



Project number: 610448-EPP-1-2019-1-IL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

PROMENTORS

Promoting Mentors' Work in Education

ERASMUS+ – EU programme for education, training, youth and sport Capacity Building in Higher Education

Deliverable D1.1

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

Due date: May 15, 2020

Submission date: May 15, 2020

Project start: January 15th, 2020

Duration: 36 months

Beneficiary and staff leading the preparation of this deliverable: Kaye College: Haya Kaplan;

University of Bucharest: Mihaela Stingu

Dissemination Level: National, Institution

Disclaimer: The European Commission's support for the production of this deliverable does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained

therein.

Document number:	DXXX
Document Title:	Detailed description of the Finnish Model of Peer-Group Mentoring
Work package type:	Preparation
Work package:	WP1 – Preparatory activities for delivering a MIT-inspired mentoring system in Israel
Document status:	Draft
Date:	21.4.20
Author(s):	Matti Pennanen & Hannu Heikkinen
Abstract	Detailed description of the Finnish Model of Peer-Group Mentoring to be utilised for the comparative report prepared in the work package 1. This paper introduces the basic principles and practice arrangements of the peer-group mentoring model implemented in the Finnish education system.
Keyword list:	Peer-group mentoring, teachers, new teachers, induction, professional development

_

Report on the Finnish Model of Peer-group mentoring

COUNTRY: Finland

INSTITUTION: University of Jyväskylä

1. Background (Theories, policies, methodologies)

Guiding questions:

- What are the main theoretical concepts that you focus on in your mentors' training?
- Present the academic institution's view on mentoring: what are the leading theories or approaches to mentoring models in your institution? Provide details (What vision underlies the mentoring process?)

The underlying theoretical principles of the Finnish model of Peer-group mentoring (PGM) are rooted in theories of learning and professional development, which provide the characteristics to the model. The theoretical principles are the following:

- 1. Constructivism
- 2. Integrative pedagogy
- 3. Dialogue and narrativity
- 4. Autonomy
- 5. Equity

Constuctivism maintains that knowledge as such cannot be transferred from a individual to another, because new knowledge is always interpreted on the basis of our prior knowledge, conceptions, experiences, and beliefs. Often people may interprete or understand the same things in different ways. Therefore discussion and communication between people is needed in creating shared understanding and knowledge. Founding on the constructivist perspective, PGM is based on exchange of ideas and joint knowledge construction, in which all parties learn. (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012, pp. 22–24).

Integrative pedagogy is utilized as the guiding model for learning in peer-group mentoring. The principle of integrative pedagogy means that different forms of knowledge are integrated in educative process to promote learning and professional development. Basically, the idea of integrative pedagogy addresses the common demand to combine 'theory and practice' in education. Instead of 'theory and practice', integrative pedagogy refers to four forms of knowledge:

- 1) theoretical and conceptual knowledge,
- 2) practical and experiential knowledge,
- 3) self-regulative knowledge, and

4) socio-cultural knowledge

Theoretical and conceptual knowledge is formal in nature and easy to express aloud. This type of knowledge can be learned, for instance, through texts, figures, discussions, or lectures. It is also abstract knowledge resulted from a conscious process of thinking. In the everyday speech it is often referred to as 'theory'. Theoretical knowledge needs to be complemented with practical and experiential knowledge. This knowledge is often simply referred to as 'practice' in the everyday speech. Sometimes the terms 'know-how', 'skills', 'capacities' and 'competences' are also used. This knowledge develops through practical experience and that is the reason why it often remains intuitive, implicit, tacit and inarticulate. Along with these two forms of knowledge, a professional needs another kind of knowledge which is self-regulative knowledge. This type of knowledge describes the metacognitive and reflective capacities and skills. A typical feature of high-level expertise is strong self-regulation, which refers to the reflective evaluation of one's own activities, awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses, and development of competence. A skilled expert is also aware of (4.) socio-cultural knowledge. This refers to knowledge that is embedded in social practices and cultures. Every workplace and social community has its own ways of action and practices which can be learnt best through participating in these practices. (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012, pp 24–27).

