

Drop-out detection and prevention

Guidelines



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tune in! Combating drop out! Drop-out detection and prevention Guidelines
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1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal of these guidelines is to be a support resource for all those people working in narrow relationship with youngsters in vulnerability situation due to their risk of early school dropout. Certainly the children who drop out of school without obtaining certification face undesirable lifelong consequences both for the individuals directly and the whole society.

The effects on society of a child dropping out include an increased need over the long term on public assistance programs. The economic and social costs of school failure and dropout are high. The secondary education completion gives individuals better employment and healthier lifestyle prospects resulting in greater contributions to public budgets and investment. More educated people contribute to more democratic societies and sustainable economies, and are less dependent on public aid and less vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Societies with skilled individuals are best prepared to respond to the current and future potential crises. Therefore, investing in early, primary and secondary education for all, and in particular for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, is both fair and economically efficient.

Over the course of their lifetimes, kids who dropped out of school at high school level or earlier have lower earnings than individuals who earn at least a high school diploma, and the current unemployment rates in Europe makes it more complicated to find a job in a labour market much more competitive and specialized; According with CEDEFOP studies – the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/identifying-skills-needs/index.aspx>, the job openings for the period 2010-2020 (replacement plus vacant positions) will be concentrated for the highest levels of education (ISCED 2-3 and ISCED 5-6).

The reduction of early school leaving to less than 10 percent of the relevant population by 2020 is a headline target in the Europe 2020 strategy and one of the five benchmarks of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

2. SCHOOL WITHDRAWAL AND SCHOOL FAILURE. BACKGROUND

- Differences between concepts

School failure: definition

From a systemic perspective, school failure occurs when an education system fails to provide fair and inclusive education services that lead to enriching student learning. At the school level, school failure can be defined as the incapacity of a school to provide fair and inclusive education and an adequate learning environment for students to achieve the outcomes worthy of their effort and ability. From an individual perspective, school failure can be defined as the failure of a student to obtain a minimum level of knowledge and skills, which can at the extreme lead to dropping out of school. Source: Field, S., M. Kuczera and B. Pont (2007), No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education.

School withdrawal: definition

A student who has withdrawn from high school is defined as a high school-aged person who does not have a high school diploma and is not enrolled in or attending school.

The definition of 'early school leaving' used at EU level refers to 'those young people who leave education and training with only lower secondary education or less, and who are no longer in education and training'.

Introduction of SCHOOL UNEASE

School unease is "an emotional state", not significantly related to the type of psychopathological disorders such language or cognitive difficulties, which manifests through a set of dysfunctional behaviours that do not allow the person to live properly the class and learn successfully by using the maximum of its cognitive, affective and relational capacity." (Mancini and Gabrielli , 1998).

It is manifested as a problem due to a variety of causes: the greater or lesser capacity to cope with the commitments and to address academic difficulties not can be explained by individual causes, namely by shifting the responsibility only on the person involved, but you need to remember that the students face their training within a school context and an environment that are socio- culturally determined.

3. CAUSES OF SCHOOL WITHDRAWAL

Which are the Affective factors that are leading to school unease?

Family

1.1. Socio-cultural disadvantage:

Low level of education of parents or of other relatives;

Socioeconomically conditions, unemployment;

Habitative conditions not adequate;

Low motivation linguistic & cultural, also for different geographical and ethnic origin;

1.2. Inadequate educative attitudes:

Overprotective attitude: is leading to difficulties for face with new situations or daily difficulties, also to the rules for living together;

Authoritarian attitude: used by parents can influence the child which may react with closure or waiver initiative, tendency or opposition to aggression;

Permissive attitude: can be took by the child as a manifestation of low interest; that leads to an excess of liberalism, does not allow the development of the capacity to tolerate frustration, which, inevitably, influence negatively the interpersonal relationships and situations outside the family;

Devaluation of the young: attitude that generates a feeling of inferiority and a general sense of helplessness in the face of situations to deal with, as well as difficulties in relationships with peers, because the young will respond more often aggressively;

Non coherence in attitudes: the lack of unity and continuity in the behaviour of adults towards the young has an effect his affectivity, increasing the difficulty of adaptation.

1.3. Shortcomings of relationships

Poorness of offered relationships;

Low quality in realization of parents' role as moderator between the young and the external world;

Affective lackness;

Family isolation.

Factors related to the social context:

2.1. Environment

- Coming from economically poor areas.
- Disintegration of the family.
- Child labour.
- Territorial and institutional failures.
- Economic marginalization, geographical, political.
- Media overexposure.

