3. Creativity in lesson design | | | 4 p | | |
| 4. Intra/interdisciplinary correlations | | | 4 p | | |
| 5. Appropriate selection of methods, procedures, ways of organising learning | | | 4 p | | |
| 6. Selection of resources. Mandatory requirement - multimedia resources | | | 4 p | | |
| THE CONDUCT OF TEACHING ACTIVITY | | | 44p | | |
| 1. Following the syllabus | | | 4 p | | |
| 2. Making knowledge accessible, essential and systematic | | | 4 p | | |
| 3. Involving all students in learning | | | 4 p | | |
| 4. Efficient use of learning resources. | | | 4 p | | |
| 5. Differentiating learning | | | 4 p | | |
| 6. Providing the necessary support to each pupil | | | 4 p | | |
| 7. Scientific accuracy. Correctness of expression (written and oral) | | | 4 p | | |
| 8. Clear formulation of tasks, explanations | | | 4 p | | |
| 9. Ensuring optimal time and pace | | | 4 p | | |
| 10. Carrying out continuous assessment and providing feedback | | | 4 p | | |
| 11. Developing students' self-assessment skill | | | 4 p | | |
| CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT | | | 20 p | | |
| 1. Handling difficult situations arising in class | | | 4 p | | |
| 2. Establishing and maintaining a stimulating atmosphere | | | 4 p | | |
| 3. Maintaining discipline | | | 4 p | | |
| 4. Valuing positive attitude towards learning, group work, peer support | | | 4 p | | |
| 5. Motivating pupils for the activity | | | 4 p | | |
| SELF-ASSESSMENT OF WORK | | | 12 p | | |
| 1. Ability to objectively self-evaluate teaching performance | | | 4 p | | |
| 2. Ability to support the approach taken psycho-pedagogically | | | 4 p | | |
| 3. Ability to respond to observers' questions | | | 4 p | | |
| Total marks | | | 100 p | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Reflection on teaching principles | |
| P1. Intuition principle | |
| P.2 The principle of conscious and active participation of all students | |
| P3. Principle of systematization and continuity | |
| P4. Principle of linking theory to practice | |
| P5. Principle of respect for age and individual particularities | |

Table 4. Evaluation sheet of teaching activity

* Examples. Concrete ways of implementation. Teaching practices that meet each criterion assessed

Overall assessment by the mentor:

Annex 5

| Subject of dialogue | Positive aspects (progress since previous dialogue) | | Aspects that can be improved | | Appreciations/ Recommendations* |
|---------------------|---|------------|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| | Self-assessment | Evaluation | Self-assessment | Evaluation | |
| | | | | | |

Table 5. Professional dialogue sheet

Date and place of next dialogue:

*Mentor's feedback, recommendations on possible ways forward:

Reflective questions

1. What were your most successful experiences during the activity?
2. What do you think made it successful?
3. What were the least successful experiences during the activity?
4. What do you consider to have caused the failure?
5. What met your expectations?
6. Which teaching sequences/experiences did not meet your expectations?
7. What would you replace them with if you were to resume the activity? What changes would you make?
8. What was the impact of the activity on students?
9. What would you like to clarify with the mentor?

Annex 6.

| Nr. crt. | Evaluation criteria | Self-reflective exercise. Comments. Alternative methods | Comments. Alternative methods / mentor's suggestions |
|----------|--|---|---|
| 1. | Matching of teaching material and target competence | | |
| 2. | The material met the requirements methodological (suggestive, attractive, diversified, differentiated) | | |
| 3. | The material was used in front of the teacher / in groups / individually. | | |
| 4. | Adaptation to the age specificities of the pupils | | |
| 5. | Multimedia materials were used | | |
| 6 | Specific teaching aids for multimedia learning were used | | |

Table 6. Activity observation sheet - Use of teaching aids

Reflective questions

What about the way you used the teaching aids satisfied you?

What do you think ensured understanding and learning?

What about the use of teaching aids did you find unsatisfactory? Why?

If you were to repeat the activity, what would you change?

What alternatives do you think you have to improve the effectiveness of the use of teaching aids?

What solutions do you see to prepare for the next activities, from a teaching aid perspective?

| Evaluation criteria | Self-reflective exercise. Comments. Alternative methods | Comments. Alternative methods / mentor's suggestions |
|---|---|--|
| Clarity of instructions | | |
| Teacher checked whether students understood the instructions | | |
| Students were cooperative | | |
| Teacher maintained eye contact with class | | |
| The teacher expressed him/herself in an approachable manner, clear, coherent and nuanced. | | |
| Teacher maintained control of the class throughout the lesson | | |
| Teacher encouraged participation all students | | |
| Teacher organized activities individual, group/team | | |

Table 7. Focused Observation Sheet - Classroom Management

Reflective questions

1. What was it about classroom management that pleased you? Why?
2. What about classroom management did you find unsatisfactory? Why?
3. What would you change if you were to return?
4. What alternatives do you consider to improve performance?
5. What solutions do you see to prepare you to remedy problems? Progress and areas for improvement, in interactive learning.

