E-Mentoring

Developing digital competencies and innovative solutions to support e-mentoring for unemployed young people

Theoretical and Pedagogical Bases

Project Result 2: E-MENTORING Online Platform of Open Educational Resources

Contents

Introduction

The aim of the E-MENTORING project is to develop the digital competencies of mentors from youth-serving organizations and equip them with innovative solutions to support e-mentoring programmes for unemployed young people.

E-MENTORING project will face this challenge by means of addressing the following objectives:

- Support the adaptation of mentors to the new digital environment, by means of increasing the capacity and readiness of youth-serving organizations to manage an effective shift towards digital education and training.
- Upskill digital competences of mentors and youth-serving organizations and their expertise in the use of digital tools to support unemployed young people.
- Design, test, adapt and apply new methodologies and ICT-based tools to train mentors and youth-serving organizations in the use of innovative solutions to support e-mentoring.

To this purpose, the consortium will co-design, develop, test, and mainstream the following innovative and OER freely accessible project results:

- A **Training Curriculum on digital competencies** for mentors and youth-serving organizations, defining for the first time the competencies, knowledge and skills needed to support e-mentoring programmes for unemployed young people.

- An **Online Platform of Open Educational Resources** including several elements of innovation such as an Online Digital Database, Theoretical and Pedagogical Basis and a Blended learning course, an ICT-based educative training resource focused on teaching development of digital competencies and solutions to support e-mentoring.

- **Guidelines and recommendations on supporting e-mentoring for unemployed young people.** A Policy set of recommendations to facilitate transferability and replicability of the project results in intermediaries and youth-serving organizations working to support e-mentoring for unemployed young people.

Mentors and youth-serving organizations are the main target users of the project results and final beneficiaries are unemployed young people. The E-MENTORING project will have a positive impact in partners and other youth-serving organizations in Europe, developing the digital competencies of mentors to support e-mentoring programmes; in mentors, extending and developing their digital competencies and accessing to innovative solutions to support e-mentoring, in unemployed young people, increasing their engagement, collaboration and retention to actively participate in civic or social processes in communities they live in; and in stakeholders, accessing to innovative solutions to support e-mentoring.

Theoretical and Pedagogical Bases

Theoretical and pedagogical bases (TPB) consist of a document analysing and describing the most relevant cutting-edge theoretical fundamentals and pedagogical approaches on the development of digital competencies and solutions to support e-mentoring, addressed to mentors and youth serving organizations, at national and European level.

- **Theoretical fundamentals**: rules, principles, or theories on which non-conventional teaching-learning methods and resources to develop digital competencies and solutions to support e-mentoring.

- **Pedagogical approaches:** ways in which teachers apply non-conventional teaching-learning methods and resources when developing digital competencies and solutions to support e-mentoring, related with theory and practice of teaching.

To do so, the partnership has worked on the following items to achieve this document:

- Identifying the most relevant and innovative theoretical fundamentals and pedagogical approaches on non-conventional teaching-learning methods and resources tailor made to develop digital competencies and solutions to support e-mentoring.

- Analysing these theoretical fundamentals and pedagogical approaches, providing guidelines for their application.

The Theoretical and Pedagogical Basis is an Open Educational Resource (OER) available in English and all the languages of the consortium and is accessible through the project Online Platform.
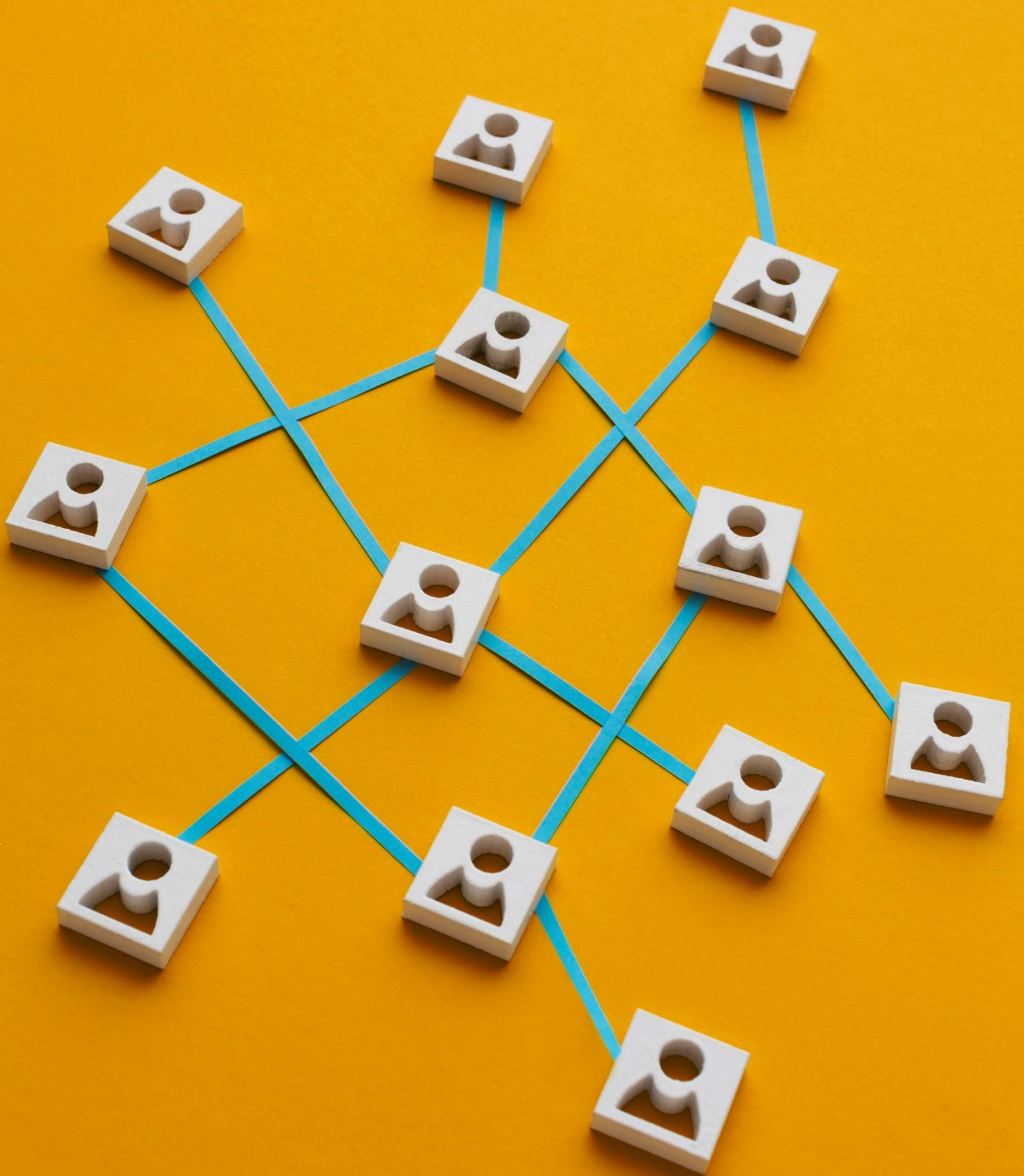
UNIT 1. e-Mentoring Basis