2.2 Culture

- Culture of indifference.
- Culture of commoditisation.
- Culture of precariousness.
- Culture of risk or challenge.
- Productive culture and consumption.
- Violent socio-cultural models.
- Culture of death (genetic engineering, eugenics).
- Drug-addiction, Alcoholism.
- Prostitution, sexual slavery work.

What are the possible manifestations of unease at school?

A. Learning Difficulties - Such persons often exhibit a discrepancy between estimated cognitive potential and the mode of operation at the level of academic achievement. These subjects, in other words, manifest ability and potential ordinary: learning difficulties would depend on a poor use of their cognitive resources, due to various causes in relation to different schools of thought. Possible indicators are:

- Poverty of cognitive content of information stored and represented.
- Deficient cognitive structures that show problems in how the information is organized and represented in memory.
- Inadequate cognitive processes that show problems in how the cognitive system interprets and acts on reality.
- Learning style very functional: rote learning rather than tending to the description of the understanding; impulsive information processing; lack of metacognitive skills.

B. Deficit cognitive age - not to be confused with the situation of learning difficulties. In fact, students with learning difficulties are often also record low motivational levels, but these increases motivation when learning improves. All this does not occur in situations in which the motivational deficit can be attributed to other causes: socio-cultural disadvantage, behaviour of teachers, teaching methods, the dynamics of the class. Possible indicators are:

- Low self-esteem (noticed in several dimensions): educational, emotional, family, body, interpersonal.
- Lack of intrinsic motivation: lack of curiosity and low level of competence.
- Lack of extrinsic motivation: induced by the environment, with accumulation of failures and failures.
- Immaturity of the ego: affective inhibition; poor emotional control; separation anxiety, low frustration tolerance.
- Inadequate style of attribution: attribution of the causes of events to external factors independent of the subject; learned helplessness (both as cause and effect of attribution style)

C. Apathy

- Immobility or reduction of the activity.
- Lack of curiosity and interests.
- Weak ability to become attached to people, things, ideas.
- Closing itself.
- Generalized fatigue.

D. Relationship and emotional difficulties

D.1. Hyper-emotionality: excessive emotional reactions (i.e., without a logical relationship to the things) as enthusiasm, satisfaction, disappointment, sadness; physical reactions such as excessive redness, weeping, pallor, stuttering, bursts of laughter, bursts of crying, gestures disordered.

D.2. Anxiety disorders:

Performance syndrome with excessive concern for the success.

Generalized anxiety syndrome: concern not relatable to particular situations

Phobic syndrome: excessive fear for particular objects, animals or situations that interfere with the normal operation.

Social anxiety syndrome: excessive shyness towards unfamiliar figures.

Obsessive-compulsive syndrome: thoughts, images or impulses that occur with some frequency and interfere with the normal operation.

Depressive disorders: a permanent state of sadness, accompanied by contempt, lack of interest, profound emptiness, apathy, often associated with loss of sleep and appetite.

4. SYMPTOMATOLOGY

The psychosocial and emotional profile of potential school leavers may be described as follows:

- Demotivated students without interest no expectations regarding their learning process.
- Young people with lack of adult references and economic family difficulties (parents spending many hours out of the family house, poor parental relationship....).
- Students without health habits (lack of sleep, inappropriate or poor diet, alcohol and/or tobacco abuse, abuse of other toxic substances).
- Young people with important lack of key competences and resources to face successfully the learning processes.
- Poor concept of themselves and low self-esteem.

All these characteristics could be aggravated with the context and environmental factors.

The crude reality is that in most OECD countries, students with lower socio-economic status have lower achieving levels on average than those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. The data confirmed that many 15-years old students in OECD countries do not reach the minimum level of skills required for their development, their family socio-economic background continues to be a handicap in their schooling. Disadvantaged schools may reinforce the negative effect of the socio-economic background. Of course, this not means that all schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods or with disadvantaged students are low performing or offer a poor education.

5. HINTS FOR DETECTION

- How to be alert
- Patterns for regular observation and analysis: when, where, how

Detection of the school failure guides us to a clear and precise diagnostic of the problem as first step to set an adequate intervention. Next, there is summary of the areas more relevant for the detection of risk factors and protection against inappropriate behaviours.

School performance

First of all, we must know the school historic of the kid/teenager. There are some indicators which may assist the school failure detection: performance, behaviour and social relationship disruptions, physical and mental disorders, etc.

