

Applied methods in coaching in Poland

by Wroclaw University of Economics

Coaching in the framework of the European project LELLE

The subject of coaching delivered within LELLE project was learning competence of students of Wroclaw University of Economics. Coaching in the framework of the European project LELLE targets students in their first or last year at university. The aim is to support students in developing their “learning to learn” skills. The coaching approach focuses on students plan for success rather than on the specific content or giving advice. Coaching sessions were delivered from November 2016 to July 2017. Involved were seven students who were motivated to take part in coaching. The meetings started with a diagnosis of current learning needs of the students and setting short-term and long-term learning goals. As a next step, the coach designed tailored development strategy for each student. It was presumed that the results would be visible in a relatively short period of time.

The meetings were skills coaching sessions, focused on enhancing learning skills. The coach was responsible for ensuring that the coachees set goals clearly and for drawing their attention to the main topic. The coachee had to choose topics for discussion and define goals he wanted to achieve. Cooperation timeframe was set by the coach and coachee together. The coach mirrored thoughts, words and actions of the coachee.

Used methods:

- 1) In-basket – type of an exercise where the participant is given a number of tasks to perform;
- 2) Case method (case study) – the participant is familiarized with a description of a (real-life) situation which is then analyzed and solutions are proposed;
- 3) Creative thinking – a set of techniques enhancing innovative approaches to problem solving;
- 4) Managing own Learning Process – i.e. based on schedules, SWOT.

Results of the training sessions were continuously monitored. The participants mentioned that cooperation with the coach:

- ✓ Increased their independence in knowledge acquisition;
- ✓ Enabled them to identify their strengths (knowledge, abilities, talents);
- ✓ Taught them how to efficiently use tools to evaluate ideas critically, for example SWOT analysis;
- ✓ Developed a habit of looking for alternatives in problem solving;
- ✓ Increased their ability to express their needs and expectations;
- ✓ Developed their ability to use time management techniques;

2015-1-HU01-KA203-013619

- ✓ Helped them decide to take traineeships/internships or extracurricular activities to broaden their academic knowledge.

Such were the benefits of taking part in coaching sessions as seen by the students:

- More learning satisfaction;
- Stronger motivation and engagement in learning;
- Better academic achievements;
- Achieving personal goals with the enhanced learning skills;
- Overcoming reluctance to see specialists and work on one's competence development.

In their feedback, the students also underlined that:

- Following their needs was helpful;
- Regularity and dynamics of the meetings were advantageous;
- Trust for the coach turned out to be important;
- Homeworks were valuable for self-improvement;
- Learning-related personal development turned out interesting and absorbing.

From coach's perspective it was helpful to look for strengths, talents and abilities of the students and using them during the sessions. It was a good idea to tailor development strategy to each individual. Relating to experiences of both the coach and the student and using them as examples was an efficient technique. The methods used enhanced internal motivation in the students.

To sum up, achieving learning-related goals was possible due to safe relationship with the coach, individual approach, adjusting used methods to students' needs and motivation of the coachees themselves. Acquired and developed learning skills (related to critical thinking, problem solving and learning management) will serve the students as an important resource in their further educational and professional development.