In peer-group mentoring the integration of the different forms of knowledge happens through informal discussion of the authentic experiences of the group members. Colleagues in the group may help to verbalise practical and experiential knowledge by using the theoretical and conceptual knowledge learned in the formal training. Asking questions and commenting helps to reflect the personal experiences from different perspectives and socio-cultural knowledge can be learned by listening to the experiences of the other group members.

The basic principles of constructivism and integrative pedagogy are accompanied with the principle of narrativity and dialogue. According to these principles both the mentors and mentees learn in the mentoring process through sharing narratives about their work and life, and instead of transferring knowledge, they actually construct a new understanding. Narratives can be written or spoken stories about personal experiences. Narratives can be expressed or supported by different artistic methods, such as paintings, performances or music. In a mentoring dialogue, both parties participate in verbalizing their experiences through telling stories of what has happened to them in their daily work. In a dialogic relationship, no one has a better or more valid vision of reality, as all of the participants in the discussion understand that their visions are incomplete. Narrative is also a form for humans to understand their personal identity and, in similar way, professional identity can be construed through narratives. (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä 2012, 14-15 and 27.)

The PGM model also draws on the idea of professional autonomy. It can be understood as a continuum of the rather high level of autonomy of the teaching profession in Finland. Automony is often erroneously misunderstood as individualism. A high level of autonomy does not necessarily allow teachers to do whatever they wish. The concept of autonomy emphasizes interaction and collective will-formation in a social sphere, whereas individualism refers to actions based on the will of a particular individual. Finnish peer-group mentoring draws on the

idea of professional autonomy as collective will-formation instead of individual will-formation. (Heikkinen, Pennanen, Markkanen & Tynjälä, 2020).

A key word of peer-group mentoring is the concept of 'peer'. Being peers with someone refers to parity of the parties; therefore, PGM is based on a presumption that the members of the group are equal participants. When examining equity in mentoring, we must ask whether we are referring to equity as: (1.) human beings, i.e. as existential equity, (2.) associated with competence and knowledge, i.e. in terms of epistemic equity, and (3.) associated with responsibilities and duties, i.e. as juridical equity. Firstly, the dimension of existential equity refers to the equal value of each individual's life in its uniqueness. From the existential point of view, it is presumed that every participant is equally valued as individual human beings in peer-group mentoring. Therefore the relationship between the participants is symmetrical. Secondly, epistemic equity refers to knowing something or being capable of doing something. From the epistemic point of view, it is evident that some people have more knowledge, capacities or competences than others. Mentoring in its traditional sense is based on an assumption that the more experienced participant (the mentor) has more knowledge and experience. But nowadays it is likely that in some areas of life the younger participants have competence and know-how that can be significant and feasible also for success in teaching. Epistemic equity thus offers various options – a relationship can be in a variety of ways asymmetric, in favour of either the mentor or the mentee. Thirdly, in terms of the juridical equity, we explore the formally defined division of responsibilities, duties, and rights in the mentoring processes. In formal mentoring relationships, mentor has to assume more legal responsibility than the mentee. But if the mentoring relationship is purely informal, the juridical responsibility is not such a major issue. (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012, pp. 19–22.)

• Present the model of mentoring and mentors' training in your university, and connect it to the national policies and approaches to induction in your country.

Founded on the previously described theoretical background, peer-group mentoring is designed to support the professional development and work-wellbeing of teachers. Part of their work, it's teachers' duty to maintain and develop their professional competence. Professional development should include the aspects of professional, personal and social support. However, PGM is not intended to provide individualised support for heavy and accumulated work-related problems and stress, which in Finland is addressed through work supervision and work health care. For work-related stress, peer-group mentoring can be considered as preventive support. PGM also serves as a model for induction, which helps new teachers to become members of their professional community. In Finland, graduate teachers have the full qualification for the profession, therefore peer-group mentoring does not include assessment, evaluation or accreditation of the professional competence of newly qualified teachers. Mentor training focuses on the mentors' role to support the group work and introduce mentors to the model of peer-group mentoring. (Pennanen, Heikkinen & Tynjälä, 2020, pp. 358–359)

• Requirements and process of becoming a mentor

There are no strict requirements for mentors, however it is recommended that mentor would have at least a few years of work experience. Also mentors may have been former group members. Teachers, who become mentors, usually have strong motivation for collaborative practices and developing their professional expertise. Teachers can enroll voluntarily when there is an open call for a mentor training programme. However, teachers have to ask permission from their employer in order to participate if the training programme is organised during their working hours.

