IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS' AT RISK

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHER

Introduction

The guidelines follow two basic principles: the centrality of the students at risk, and the continuous work of a well-defined team, involving different actors in the educational process: teachers, school staff, external experts, family. Only by activating a continuous process of welcoming, observation, adoption of individualized strategies and monitoring of their outcomes, it is possible to make an effective intervention to fight early school leaving and, at the same time, state principles which may be applicable and transferable to similar cases. The teacher must be at the centre of this process, but he must not be left all alone. This is the reason why these guidelines are strictly connected with those related to headteachers and policy makers.

Welcome

The welcoming process is based on students who, during learning activities, will move from being passive to being active participants, so teachers must design, plan and implement programs for students in order to make the transition from traditional teaching and learning to active learning possible and effective. It will be important to choose the right strategy: we need guidance for all students about general matters, but we need small group activities for students at risk. This can be a long term process, but also a brief intensive action: it is fundamental to have clear aims and goals. The steps to follow will be:

1. Examine the outcome of the sending school, formal and informal (any cards accompanying the findings and cognitive features of the student.)

2. Contact the sending school - a must in the case of obvious problems - communicate with the teachers of the student, even in a casual mode, to receive the information which is not held by the new school yet

3. Hand out entry tests and disciplinary orientation tests used in schools (cf. Online products), in order to identify attitudes, motivations, difficulties, learning gaps

4. Activate an individual interview - even several times - with the student, discussing the results of learning and listening to the explanations given about his condition and his school and life previous experiences

5. Invite family for a first interview to better understand, through direct but not intrusive contact, the individual characteristics (in particular the cultural background and context of family life)

Websites

● On line training module on Identification of students at risk
This module has been developed in the framework of the School Inclusion Project funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme-Comenius Sub Programme.

● Guidelines against early school leaving
These Guidelines available on the Stay@School website address all teachers who want to know the new situation in the school, when they arrive or when they have to work in a new role. There they can find the good practices to tackle early school leaving.

● The Cube
The Cube is an educational tool, available on the Stay@School web site, to arouse reflection, discussion and search for solutions on the topic of early school leaving. Each of the six sides is dedicated to a factor of early school leaving and displays a student testimony along with a QR code directing to a video on the web. That offers a solution to the situation evoked.

● Student's induction
Guide for teachers and trainers designed to help teachers with the information they need in order to design, plan and implement induction programs for students.

● Inducția elevului - Ghid pentru profesori și formatori
The guide is developed in the Phare Project by WYG International and IMC Consulting Ltd. It is designed to help teachers with the information they need in order to design, plan and implement induction programs for students.

Observation

1. View specific sections of the School Inclusion Portal, especially Units 1 and 2

2. In the first Class Meeting, share the mutual information with colleagues and agree on the elements of diagnosis to be tested further. If the student is identified as a subject at risk, it is necessary to clarify the factors with accuracy: personal reasons - learning or psychological, relational problems - or family factors. It will be advisable to entrust the responsibility of mentoring the case to one of the class teachers, the one who, depending on the risk factors, has more chances of relational success. All the teachers, however, will adhere to the directions of individualized teaching, the one chosen to deal with that case or similar ones (e.g. in the adoption of assessment criteria, in the making of working groups, in monitoring homework, etc.).After that, a period of further observation will start, highlighting the criteria to be checked (if any, observation cards can be found online). If the case is particularly difficult, inform the headteacher to activate services / supports or external expertise.

Success Story

- Failures and successes-How to go on among
  A success story described on the School Safety Net Portal.

Identification of Needs

1. Carry out tests, both formal and informal, even oral ones, to identify the cognitive style of the student. During the period of observation, act as a reference adult, establishing an open relationship with the student. Take care of the student's inclusion in the class with pragmatic attempts to build positive relationships with as many classmates as possible, encouraging the coming out of positive links with those who are the most helpful and available among the classmates

2. Carry out planned activities of cooperative learning (see instructions in Module 3 of the School Inclusion Portal)

Websites

- Teaching methods
  This training module has been developed in the framework of the School Inclusion Project funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme-Comenius Sub Programme.

- Methods for the Prevention of Early School Leaving
  A research published in the framework of the "School – a necessity, not just a right" project.

- Guidelines on Identifying Young People at Risk of Early School Leaving
  Clear guidelines for identifying early school leavers for the School Completion Programme, easily to be adapted to other early school leaving programmes.

