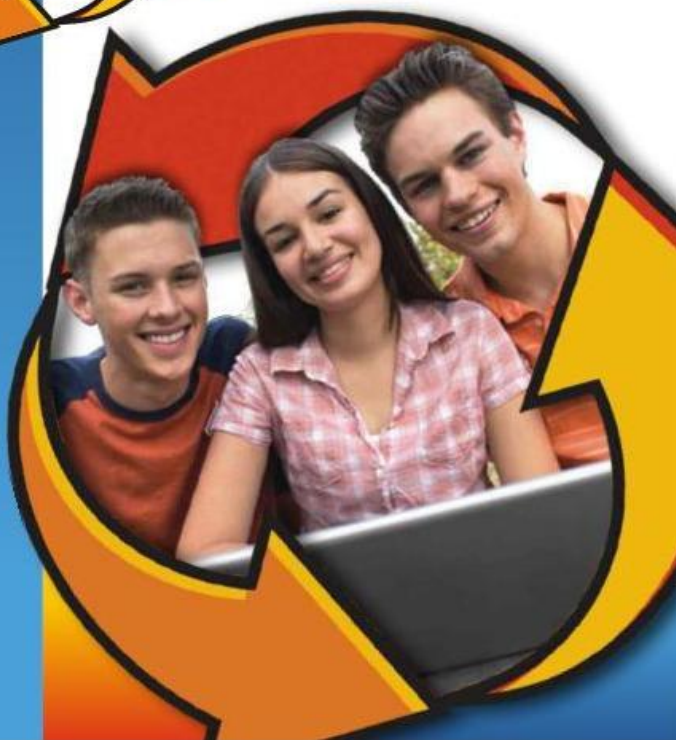


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Stay@School

The School Inclusion Project

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Life Long Learning Programme
Transfer of Innovation

Educational Material for teachers

Lesson Plans on preventing school dropout



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Beforehand

One challenge is common to all European countries Educational System, the prevention school dropout. The School Inclusion N°134309-LLP-1-2007-1-IT-Comenius-CMP, financed in the framework of the Life Long Programme, Comenius sub programme has given evidence to the fact that teachers are suffering from a lack of skills and competences, and consequently of motivation in understanding and dealing with pupils at risk of school abandoning. Teachers often are not able to identify with the necessary anticipation the manifesting of the risk factors leading drop out and to the necessary initiatives to give effective answers.

The Stay@School project to provide an effective answer to the needs of the teachers outlined above, intends to transfer the successful experience of the School Inclusion project, evaluated positively both by the European Commission and by the external evaluator: "the main contents of the teachers' training programme provides the necessary skills and tools to fight students' drop out and prevent early school leaving".

The project aims to improve the portal developed during the School Inclusion project in order to transfer its contents on a Geographical basis, focusing on the involvement of teachers from different countries that the ones that were involved in the previous project and as far as Italy is concerned, spreading the use of the School Inclusion Portal in different regions.

What is the material about?

One of the project objectives is to develop a collection of educational products on the prevention of early school leaving by engaging teachers in hands-on experience (learning by doing) aimed to test the skills and abilities acquired during the course, through the creation of education materials and easy to use flexible information to prevent and tackle the problem of scholastic drop-out (such as a brochure, a cartoon, a multimedia educational module, a short film, etc.).

A lesson plan is vital in teaching, it gives you the guide you need to pull through. Good lesson planning is essential to the process of teaching and learning. A teacher who is prepared is well on his/her way to a successful instructional experience. The development of interesting lessons takes a great deal of time and effort. As a new teacher you must be committed to spending the necessary time in this endeavour.

The complexity of the factors contributing to pupils' dropping out of school makes planning and preparation absolutely critical. The content has to meet the needs of a wide range of students in the classroom. Thus, samples of lesson plans on this topic are a necessity; they are very useful as long as they rely on solid experience. Successful experience has to be passed on to the others. It gives the chance to the teachers to enhance the quality of education for all the students and provides them with a variety of opportunities to help them integrate into society. These lesson plans have been devised to increase the awareness of the diversity of the issue under discussion. They provide teachers with interesting activities meant to encourage positive and constructive behavior in the classroom.

1. LESSON PLAN: DO NOT ABANDON, PLAY YOUR ROLE

Project Abstract

School dropout is a social, complex reality, with multiple causes and with a great need of diverse answers. Therefore, the partner schools in this project chose to approach this problem through interdisciplinary and transversal activities integrated in the school programme, through extracurricular activities on different subjects, such as stage performances, music and theatre.