2. Role and responsibilities (for mentors and mentees)

Guiding questions:

- What is the mentor persona that you are aiming for (what are the characteristics, skills and abilities of the ideal mentor)?
- What are the mentor's/mentee's role and responsabilities in your view?

The person leading the group is referred as a mentor and other group members are referred as mentees (or group members). These designations are not used to prefigure the professional expertise, but only to prescribe the roles for the group work. Peer-groups are mainly self-directed planning their meetings and contens for the meetings usually on a yearly basis. The relationship between participants is reciprocal, in which everyone can give something to each other.

Peer-group mentoring draws on the contemporary view of mentoring roles. Instead of hierarchical positions (master and apprenctice, for instance) PGM cultivates the lateral positions of mentors and mentees, in other words, the peer relationship. From the learning perspective, mentor is regarded as a critical friend and partner in dialogue, while mentees are active, critical and reflective thinkers. Group members, mentors involved, are responsible for their own professional learning and they can decide how to make best use of the support and advices received from the group. Mentors and mentees should be able to demonstrate empathic support, which highlights the humanistic features of mentoring. In PGM, mentors role is to support the empowerment of the mentees and the recreation of the professional community. Mentees' role as active and contributive agents in the work community is emphasised. Preferable set of characteristics for mentors and mentees have been identified as follows: equal, peer, communicative, sharing, attentive, constructive, reflective, empathic, calm, committed, energetic, present, trustworthy, interested in professional development. Good mentors are described also with qualities such as considerate, motivated, and prepared. (Pennanen, Heikkinen & Tynjälä, 2017, 364).

Peer-group mentoring the mentor's role is more about facilitating the meeting (preparation, practical arrangements) and the discussion (guiding, asking questions). Likewise, the role of mentee is not about being subordinate, but being recognised as a member of the group. The designated roles of mentor and mentee in peer-group mentoring do not create fixed positions with respect to expertise. Instead, participants share their knowledge and experiences, and sharing is valuable as such without any formal titles to highlight or prefigure the expertise (Pennanen, Heikkinen & Tynjälä, 2017, 366).

3. Mentor Education

Guiding questions:

- The profile of the mentoring courses facilitators
 - What is the profile of the course facilitators? Describe their background.
 - How do you train the course facilitators?
- Mentoring courses/training
 - What are the goals of your mentoring courses/training?
 - What are the central topics of the mentoring courses?
 - What skills does your mentoring training promote? (e.g. empathy, problem solving, active listening).
 - What are the guiding principles of the mentoring model in your institution?
 - What are the central values that guide the process?
 - How does the field of mentoring relate to teachers' professional identity and career development?

Peer-group mentoring is coordinated in the National Network for Peer-group Mentoring, which involves all the universities and universities of applied sciences providing teacher education in Finland. This network has applied funding for the development of PGM and organising the mentor training programmes. Network agrees on the universities who will provide mentor training and the overall framework for the training programmes. Universities can make individual decisions on the more specific themes and contents for the training seminars.

Network has used a variety of different educators and trainers in mentor training programmes. Programmes are usually lead by teacher educators and educational researchers, who are familiar with peer-group mentoring, teacher education, teachers' professional development, educational and learning theories, mentoring and induction. For more specific themes there have been visiting lecturers and educators, for example experienced mentors, educational philosophers, experts on communication and social interaction.

Mentor training program introduces the theoretical background of PGM and the methods used in the groups. The training programme implemented in Central Finland, for example, lasts for one academic year and comprises 8-10 ECTS study points (ECTS= European Credit Transfer System). Mentor training programme usually consists of five seminars of two days each, and includes learning assignments. As part of the mentor training programme, it is intended that mentors try to organise a group for peer-mentoring in order to apply the conceptual frameworks and methods learnt in the training seminars. Mentors are trained to utilize interactive and constructive learning methods to promote social learning in the group. Contents in the past mentor training programmes have been interaction and dialogue in the work community, well-being in schools, constructivism and collegiality in learning, tacit knowledge, supporting professional identity work through narrative work, and professional ethics in education. (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012, pp. 29–30).