- Low educational levels. Differentiate among subjects with higher difficulties for him/her and those showing lower problems.
- Method of study: existence of an adequate location for studying, comprehension techniques, memorizing, cope with the exams, planning...
- Attitude in the classroom: inattention, involvement, participation, unfulfilment of tasks, lack of interest, often absences in the classroom, lies, excuses.
- School integration: classmates, teachers and the centre activities.
- Attendance levels.
- Problems, conflicts with the centre rules.
- Expectations of the academic life.

Emotional condition

- Difficulties for expressing opinion or adequate social development.
- Existence of defiant, aggressive behaviours, hostility.
- Impulsivity for solving problems, decision taking.
- Nervousness, apathy.
- Sudden changes of mood.
- Social skills to interact with his/her classmates, teachers and family members.
- Complaints from his/her classmates, teachers or other centre staff.

Substances abuse and attitude to the drugs

- Frequency and intensity of use of legal substances.
- Frequency and intensity of use of illegal substances.
- Opinion about drugs.
- Perception of drug use risk.

Antisocial behaviour

- Acts of vandalism (school material and/or facilities damage).
- Robberies.
- Aggressive behaviour.

Life style

- Physical appearance: loss of weight in a short time, hygiene, clothing....
- Leisure and spare time: hobbies.
- Money access. The young ask for borrowing money to his/her classmates, friends.

Family

- Family structure.
- Laboral condition.
- Educational style: permissive, authoritarian, democratic.
- Relationship between the student and other members of the family.
- Use of substances and attitude about them.
- Other family problems: divorce, violence,...
- Parents link to the school.
- Parental control over the school tasks and the behaviour of the young.

Friends

- Preferences: friends from the school, neighborhood, other.
- Profile of friends: age, life style, activity, substances use and leisure.

Physical and social environment

- Community resources in the neighborhood: sports facilities, youth associations etc.
- Awareness and use of these resources.
- General characteristics of the neighborhood where he/she lives.

Please refer Annex 1 including a proposal of Questionnaire for detecting early factors and risky behaviour covering all above aspects.

6. TIPS FOR PREVENTION

- How to create, develop, boost and maintain an optimistic and rewarding environment
- How to create, develop, boost and maintain an optimistic and rewarding learning environment are key factors on preventing drop out situations, in particular when working with youngsters in theoretical training sessions.

Therefore, it's very important that all trainers:

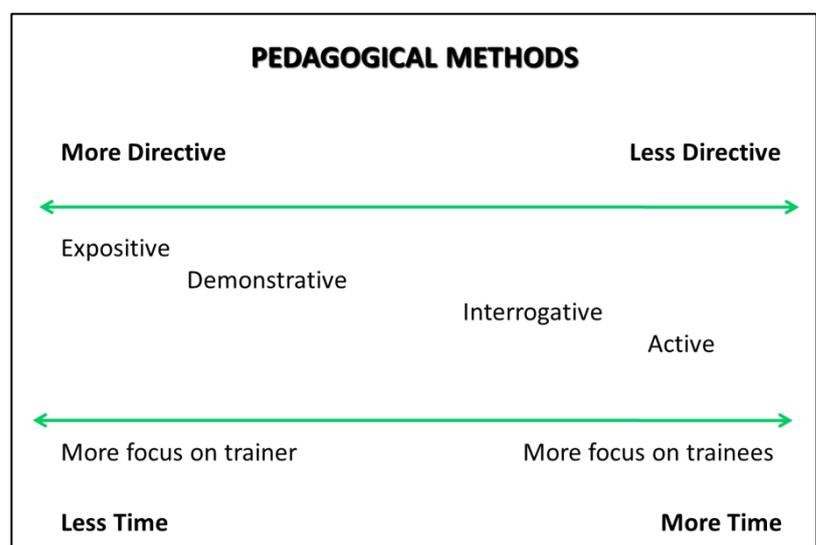
- Understand the dynamic relationship trainer-trainee-learning object, aimed to facilitating the training processes (pedagogical relationship);
- Understand the psychosocial phenomena, such as leadership, in training groups;
- Understand the dynamic of individual learning inside the working group;
- Recognize their mediation role inside the working group;
- Make use of creativity on the pedagogical environment;
- Implement inclusive strategies for differentiated target-groups;
- Understand , identify and apply different pedagogical techniques in differentiated contexts;
- Select and apply the most appropriate pedagogical techniques and methods to the training objectives, target-groups and training contexts.

The ability to motivate and keep the learners motivated during the theoretical learning process is a key driver to successfully prevent school/training withdrawal.

The choice between more directive or less directive methods also influences this motivational process.

Tips for making the expositive method more attractive to learners:

- Provide testimonials (eg. invite a guest);
- Use analogies; repetitions; personal experiences; practical examples and illustrations



The use of active methods designates a set of methods/techniques where the trainee/learner is the active agent of the training, particularly in theoretical learning contexts.