The idea that actions for preventing school dropout must be promoted and applied, the will to support the efforts to diversify the teaching-learning methods, the concern for pupils' school and professional choices – all these represent the main motivations for students to avoid school abandoning. They also give them the opportunity to get involved in artistic projects and to be a part of a team.

The activities in this project allow pupils to strengthen their confidence, giving them the chance to express themselves in another way, to get across their limits, to find their motivation for study; the purpose of these activities is to diminish the absenteeism and school abandoning rates.

Purpose/ Main reasons of the project

School plays an important role for the teenagers' future and therefore for the future of our society. It serves a formative function of education and helps pupils to integrate and socialise. As any other institution, the school has encountered a series of difficulties, such as school dropout. School dropout has negative consequences, both on the teenager that drops out of school and on society.

The project activities were developed to increase pupils' motivation for study and to diminish the absenteeism and school dropout rates. The project partners' purpose is to develop the sense of belonging in pupils, to create an environment that increases pupils' initiative and creativity. Through the stage performance activities, the partners aim to increase self-esteem and confidence, to develop active citizenship and to improve personal development.

Pupils have different personal predispositions, depending on the social environment. School and life experiences are different from one person to another. This project promotes equality of chance, development of the educational process in a multicultural frame, support for disadvantaged groups, fight against school dropout and failure.

Objectives

The purpose of the project is to develop and diversify the educational strategies that can lead to a lower rate of school dropout, to promote inclusive teaching-learning strategies that correspond to the pupils' needs, to increase pupils' motivation to continue their study.

Target group

- Children whose parents are in a precarious financial state,
- Children who come from disorganised families,
- Children who come from large families with many members,
- Children whose parents work in another country.

Activities

- Acting performance games – plays realised by pupils in partner schools
- Worksheets – artistic jobs
- Promotional products for stage performances

- Create and enact a stage performance

Expected results

- Reduce the number of pupils that drop out of school;
- Reduce the feeling of social marginalization and exclusion in children that come from under-privileged families;
- Increase the adapting capacity and social-educational integration capacity;
- Explore the relationship between the education level and the chances to accomplish the personal objectives;
- Increase the capacity to develop relationships;
- Reduce the negative behaviours and attitudes and form other behaviours, close to the normal ones.

Assessment

In order to assess the project, the development of the project activities, the efficiency of the relationship between partners, the impact on community, the involvement of the school partners will be verified.

Authors: „Ștefan cel mare” Technological High School Codăești, Vaslui County, Romania – Teachers: Grădinaru Corina, Banda Daniela, Costan Lenuța

2. LESSON PLAN: PREVENTING SCHOOL DROPOUT AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

Project abstract

The project for preventing school dropout and early school leaving at pupils aims to:

- Identify the cause of school dropout;
- Create school and extracurricular educational programmes and projects that can increase the level of school attendance and to facilitate the integration of the children that dropped out of school
- Identify a set of strategies for prevention and reduction of school absenteeism and dropout.

Objective/Main purpose of the project

For each and every society, education represents a key-field for its continuous and competitive development. Investments in human capital, in a performance-oriented, equitable educational system are vital for the development of a society based on knowledge. On that account, it is essential to prioritise the initial and continuous form of human resources, in order to complete a form of education and to introduce school graduates on the labour market.

Under these circumstances, the school dropout phenomenon that seems to extend in certain environments and human communities represents a major risk for the development of society.

This project started because it has been determined that school dropout tends to become a large phenomenon, with negative consequences on the teenagers' professional evolution and with major implications in their future insertion on the labour market.

Objectives

- Inform pupils in order to prevent early school leaving;
- Reduce absenteeism and school dropout rates.

Target group

- Pupils in the 9th to 12th grade that are/ are not at risk of abandoning school

Activities

- Debates on school abandoning;
- Questionnaires on school abandoning for pupils, teachers and parents;
- Presentations and case studies;
- Workshops – pupils/ parents/ teachers/ NGO guests;
- Folders with informative materials for parents/ pupils;
- Extracurricular activities on pupils' abilities, aimed to improve their perception on self-esteem

Expected results

During the project, we observed that the absence of certain pupils had diminished and the attendance had improved and that the school results had been better in collaboration with the psycho-pedagogical counsellor of the school. Pupils in the target group of the project will have an improved feeling of belonging to the group they are in.

The analysis of the activities of this project (non-formal activities) will show that non-formal education brings benefits to the pupil's personality development, at motivational and emotional levels; however, it must be correlated with formal activities in order to facilitate and develop pupils' cognitive and emotional factors, absolutely necessary for their integration in society.