• Practical aspects

• How do you implement your mentoring model? What are your hands-on practices?

Mentor is the person responsible for gathering the group together. This can be done through different methods, such as email invitation, informal discussion, or online registration. The ideal size of the group varies between five to ten members and it provides a platform where multiple views could be introduced but the discussion would not become too impossible. The peer-mentoring group usually meets 6 - 8 times in an academic year, for about 1,5 - 2 hours at a time. Meetings are preferred to be held in some other places than school. There are no exact requirements for the meeting place, but it should be cozy and peaceful enabling confidential discussion. The group devises a plan of action in its first meeting and group can choose a common broad theme for the entire academic year. Some of the examples have been multiculturalism, curriculum work, or teaching method development in a specific discipline, such as arts, physical education, mathematics etc. The mentor is the facilitator of the group and responsible for the group's schedule. The mentor also leads discussion, trying to allot speaking time equally among participants. The mentor can also propose themes to be discussed and stimulate discussion through different narrative and action-based exercises. The ethical basis of the group is manifested through an agreement upon action. All the PGM groups are expected to compose their own rules and agreements, but all the agreements must include two basic principles: confidentiality and discussion ethics. The principle of confidentiality means that everything spoken in the group stays in the group; in other words, disclosures made within the group are not shared outside the group. The ethical discussion principle means that the group's purpose is not to be a rumor mill, wherein other employees' or pupils' personal affairs are debated. That is why the group agrees to avoid mentioning by name or stigmatizing in some way people who are not part of the group. (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012, pp. 16-17).

• Present three practices (including their rationale, goals, methods, etc.)

Peer-group mentoring has been implemented in various situations (Pennanen, Markkanen & Heikkinen, 2019) of which three examples are described here. One version of the Finnish PGM model combines pre-service and in-service teacher education by inviting teacher students to the same mentoring groups with working teachers. Peer-group mentoring can be offered as an voluntary course for student teachers when included in the university's curriculum. The idea is to provide student teachers a chance during their studies to participate in a professional community of working teachers and in this way to promote intergenerational learning. The main objectives were to promote students' professional identity work and empower students to take steps towards working life. From a wider viewpoint, the model was designed so that it would mirror a 'rich pedagogy' in teacher education that brings together teachers from different stages of their career to share viewpoints and expertise and to learn together. (Korhonen, Heikkinen, Tynjälä & Kiviniemi, 2017).

Peer-group mentoring has been utilised to enhance the multiprofessional collaboration in a municipality located in northern Finland. This was applied in a parallel to newly established facilities, which served as an community centre for early childhood education, basic education and youth work. The aim was to improve the communication and collaboration between different education professionals. Multiprofessional teams arranged peer-group mentoring meetings following the principles of the model. PGM was supported by the administrative leaders of each field and process included joint planning of the whole staff, in which needs and aspirations could be shared. It was observed that peer-group mentoring helped different professionals to gain knowledge of others' work and also befriended each other. This helped to discuss the values and aims of the work in the same unit, in which administrative borders needed to be crossed on a daily basis. Familiarising and befriending were important parts to build sustainable practices for collaboration and also had a significant impact on work well-being. (Ylitapio-Mäntylä, Rossi-Salow, Rivinen ja Norvapalo, 2019)

In liberal adult education peer-group mentoring was a good way to bring colleagues together whom they would not otherwise meet. Especially part-time teachers who have irregular working hours may have difficulty connecting with colleagues to discuss work-related issues. Peer-group mentoring meetings proved to be worthy for networking and as a forum to exchange good practices with colleagues in the same subject. Another important aspect was the discussions about the pedagogical work in liberal adult education as the teachers does not necessarily have extensive formal pre-service education for teaching. Organising peer-group mentoring in liberal adult education required the commitment of the educational leaders to provide and allocate resources for the meetings. (Hokkanen, Mäki-Hakola, Karhulahti, Simola & Heikkinen, 2019).