Setting up a Customized Plan

1. In the second meeting of the Class Council suggestions should be made as to enable the student to follow a customized path, which is the outcome of a shared observation, to be agreed with the student and presented to the family as an educational agreement, including mutual commitments. These may include additional laboratory activities in peculiar motivating fields (both curricular or extra-curricular). They may also include the intervention of a psychologist, a guidance counselor, a "peer educator" previously trained by the school, a mentor made available, or any other organization outside the school which can cooperate in the activities of the individualized plan

2. Involve the family, through a new meeting, in the shared activities, plan systematic and intermediate checks of the agreement in the presence of the most representative actors, starting from the student himself

Websites
- Online training module on Communication
  This module has been developed in the framework of the School Inclusion Project funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme-Comenius Sub Programme.

Sharing the Educational Agreement

1. Develop the educational agreement indicating, in addition to mutual commitments, any planned activities, both inside and outside school, including subjects, liabilities, actions, informal checks, progressive monitoring, awaited goals. Use a GANT diagram for this purpose, which you'll have previously built with the student.

2. Spread the educational plan among all the interested students

3. Subscribe the educational agreement, giving special emphasis to the event as part of school life.

Publication
From the School Inclusion Net Portal
- Early school leaving falls in the net. Strategies for a high-quality school that promotes and supports
  Review available on the School Inclusion Portal on the book resulted from a recently implemented project focused on five actors: students, parents, teachers, local networks and organization of administrative aspects.

Monitoring

1. With the help of the mentor, the internal tutor and peer educators, the student is periodically (monthly) engaged in a self-evaluation of his/her results, aimed at increasing self-esteem, motivation (in case of loss) and at accounting for the undertaken responsibilities

2. The school carries out a rewarding system of encouragement or call in case of defection from responsibilities, always looking for the sharing of views with the student and his external supporters

3. At the end of the first interim period the Class Council values both learning outcomes and behaviors related to the customized plan; it also assesses the use of new forms of recovery and re-motivation in case of failure

Website

Lesson Plans on preventing school dropout
A proposal of a lesson plan for teachers developed in the framework of the Stay@School Project.

Ongoing Revision of the Customized Plan

1. Schedule a new meeting with the family, the experts , the student and the responsible class teacher in order to update the training plan

2. Include business contacts with external bodies if necessary, increase recovery activities such as laboratory works (e g. Possible observational stages)

Websites

Online training module on Communication
A training module for teachers developed in the framework of the School Inclusion Project.

Improving Classroom Behavior

1. Arrange a meeting with the orienteering counselor to deepen the dynamics regarding the relationship between the student and the classmates, also with the participation of peer educators or other professional people involved

2. Strengthen relationships with the class in order to motivate the student's staying, even facing a class discussion with the moderator teacher; involve the class in the battle for prevention

Websites

- **Educational products for teachers**
  This section of the Stay@school Project gives access to the products developed by the teachers involved in the Stay@school Project and addressed to other teachers in order to help them identify and prevent those behaviors and situations that may lead to early school leaving.

- **Abbandono scolastico**
  Review of an online publication on early school leaving.

Assessment of Acquired Skills

1. Prepare the student to the final examination skills by providing appropriate tests, in order to prevent his/her ultimate failure

2. Involve the Class Council in order to prepare a successful outcome, offering tests which should be easily accessible and comparable with those of the class

3. Involve the student, making him/her aware of the assessment criteria

Websites

- **Common Assessment Framework**
  The web site of the School Inclusion Project provides some very useful links to the common assessment framework, scholastic assessment and assessment of distress and school dropout.

- **Manual of scholastic assessment**
  This book aims at supporting academicals courses and at responding to the needs of teachers and other educational operators.

- **Test TVD - Assessment of distress and school dropout**
  A book dealing with cognitive processes and cognitive-motivational for children aged 12 to 14 years. TVD is a valuable tool to evaluate the student's academic experience of junior high school.

The Final Outcome as a Planned Success

1. Any subject involved in the carried out activities, from the first moment to the last, works for a positive outcome, and provides elements for evaluating the path in order to fight early school leaving. These elements have to be related to the individualized aspect of the educational and training system.

2. The group that worked during the experience assesses the various phases of the work and works out a series of dissemination events and shared considerations that identify strengths and   weaknesses. The various stages of the path are the check- list on which we have to build future individualized pathways and support future teaching activity.

Websites

🌳 The extended school program - strategy, effective in preventing school failure
Concrete solutions based on specific situations, which can serve as inspiration for those willing to consider the idea of extended hours (after school) and the Day Center for children in need in school.

🌳 The school must change
A book to motivate teachers to reflect on the possibilities to change the school.