



**Scaffolding in Teachers Development:  
Mentoring and Mentors in Induction Programs**



# Objectives of LOOP Landscape

- Investigating the **state of the art** of induction programs in all partner's countries (impact & needs);
- Characterizing **the mentoring programs and their national variations in schools** (knowing and portraying the role of mentors and opinion of school leaders of mentoring activities);
- Developing a **mentoring strategy** to support mentoring programs on involved schools.



# IO1: LOOP Landscape

It consisted in a qualitative and quantitative research to draw up the **portrait of mentors** and their contribution; the results of this research is collected and published in **the LOOP - Improving our understanding of teacher education report**.

Link: <http://loop.casadoprofessor.pt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/IO1-LOOP-LANDSCAPE-FV.24032022-compress.pdf>

# IO1: LOOP Landscape

This first phase was essential to study the **pattern and differences** of the induction programs and their mentoring activities in each Country.

Its configuration depended on the following factors:

- **Characteristics of school context**
- **Involvement of management staff**
- **Availability of resources**
- **Quality control system used**



# Target Group

- **School leaders**
- **Local authorities**
- **Stakeholders – to be identified within the partnership**
- **Teacher training centres and organisations**
- **Teachers at different stages of their careers**

# Data collection

Data collection followed a mixed methodology: quantitative and qualitative.

Partners used the following techniques: questionnaires, interviews and focus group.

Number of questionnaires: **75 per Country**, in a total of **300 throughout the partnership**, and divided into:

- 50 questionnaires for teachers at different stages of their career paths
- 20 questionnaires for school leaders
- 5 questionnaires for teachers training responsible.

# Data collection

- **Interviews:** school leaders, mentors and those responsible for teacher training (five individuals)
- **Focus group** (with five stakeholders)

Questionnaires was mainly focused on:

- ✓ Mentoring program and its characteristics
- ✓ Role of mentors
- ✓ Needs analysis (needs of the different target groups school leaders, stakeholders, teachers at different stages of their careers)
- ✓ Activities of the mentoring programs



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# Final results

The results of this process was published in the **LOOP - Improving our understanding of teacher education report**, conferring a high degree of transferability to this product and its impact on teacher training and schools.

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The research revealed that there are **many similarities between three countries of the partnership – Italy, Portugal and Greece** – and **differences with Germany**, which also participated in the research.





# Similarities

1. **the weaknesses of the mentoring and induction programs offered** to newly appointed teachers and **very late programs** due to the late careers of permanent teachers (in Italy it happens that teachers become full professors even after 15/20 years of precariousness);
2. **the needs of teachers:** the lack of time outside school hours to devote to their training; lack of motivation; the size of classrooms, the lack of cooperation with the headmaster and other colleagues; new ICT tools to learn, students' special needs and the communication to parents.
3. **the fact that these programs are fundamental for all teachers**, not only for teachers at the beginning of their careers but also for experienced teachers, as an example of on-going training.

# Differencies

1. Teacher training in Germany has a long tradition, especially the training of trainee teachers has been adapted both to scientific and economic demands. **The challenge of a good mentor is to be there in case of emergency as well as to guide the trainee teachers in their professional development.**
2. Even in Germany, **time management, administrative work** with specific time deadlines and **student-teacher/teacher-parents relationship** belong to the main problems that a teacher has to face up.
3. In Germany teachers are satisfied with working conditions, because **they mainly collaborate to each other, they are motivated through this collaboration and they gain benefits from experienced teachers.**

# Context and characteristics of training and mentoring programs

- **Use of digital tools** such as interactive whiteboards/ Information about New Technologies/ Support to the use of digital technologies during teaching and learning;
- **The development of human resources/** Teachers' motivation strategies/ Competencies Development;
- **The sharing of implicit knowledge among teachers/** Peer support (class observation amongst all)/ Collaborative work/ Cooperation between colleagues;
- **Best Practices among teachers at schools/** The transmission of the knowledge and experience of the qualified teachers / The complexity of the educational environment/ Group planning and organization of educational activities and teaching;
- **Students' Learning Difficulties;**
- **Interpersonal relationships among teachers/students/parents/** Developing Communication between teachers, students and openness to the school community.

# The role and characteristics of a mentor

A good mentor should:

- **be collaborative, encourage team work, have communication and soft skills;**
- **give emotional support to teachers and be supportive** in any difficulties in teacher daily work (helpfulness, willingness, empathy, supportiveness, innovative, taking risks, creative, trust and discretion, skills, competences, team spirit, and collaboration);
- **propose practical solutions;**
- **promote new teaching techniques** by sharing his/her own experience and knowledge;
- **have academic knowledge/ background and proven experience** in his/her field, leadership skills;
- **give motivation.**

# Conclusion

Our findings prove that **it is worth looking into existing programs connected with teacher training to get into contact with the teachers at school at different stages of their career.**

In this sense, not only the training of future teachers may profit from inter-staff procedures but **the quality of the lessons might improve because of constant input both from younger and more experienced teachers.**

All the countries agree that **as the challenges grow on, the mentoring and inductions programs will become more appropriate and useful.** However, they have to be **carefully designed and meet teachers' needs,** that become bigger nowadays.



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Our school, the Hospitality and Catering School (**IPSSEOA**) **PIETRO PIAZZA** in Palermo since 2021 has taken part in the LOOP project both in the research and study phases involving more than 70 teachers including staff and young teachers.

The comparison with other European realities was essential to clarify the figure of the mentor as well as to introduce innovative mentoring programs.

**We used questionnaires, interviews and focus group.**

**Questionnaires** was mainly focused on:

- Presence of activities of mentoring programs in Italy
- Role of mentors in Italian schools
- Needs analysis

The **target group** was:

- School leaders
- Teachers in different stages of their careers





# IPSSEOA Contribution

In the month of May our institute also hosted the various partners for a meeting which had interesting implications in terms of the initial objectives to compare the role of the mentor figure and mentoring programs in the European variants.

The results of the research, elaborated and worked by CESIE, have made it possible to make similarities as well as differences with the other partners and the results are visible from the report on the platform LOOP.



In countries like Germany it has emerged that mentoring programs have a great importance and a long tradition.

In Italy teachers are not always satisfied with working conditions, because they become full professors even after 10/15 years of precariousness and therefore they receive training or mentoring programs very late.





# Conclusion

Mentoring brings value at many levels for mentees, mentors, school leaders and the organization for which they work.

Mentees have an opportunity to gain practical and empathic knowledge. Mentors have an opportunity to expand their repertoire of professional knowledge and skills through their instruction, example and facilitation of others. The organization has the opportunity to further develop and disseminate the wealth of talent, skill and knowledge of its employees or its teachers.



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