They are based on activities, freedom and self-education, where the learning situation is less structured and more interactive.

The use of active methods allows a good development of the participants knowledge, skills and competencies, prepares the trainees/learners for more active participation in their professional context, promotes the development of initiative and creativity, supported by suitable means to memorize the achievements.

Examples of active methods in theoretical training environments:

BRAINSTORMING

Process that intends to have the "largest number of possible ideas" in a limited amount of time.

Ideal number: 6 - 12 participants.

Time: 10 - 60 minutes.

Objectives: Encourage imagination, creativity; new ideas for solving a problem.

STUDY CASE

It consists in the study, of a real case or problem. It seeks a problem resolution and because of that, it's given priority to real cases.

Ideal number: 5 participants.

Time: 60 - 240 minutes.

Objectives: Motivate, develop analytical capacity, Develop the group decision capacity.

ROLE PLAYING

Particular form of study case through the dramatization of a real situation and that can be exploited educationally.

Ideal number: 6 - 10 participants.

Time: 15 - 120 minutes.

Objectives: management of group relations management and problem resolutions.

PROJECT

It is a working method based on the participation of group members with the aim of achieving a work planned and organized by mutual agreement.

The work is oriented toward solving a problem.

The project is a plan to be undertaken to address a problem, to study an issue, realizing an action.

Although the selection of pedagogical methods and techniques should be always prepared having in consideration the specific learning contents and groups, there are specific types of exercises that can be applied to all groups in order to keep the learners engaged in the learning process, and ultimately, motivated to proceed with the learning pathway.

PEDAGOGICAL GAMES

The game is a fun activity with pedagogical aims and objectives and should not be seen as a way to fill dead time training.

The pleasure and satisfaction generated by the games play a major role in the identification of participants, increasing the cohesion of the group that facilitates the trainer tasks as facilitator of learning.

The games lead trainees to a participation and involvement than those achieved in other types of activities.

Tips for motivating training groups:

- Create an attitude of self-confidence.
- Promote a pleasant and positive social climate in group training.
- Demonstrate joy, affection and love for what you do.
- Define and clarify expectations and / or objectives.
- Communicate the objectives of the training sessions.
- Show willingness and sense of humour.
- Create good atmosphere in the working group.
- Adapt the program to the interests of the group.
- Use examples from everyday life of students/learners.
- Identify signs of frustration and help eliminate them.
- Be fair and consistent in their praise or in criticism.
- Encourage discussion and group work.
- Value the individual contribution (promote self-esteem).

Tips for getting learners/trainees engaged in the training sessions:

- Promote the learners/trainees participation in the beginning of the training session.
- Promote active participation during the training sessions.
- Conclude the training sessions with a collective resume of the work done.

Tips for getting to know training groups expectations:

- Ask participants to write/ say their expectations for the training session.
- Make sure to adapt as possible the program to their expectations/ create connections between their expectations and the training contents.
- Confirm if their expectations were met at the end of the session and if not, create a link to the next session.

Tips for keep the learners/trainees engaged during the training sessions:

- Diversify the use of pedagogical methods and techniques - promote dynamics;
- Develop the ability to learn with the learners/ students;
- Establish an informal relationship;
- Guide the learners/trainees towards the objectives;
- Develop his/hers own style;
- Express your enthusiasm;
- Use your voice;
- Maintain eye contact;
- Be brief and objective;
- Take breaks;
- Introduce stories / testimonials / experience;
- Keep the mood appropriate to the topic / group;

7. CONCLUSION

Tune-in! partner countries have very different profiles concerning the factors that contribute to the Early School Leaving phenomena and dropout rates: while countries of the south of Europe, that is the case of Spain, Portugal and Italy hold Early School Leaving rates over the UE28 (about 11%), Slovenia is at the bottom of the figures (less than 4%). But in spite of this considerable difference, the essential goal is no matter what, our youngsters don't leave the school, the educational system.

As described in the section dedicated to the causes of school withdrawal, these are quite variable, not only from country to country, but also from learner to learner. Therefore, the prevention and early intervention are crucial to implement successful strategies to maintain learners motivated and interested in completing their qualifications. The active and coordinated work between families, schools, social services, health professionals and all groups working hand in hand with children and youngsters at risk should streamline efforts towards the early detection of risks in order to provide personalized answers in time before additional and diverse problems arise or the drop out from the educational system takes place. There is an urgent need to continue with the implementation of measures and solutions in all involved areas focused at better meeting the challenges in the field of social and work inclusion of youngsters and NEETS.