Authors: Technological High School, „Nicolina” Iași, Romania – Teachers: Mihaela Toma, Matei Maricica, Șipoteanu Anca-Iuliana, Matei Cornel

3. LESSON PLAN: AGAINST SCHOOL ABSTENTEEISM

Objective/Main purpose of the project

The purpose of the project is to increase attendance in a qualitative educational system for pupils at risk of school abandoning, by engaging them in attractive remedial and counselling activities

Objectives

- To identify the social, economic and psychological factors that contribute to abandoning school;
- To develop and deliver educational programmes that can lead to the development of key-capacities of pupils at risk of abandoning school;
- To develop specific activities to improve and promote the social abilities for social integration of pupils at risk of abandoning school;

- To increase parents' involvement in educational and social rehabilitation of pupils at risk of leaving school;
- To show best practice examples and examples of support for renewal of educational practice in schools with pupils at risk of abandoning school;

Target group

- Pupils at risk of abandoning school, from urban and rural environment, from different neighbourhoods;
- Parents of the pupils at risk of school abandoning;
- Staff involved in preventing the school abandoning phenomenon;

Activities

1. Development of instruments for prevention of school abandoning and school failure

- Elaboration of a set of instruments to identify the social, economic, psychological factors that contribute to the phenomenon of early leaving of school (questionnaires)
- Elaboration of didactic extracurricular modules for the needs of the target group;

Modules for pupils:

- Remedial activities during the Romanian class
- Remedial activities during the Mathematics class
- Communication in a foreign language
- Use of computer in learning process

Modules for improving the social skills for pupils and parents of pupils at risk

- Communication and conflict mediation
- Counselling and psycho-pedagogical orientation

2. Trainings for the teachers that work with pupils at risk of abandoning school

The purpose of this activity is to form a group of **educational assistants**:

- Primary school teachers,
- Romanian teachers,
- Mathematics teachers,
- Foreign languages teachers,
- Informatics teachers,
- Psycho-educational consultants.

3. The process of remedial educational programme

- Elaboration of work instruments for educational assistants
- Planning the educational assistants' interventions in field
- Activities with pupils

4. Activities for improving pupils' social skills

- Activities for improving pupils' social skills
- Planning the educational assistants' interventions in field
- Activities with pupils

In the educational establishment, the coordinator of educational assistants team (namely the school principal) will develop, together with the team, the chart of activities. In this chart, two days of activities, which will take place in the afternoons, for each group of pupils will be described.

5. Activities with parents, for scholar and social rehabilitation of the pupils at risk of school abandoning

The educational assistants will engage parents in counselling sessions, communication and pupil conflict mediation activities, for them to better acknowledge the role of education in a child's development, but also to better communicate with their child and get to know him/her.

These activities will take place on Saturday, two hours/day, one day/ month, one hour/ each module.

Expected results

- A modern, flexible programme, adapted to the needs of pupils at risk of abandoning school;
- Increase pupils' motivation and school performance;
- Pupils with a greater knowledge in Romanian and a foreign language, with abilities of working with the computer
- More communicative and better integrated in the educational and family environment pupils, with an improved attendance at school and with better school results
- Parents with better abilities to communicate with their own children, to mediate conflicts; involvement of the parents in the child's school life, aware of the effect of early school leaving.

Authors: „Nicolae Iorga” School, Iași, Romania - Teachers: Mioara Peste, Daniela Tarniceriu, Margareta Lencu, Nicoleta Idricianu-Manolea

4. LESSON PLAN: PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES FOR ABSENTEEISM

Project abstract

Different mutations in society and contemporary family (economic issues, difficulties in parents-children relationship, short amount of time spend with the family, redistribution of roles, low social and emotional support, professional overload of the parents or parents working abroad etc.) represent the main reasons of a larger number of emotional problems in children than in the past.

Moreover, there is also the group pressure, the risk of drug abuse and other forms of addiction, weak, inconsistent educational row-models, school overload, assessment and grading dysfunctions, fear of exams etc., real stress factors for pupils, who avoid the “problem” by skipping classes. From this point of view, absenteeism is a social problem, a late sign of some problems, a behaviour that reflects the structural attitude of lack of interest, motivation and trust in school education.

Unfortunately, the rate of absenteeism is increasing, especially in high schools, and ignoring this problem or excessive punishment can only transform it into a general phenomenon.

This material is a support material for head-teachers that confront to the problem of absenteeism.

Activities

1. Activity: Sources of school stress

PURPOSE: identifying the sources of school stress

LEVEL: secondary school, high school

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NECESSARY MATERIALS: A4 sheets of paper, pencils

TIME: 25 min.