- How do these practices connect to the view that you presented above?
- How are the mentoring courses and training adapted to the local context and culture?

All of these examples used the similar principles to organise peer-group mentoring. In order to be viable and meaningful, the participants in each cases decided the themes, topics and contents for the meetings, which reflects the self-directed group work. However, groups are still supported by the surrounding arrangements, for example, peer-group mentoring for student teachers is included in their studies and organisational support for planning and resources in two other examples.

As the mentor training follows the similar principle of integrative pedagogy as does the peer-group mentoring meetings, it is valuable to connect the learning with the socio-cultural knowledge of the participants. This can be done through connecting the learning tasks and examples close to the participants' experiences. Mentor training uses small group exercises in which participants have the space to discuss issues related to local implementation and enactment of peer-group mentoring.

4. School level impact

Guiding questions:

- Effects and impacts
 - As far as is known, what is the contribution of your academic institution's mentoring training process to mentors, interns, beginning teachers and schools?
 - If research has been conducted, what was its focus and what were the findings? (Include a research abstract).
 - Please present any additional evidence you might have of the various impacts of the training and mentoring processes.
- Mentoring with the schools in mind
 - What kind of connections do you have with schools as part of your mentoring activity and with whom? (Principals, leading teams where relevant, etc.)
 - What mechanisms do you promote within the schools in order to enhance mentoring? How do you do that?
 - What successes and accomplishments have the schools had in this context? Please provide examples.
 - What difficulties do interns and beginning teachers express about the actual mentoring (what do you hear from both the groups' facilitators and the beginning teachers, or from others?)
 - What kind of challenges do you meet when working with schools to implement your mentoring model?

The National Network for Peer-group Mentoring has produced 193 research publications during 2009-19. This includes seven edited books, 21 articles in peer-reviewed journals, 25 chapters in peer-reviewed edited books (or peer-reviewed conference proceedings), 53 chapters in non-refereed edited books, 21 master's theses, three doctoral dissertations and 69 conference papers or posters (Pennanen, Markkanen & Heikkinen, 2019). In this report these publication can be covered only partially.

In general, teachers, whether new or experienced in their profession, have found PGM important for their professional development and wellbeing. Based on a study, 96 % of the mentees participating in PGM found peer group mentoring important both at the beginning of teachers' working career and also in later stages of working life, and 84 % of the respondents perceived that the other members of the group supported their professional development. On a personal dimension of support, 84 % of the respondents felt that PGM had strengthened their professional identity. As to social dimension of professional development, 81 % of them agreed with the statement that PGM had improved their collaboration skills. About 55 % of vocational teachers reported that they had changed their working methods due to participating in PGM, whereas 35 % of the general education teachers agreed with this statement. While 38 % of

vocational teachers reported that they had been contacted more often by their colleagues about their opinions and advice after participating in the PGM, only 10 % of general education teachers had noticed this kind of effect of their PGM experience. (Geeraerts et al. 2015).

A review of the research on PGM presented prerequisites, benefits, and challenges of PGM on three different levels: individual/group level, organizational level, and national level. With regard to the individual and group level findings, prerequisite for successful peer group mentoring were an open and confidential atmosphere, common rules and agreements and activating methods. The review results indicated highly positive in terms of teachers' wellbeing as well as professional and identity development. The main challenges related to time management, commitment of participants and difficulties in group-dynamic between people. At the organizational level, the support from the management is a prerequisite for success. The benefits for the organization were mostly indirect, however it was noted that teachers also were empowered to act as constructive change agents in their schools. The biggest challenge was that peer learning was not always recognized as a form of professional development. Thus, conceptual change in terms of what is regarded as professional development is needed. Recommendation is that mentors would get some compensation for organising and facilitating the groups and the participation in the group would be included as part of teachers obligation for annual professional development. At the national level, it was observed that without legislation or national collective agreement about the principles and conditions of the activities, PGM does not become consolited part of the education system. This situation allows municipalities to cut spending on teacher induction in economically challenging times, which is reflected in low proportion of teachers participating in mentoring. (Tynjälä, Pennanen, Markkanen & Heikkinen, 2019).