In the scope of Tune in! Project, the current guidelines have been developed to support VET professionals to detect and prevent dropout situations, providing also tips for the implementation of strategies on how to keep learners motivated in theoretical learning environments, as a complement of the development of tune in! toolbox containing practical methods developed based on the production schools approach.

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9. ANNEX 1

Questionnaire for detecting early factors and risky behavior

1. Regarding the last course, the academic performance of the student:

- Has improved
- Is the same
- Has worsened
- Has worsened considerably

2. His/her learning outcomes are:

- Better for the subjects
- Worse for the subjects
- Equal in almost all subjects

3. The student seems to have a proper study technique:

- Plan his/her tasks: Yes NO
- He/she easily distracted when studying: Yes NO
- He/she has a proper study technique: Yes NO
- He/she has a proper location for studying: YES NO
- He/she knows to take notes: Yes NO

4. The student:

- Attends regularly to class Yes NO

5. His/her attitude in the class should be:

- Attentive/ motivated Yes NO
- Involved in the work Yes NO
- Normally he/she does the homework. Yes NO
- Disturbs the classmates. Yes NO
- Participative. Yes NO

6. It may be said that he/she is socially integrated in the class. Yes / No

- He/she is integrated in the school activities. Yes NO

7. Regarding the school centre regulations, the student:

- Respects most of the regulations. Yes NO
- Many class absences. Yes NO
- Involved in some conflicts this course. Yes NO

8. The student:

- Expresses his/her desire to continue the studies. Yes NO
- Willing about the studies is quite vague. Yes NO
- Wants to leave the studies. Yes NO

9. Recently, the student shows:

- Defiant behaviors
- Aggressive behaviors
- Hostility
- Impulsivity to solve problems or decisions taking
- Sudden changes of his/her mood (nervousness, apathy)
- Changes of his/her appearance (weight loss, lack of cleanness)

10. In general, the student:

- Is able to relate with his/her classmates.
- Is able to relate with the teachers, tutors and the staff of the school.

11. His/her classmates:

- Normally claim about his/her behavior.

12. Recently, the student has been involved in loutish acts and/or robberies:

Yes NO

13. The student spends most of his/her spare time:

- Practicing sports
- In bars and discos
- With friends at home
- At home
- Outside, in the street
- Other

14. The student's interests are:

.

15. The student likes to be with:

- His/her classmates
- Neighborhood friends
- His/her family
- Alone
- Other.

16. The student usually goes out with people:

- Legal drugs users / Not legal drugs users
- Illegal drugs users / Not illegal drugs users
- Showing antisocial behavior / Not showing antisocial behavior

17. The student has a fixed time to go home:

During the week, at .

Weekend, at

- He/she has not a fixed time to go home during the weekends
- He/she has not fixed time to arrive at home during the whole week

18. The student has a fixed assigned pay

Yes NO Euros per week.

19. In comparison with his/her classmates, the student usually has:

- More money
- A similar amount
- Less Money

20. The student is consumer of:

- Tobacco
- Daily Weekends Occasional Amount: .
- Alcohol
- Daily Weekends Occasional Amount: .
- Cannabis
- Daily Weekends Occasional Amount: .
- Pills
- Daily Weekends Occasional Amount: .
- Cocaine
- Daily Weekends Occasional Amount: .
- Heroin
- Daily Weekends Occasional Amount: .
- Other illegal drugs
- Daily Weekends Occasional Amount: .

21. The family structure of the student is:

- Father
- Mother
- No of siblings: . Place.
- Other: .

22. The student lives with:

23. The education style of the family seems to be:

- Permissive
- Authoritarian
- Democratic

24. The family has clear and coherent rules:

Yes NO

25. The relationship of the student with his family is usually:

- Adequate
- Not adequate

26. The family has important problems:

- Abuses
- Unemployment
- Drugs consumption
- Criminal activities

27. Parents are involved in the activities carried out by the school:

- Normally, both parents attend together always or almost most of the times to the tutor's meetings
- One of them attends to the tutor's meetings.
- None of them attends to the meetings
- Both of them usually participate in activities organized by the school centre.
- Only one of them participates in the activities organized by the centre.
- They don't usually participate in the activities organized by the centre.

28. The father or the mother usually checks the school homework of his/her son/daughter.

Yes NO

29. The neighborhood of the student:

- Has not enough resources for youth (sport centre, youth associations.....)
- Has enough resources for youth
- It is a troubled neighborhood (drugs, delinquency)
- It is not a troubled neighborhood

30. The student knows the resources available in his/her neighborhood

Yes NO