DESCRIPTION: The class is divided into groups of 4-5 pupils. Each group writes a list of sources of school stress, which they will present in front of the class. Then, discussions with the class will be conducted: the items on the lists can be deleted, diminished, tolerated, adapted etc.

2. Activities: Reactions to stress

PURPOSE : Awareness of stress reactions

LEVEL: secondary school, high school

NECESSARY MATERIALS: A4 sheets of paper, pencils

TIME : 40 min.

DESCRIPTION: The class is divided into groups of 4-5 pupils. In 15 minutes, each group writes down reactions they had in a stressful situation (test, semestrial papers, exams etc.) and then they will present them in front of the class. Physical/psychological reactions are to be noted (e.g. heart pains, excessive sweat, headaches), but also the cognitive (what they thought), emotional (what they felt), behavioural (how they behaved) reactions. Finally, several strategies of reassessment of the feelings considered to be stressful, through positive thinking can be identified.

3. ACTIVITY: My diploma

PURPOSE: Development of self-esteem

LEVEL: secondary school, high school

NECESSARY MATERIALS: worksheets, pencils

TIME: 20 min.

DESCRIPTION: Each pupil receives a worksheet named “My diploma”, which she/he is going to fill in. The pupils can show their work in front of the class.

4. ACTIVITY: Who am I?

PURPOSE: Development of self-esteem

LEVEL: secondary school

NECESSARY MATERIALS: worksheets, glue, scissors, pencils, coloured markers, magazines

TIME: 30 min.

DESCRIPTION: Each pupil receives a worksheet named “Who am I?” and the materials. The pupils receive the task to create a drawing that gives the others some clues about who they are. The pupils are allowed to use words, symbols or drawings. After the completion of the task, the class is divided into groups of 3-4 pupils; each pupil shares his/her drawing with the other pupils in the group. The groups discuss common aspects for 5 minutes. Finally, the class is reunited and they discuss for 10 minutes on the following topics: was the task easy/difficult to perform, what common things did they discover, did the task help them to get to know each other etc.

5. ACTIVITY: How do I see myself, how do the others see me?

PURPOSE: Building a positive self image

LEVEL: secondary school

NECESSARY MATERIALS: A4 sheets of paper, markers, coloured markers, whiteboard/ flipchart

TIME: 50 min.

DESCRIPTION: This activity gives the pupils the possibility to discover some personal strengths that contribute to a balanced development of their personality.

The class is divided in groups of 5 pupils; they receive an A4 sheet of paper and coloured pencils.

Each pupil draws the shape of his/her own hand on the sheet of paper and writes down his/her name. On the thumb, he/she writes a personal attribute (character features, personality particularities; for example: generous, intelligent, nice, talented etc.) Next, the group colleagues mention other strengths of their colleague, which they write on the other “fingers” of the hand drawn on the paper. This way, each member of the group will have the shape of his/her hand drawn on the sheet of paper, with all

the personality features that he/she and his/her classmates identified. Finally, all the sheets of paper are put on the whiteboard or on the flipchart.

Another version of this activity is to mention one (or more than one) positive behaviour. The focus is on the positive features, not on negative aspects of their own personality.

Suggestions for teachers:

The focus is on valorisation. If the teacher notices that some pupils cannot identify positive aspects of his/her behaviour or personality, other pupils can write only on the “fingers” of the hand. This way, with the help of the others, the pupil will get to know himself/herself and to improve self-valorisation of his/her own potential.

6. ACTIVITY: My strengths and weaknesses

PURPOSE: Development of self-esteem

LEVEL: secondary school, high school

NECESSARY MATERIALS: worksheets, pencils

TIME: 30 min.

DESCRIPTION: Each pupil receives a worksheet named “My strengths and weaknesses” (appendix 3); they have 10 minutes to fill in the worksheet. After they complete this task, groups of 3-4 pupils discuss for 5 minutes about the answers they gave. For 15 minutes, the pupils discuss and are helped to complete the list with their strengths. The teacher will try to discuss about how some less positive personality aspects can be improved.

7. ACTIVITY: Portrait

PURPOSE: Increasing the level of self-esteem

LEVEL: secondary school

NECESSARY MATERIALS: A4 sheets of paper, pencils

TIME: 15 min.

DESCRIPTION: A sheet of paper is clipped on the back of each pupil. For 10 minutes, each pupil writes down on other pupils’ papers positive character features. After 10 minutes, each pupil will have a list with positive aspects, which he/she will read and reason upon.