Annex 7

| COMPETENCES. ASSESSMENT INDICATORS | Grading awarded | | Mentor's recommendations |
|--|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| | Self- | Evaluation | |
| | | | |

| | evaluation | | |
|--|------------|--|--|
| I.Cognitive competence | | | |
| 1. Content knowledge of the subjects taught | | | |
| 2. Correct writing and neat expression | | | |
| II.Design competence | | | |
| 1. Compliance with the programme | | | |
| 2. Carrying out the teaching design: | | | |
| a) Correlation - Details of content. Skills. Learning activities. Resources. ASSESSMENT | | | |
| b) Creativity in designing the lesson | | | |
| c) Ensuring the applicability of the content | | | |
| d) Intra and interdisciplinary correlations, integrated approach | | | |
| e) Appropriate selection of teaching-learning methods (focusing on student activity) | | | |
| f) Selection of resources. Mandatory requirement multimedia resources | | | |
| g) Combining different forms of activity (frontal, group, individual) | | | |
| h) Designing differentiated learning tasks | | | |
| i) Adequate selection of continuous assessment modalities | | | |
| III.Competence of action | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1.Preparing/maintaining the necessary conditions for the lesson: | | | |
| a) Ensuring the means of education | | | |
| b) Organization of the group of students | | | |
| 2.Using motivational strategies | | | |
| a) Capturing attention | | | |
| b) Maintaining interest in knowledge | | | |
| c) Satisfying students' cognitive needs | | | |
| d) Attractive approach to the contents and the form of presentation | | | |
| e) The ability to effectively use the forms of motivation | | | |
| 3.Use of teaching-learning-evaluation strategies | | | |
| a) Adequate use of teaching-learning methods (focusing on student activation) | | | |
| b) Ensuring the applicability of the content | | | |
| c) Organizing the class and distributing tasks ensuring the participation and support given to all students; | | | |
| d) Capitalizing on the formative value of group activities | | | |
| e) Ensuring differentiation in learning | | | |
| f) Effective use of educational means in the activity (including multimedia) | | | |
| g) Judicious use of training time | | | |
| h) Use of assessment as a | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| source and opportunity for learning | | | |
| i) The use of the evaluation results in the self-regulation of the didactic act | | | |
| IV. Communication and relational competence | | | |
| 1. Semantic communication: | | | |
| a) Communication and relationship with the mentor teacher | | | |
| b) Ensuring the receptivity of the message (intelligibility, fluency, rhythm, degree of accessibility); | | | |
| 2. Affective communication | | | |
| a) The ability to apply to the student's situation | | | |
| b) Identifying problems and solving them constructively | | | |
| V. Personal skills/qualities | | | |
| 1) enthusiasm | | | |
| 2) affective availability | | | |
| 3) confidence in students' abilities | | | |
| 4) consistency | | | |
| 5) assuming responsibility for the training of students | | | |
| 6) objectivity | | | |
| 7) affective balance | | | |
| 8) flexibility of behavior | | | |
| 9) moral dress | | | |
| 10) punctuality in designing | | | |
| 11) responsiveness to the mentor teacher's | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| suggestions | | | |
| 12) punctuality in the didactic activity | | | |
| VI. Self-assessment capacity | | | |
| 1. The ability to make decisions, during the activity, related to the teaching-learning-evaluation process for the purpose of self-regulation | | | |
| 2. The capacity for objective self-evaluation of teaching performance | | | |
| 3. The ability to psychopedagogically support the work done | | | |
| 4. The ability to answer the observers' questions | | | |

Table 8. Final evaluation sheet of the follower's activity

Note:

A qualification is given for each indicator.

Recommendations from the mentor make explicit reference to competencies and assessment indicators.

Annex 8

| Reflective questions | Exemplification |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. What were the most successful experiences during the mentoring activity? | |
| 2. What do you think has determined the success? | |
| 3. What were the least successful experiences during the mentoring activity? | |
| 4. What do you think caused the failure? | |
| 5. What met your expectations? | |
| 6. What did not meet your expectations? | |
| Conclusion. What changes would you make in your own work in the new mentoring phase/if the mentoring were to resume? | |

Table 9. Practice journal

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