



Coaching for staff professional Development in education

Learn Sheffield, host of the first CoDe learning visit

The first learning visit within the “Coaching for Staff Professional Development in Education - CoDe” Project took place between 28th and 31st January 2020 and was organized by Learn Sheffield. The event was an opportunity for the project partners to get familiar with various coaching practices across several institutions in Sheffield, whose field of activity includes education, business, health services and performing arts.

The learning visit started with an introductory meeting organized on the Learn Sheffield premises, where the participants of the six partner countries discussed the host institution’s coaching activity and general principles that underlie it. The meeting was followed by a visit to *UTC Sheffield*, where a student-based peer-to-peer coaching model was presented and analysed.

During the second day of the learning visit, the partners had the opportunity to meet the representatives of the *Twinkl Company*, a successful business specializing in educational resources development, with collaborators in several countries. The coaching model the company implements for the staff professional development is GROW-based, which was discussed in terms of structure and efficiency with company representatives who have benefited from it. Moreover, the learning visit agenda included coaching observations at the *Hunters Bar Junior School*, a private education institution that provides its staff with coaching-based professional development. In this framework, the

project partners observed several coaching models performed by the school senior staff and afterwards discussed the advantages of each.

Meetings with representatives of the UK National Health Service and Crucible Theatre were also organized within the learning visit in order to provide an insight into various coaching practices and experiences through extensive and interesting dialogues.

The learning visit in Sheffield has also been an opportunity for the project partners to share their reflections following the meetings they attended, with the conclusion that coaching is, first and foremost, a non-hierarchical professional partnership, a means to explore the individual’s potential through carefully guided conversations that can lead to identifying problems and / or solutions. The partners have also come to the conclusion that coaching is a means of reflecting the problem back at the individuals to show them that they are trusted with reaching the best solution by themselves, and that they are valued. At the same time, coaching is a process of setting personal objectives, as well as an exercise of active listening and mutual trust.

These experiences have created the prerequisites of building meaning around the concept of “coaching”, which will be enriched throughout the following study visits, as the project members will gather more good practice models in coaching from the partner



CoDe desk research

In order to develop a better understanding of how coaching works for various professional categories, a desk research was conducted in the partner countries with the aim of using the findings to define what 'good practice' is in educational settings. Teaching is often referred to as an 'impossible profession' that requires intuition, a variety of specific knowledge and skills as well as reflected experience. As a consequence of rapidly changing work conditions and increasing diversity of groups a teacher has to work with, various forms of teacher support such as coaching, mentoring and supervision have been focused on in recent years. The potential of these types of support for professional development, indisputable as it is, has been used in varied forms and intensity in various European countries and schools. Coaching has had a much longer tradition in business corporations and possible transfer of experience from companies to schools has not been clearly described because schools are organizations with a specific culture, interpersonal links and time structures.

The aims of this desk research were:

1. to describe the arrangement, opportunities and

limitations of coaching in selected schools and companies.

2. to identify the specifics and challenges/limitations of the implementation of coaching in selected schools.

Therefore, the partners were interested in what the experience of coaches, educators and other people involved is, how they perceive the specifics of coaching in schools and which processes can help to implement these forms of professional cooperation in schools. To this end, during January and February 2020, the project partners conducted in-depth interviews with selected coaches and coachees in each partner country, according to a previously arranged structure. The respondents were either coaches who had at least two years of continuous coaching experience in business organizations and/or schools or teachers and other employees of schools/organizations in which coaching takes place (coachees). At least 4 interviews (2 with coaches and 2 with coachees) were conducted in each partner country according to a set framework.

The results of the desk research will be published on the institution websites of each project partner.

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