8. ACTIVITY: „HOW AM I AND HOW DO I WANT ME TO BE?”

PURPOSE: self-knowledge, personal development

TIME: 50 min.

LEVEL: secondary school, high school

NECESSARY MATERIALS: worksheets (one for each pupil, appendix 5) flipchart sheets, markers.

DESCRIPTION: the class is divided into groups; the notion of self image (the opinion you have of yourself) is defined with the help of the pupils. The topic of discussion is the following: the fact that we all have strengths and weaknesses, which we want to improve. Each pupil receives a worksheet. After they fill in the worksheet, following instructions, they share (if they want to) the information on the worksheet with the group colleagues. They create hierarchical relationships between the personal aspects they want to change; then, they think about steps and ideas of how to make this happen. The activity can continue by asking each group to select (negotiate) an aspect which they want to improve and show the necessary steps for making the change. They make a list with all the ideas on the flipchart and a representative pupil of each group presents the ideas in front of the class.

9. ACTIVITY: Assertiveness

PURPOSE: Development of assertiveness

LEVEL: secondary school, high school

NECESSARY MATERIALS: informative materials, A3 sheets of paper, coloured markers, markers

TIME: 50 min.

DESCRIPTION: The class is divided into 3 groups. Each group receives informative materials that contain the description of the following types: passive, aggressive, assertive. The groups have 20

minutes to create a brief overview of the information given and to write the main ideas on the A3 sheet of paper. Finally, each group presents the sheet of paper in front of the class.

Authors: Kindergarten with long day care services No.10, Huși, Vaslui County, Romania – Teachers: Turbatu Nina, Calancea Alina

5. LESSON PLAN: FOLLOW YOUR CLASSMATES' EXAMPLE!

Project abstract

Education is a common subject in all environments and social situations. Institutions, social organisations, human communities, but also every person in different life situations – individual or collective – they all mirror the strength or the weakness of education through the results they have in certain activities that may bring satisfaction or disappointment, success or failure.

In the last years, our educational system has been confronting a serious problem: absenteeism; this problem leads to school abandoning and school failure.

Pupils attending secondary schools who have a low school attendance live far away from school, stay at home to take care of housework or come from families with many children and a precarious financial situation or disorganised families. The low attendance leads to the impossibility to complete the semestrial situation or the study, which also leads to grade repetition and school abandoning.

Main purpose of the project

To diminish the number of pupils who abandon school and to increase their motivation for learning, in order to ensure equal chances to basic education for all pupils.

Objectives

- Raising awareness on the importance of education for the pupil's personality, both for the children with problems, and for their parents;
- Increasing motivation for learning by encouraging the pupils who come from disorganised families, with bad financial situations, to take part in extracurricular activities
- Identification, procurement and use of sponsor funds, in order to pay for material expenses of children with problems
- Preventing and fighting against criminal behaviour in pupils
- Identifying pupils who abandoned school or who are at risk of abandoning school
- Supporting pupils at risk of abandoning school in order to keep them in the educational system
- Improving family system implication in the educational and social rehabilitation of the pupils at risk of abandoning school
- Increasing the rate of involvement of local community in finding solutions for the situations of abandoning or risk of abandoning school

Target group

- Pupils at risk of having a low attendance
- Teachers

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- Parents

Activities

For pupils:

Purposes:

- Increasing child's self-esteem through improving the self-image
- Emphasizing the child's motivation to learn

Actions

- Meetings of pupils in different grades or educational level for sharing experience regarding the learning conditions in the family (quarterly)
- Development of a counselling program for pupils that have knowledge gaps (weekly);
- Debates on "Does the successful education ensure a successful life? (biannual);

For parents:

Objectives:

- Promote a more sensitive approach of the family in the relationship with the school;
- Raising the civic standards of the pupils' families

Actions:

- Start a group of training for parents of the children with problems (quarterly);
- Permanent psycho-pedagogical counselling in the Interscholastic office for psycho-pedagogical assistance (permanent);
- Meeting with doctor and psychiatrists with the topic: "Physical and psychological changes in the children's lives" (quarterly);
- Debates in the parents group on the topic "The family – an institution with a fundamental role in the child's life".

For teachers:

Purposes:

- Recognition of psychological and behavioural aspects of pre-teenagers;

Actions:

- Possibilities of getting to know the psychological and pedagogical aspects of pupils
- Experience exchange between teachers on the subject: "Empathy and teacher-pupil relationship"
- Debates on the research on the causes of school failure
- More frequent visits to pupils' homes

Authors: Secondary school no. 1 Puscasi, Vaslui County, Romania – Teachers: Chirca Diana-Lenuta, Moisei Mihaela