Induction is a problematic topic in Finland. According to a TALIS-survey, there is low availability of induction programs for new teachers (Taajamo & Puhakka, 2019, 6). The difficulty is found in the nature of the education system and the current (financial) situation in municipalities. Finnish education system is based on the model of distributed decision-making and, related to that, municipalities as education providers and employers are responsible for local decision-making and educational policy. Therefore municipalities have different approaches to organise induction support for new teachers and, in many cases, induction programs have been insufficient.

5. Future plans

Guiding questions:

• What are your future plans? (Applying certain ideas, adopting an approach, connecting to the Academic institution's vision, etc.).

In Finland, the main challenges of the model are system-related: (1) the shift from project-based (and project-funded) activity to a consolidated part of the educational system, (2) sufficient resources and allocated time for the professionals to engage in the activity, and (3) awareness and support for mentoring in the education system to promote availability (Markkanen, Pennanen, Tynjala, & Heikkinen, 2015).

Finland is outlining how mentoring solutions can be developed in the near future. Initiatives have been taken, for example, through a national survey to identify the factors influencing the attractiveness of teacher education. One of the conclusions of the study is that induction and mentoring of new teachers should be further developed. The future shows which direction the development will take.

References

Heikkinen, H. L. T., Jokinen, H., &. Tynjälä, P. (Eds.). (2012). Peer-group mentoring for teacher development. London, England: Routledge

Hokkanen, S., Mäki-Hakola, H., Karhulahti, A., Simola, E. & Heikkinen, A. (2019). Teema 4: Vapaan sivistystyön verme. [Theme 4: Peer-group mentoring in Liberal adult education]. In M. Pennanen, I. Markkanen & H.L.T. Heikkinen (eds.) Verme2 testaa: Kokemuksia vertaisryhmämentoroinnin soveltamisesta [Verme2 testing: Experiences in applying peer mentoring]. Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä. pp. 55–66.

Korhonen, H., Heikkinen, H. L., Kiviniemi, U., & Tynjälä, P. (2017). Student teachers' experiences of participating in mixed peer mentoring groups of in-service and pre-service teachers in Finland. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *61*, 153-163.

Pennanen, M., Heikkinen, H. L., & Tynjälä, P. (2017). Virtues of mentors and mentees in the Finnish model of teachers' peer-group mentoring. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 64*(3), 355-371.

Pennanen, M., Markkanen, I., & Heikkinen, H. L. T. (Eds.). (2019). Verme2 testaa: Kokemuksia vertaisryhmämentoroinnin soveltamisesta [Verme2 testing: Experiences in applying peer mentoring]. Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä.

Taajamo, M., & Puhakka, E. (2019). Opetuksen ja oppimisen kansainvälinen tutkimus TALIS 2018: Perusopetuksen vuosiluokkien 7–9 ensituloksia, osa 1 [International research in teaching and learning TALIS 2018: First results of basic education grades 7–9, part 1] (Raportit ja selvitykset No. 8). Helsinki, Finland: Opetushallitus. Retrieved from https://www.oph.fi/fi/tilastot-ja-julkaisut/julkaisut/opetuksen-ja-oppimisen-kansainvalinen-tutk imus-talis-2018

Tynjälä, P., Pennanen, M., Markkanen, I., & Heikkinen, H. (2019). Finnish model of peer-group mentoring: Review of research. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences. Special issue "Mentoring: Theoretical Background, Empirical Findings, and Practical Applications.", 1–16.

Ylitapio-Mäntylä, O., Rossi-Salow, M., Rivinen, S. & Norvapalo, K. (2019). Moniverme varhaiskasvatuksen, perusopetuksen ja nuorisotyön yhdistäjänä. [Multiprofessional peer-group mentoring connecting early childhood education, basic education and youth work]. In M. Pennanen, I. Markkanen & H.L.T. Heikkinen (eds.) Verme2 testaa: Kokemuksia vertaisryhmämentoroinnin soveltamisesta [Verme2 testing: Experiences in applying peer mentoring]. Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä. pp. 42–50.