Introduction

The E-Mentoring unit on e-mentoring basis aims to understand the meaning of e-mentoring and the types of programmes that can occur in the digital environment, differentiating them from the traditional mentoring, as well as to guide the future e-mentor on what his/her role is and how to structure a programme.

The Theoretical and Pedagogical Basis will provide relevant theoretical information on the e-mentoring foundations, the benefits and challenges involved in its implementation and pedagogical methodologies that can be used when teaching the unit.

Currently, our society and environment are in continuous change and evolution, with changing characteristics where the effect of technology, the amount of information we receive every day and the infinite possibilities of future scenarios have changed the configuration of our daily lives, our work, labour market and demands.

This is why theoretical knowledge is still very important, but new technologies and resources are an indispensable element for professionals, both to improve the performance of their functions and to facilitate outreach to others.

As an example, e-mentoring is one of this adapted and new resources, aimed at creating supportive relationships, providing a safe virtual environment where the mentee, in our case unemployed young people, can share any critical issues affecting their professional and personal success. Its main objective is to ensure that participants feel "connected" and have the facility to create communities using key elements such as interaction (Rovai, 2002), thus enabling them to participate more actively in the society around them.

Description

Theoretical fundamental

Mentoring is a practice aimed at developing the potential of people, based on the transfer of knowledge, and learning through experience, all within a structured process in which a personal and trusting relationship is established between a person (a mentor) who guides, stimulates, challenges, and encourages another (a mentee) according to his/her needs in order to maximise talent, learning and opportunities.

Mentoring is a resource for change and improvement for all those who participate. It is one of the most powerful practices to promote learning and talent development, enabling the acquisition of skills and competencies.

e-mentoring

In e-mentoring, we refer to the mentoring that uses any kind of digital technology: video conferencing, emailing, texting, chatting via apps, mobile phones, laptops, or computers with an internet connection.

Applied to the case of mentoring young people, this practice multiplies the possibilities and speed of its effects thanks to the widespread use of the internet, mobile phones, apps, and digital media among them.

e-mentor

If, as shown above, the leap from mentoring to e-mentoring is based on applying ICTs in the communication, structure, and tools of the programme, it is necessary to go deeper into the definition of the mentor, in order to establish what nuances should be added to the e-mentor profile.

For this, as a mentor, it is important to consider and understand the following factors:

- Decide on the type of mentor you are going to become.
  To meet the objective of improving e-mentoring solutions for unemployed young people, there are different theories and approaches within mentoring that can be applied:
    - Personal development: focused on improving the active participation of young people in their environment.
    - Career support: focused on improving the employability of young people.

- Decide on the type (and degree) of technology used.
  Now, the structure of the programme also depends on these technical aspects which should be decided based on the mentee's needs and environment. It is your responsibility to raise and discuss with the e-mentee to determine the most appropriate way: using only digital messaging, messaging plus videoconferencing, the combination of face-to-face and digital, platforms, software, apps, tools…

e-mentee

The definition of mentee refers to a person who receives advice, training, or guidance from a more experienced or skilled person. This is because the mentee has specific skills or competencies that they want to learn from their mentor, and the mentor can devote a certain amount of time to teaching them. Typically, the mentor and mentee will set goals together and meet regularly to practice or learn new skills throughout the mentoring programme.

Translating this to the digital environment simply emphasises the mentee's obligation to maintain regular contact with the mentor through the different digital options proposed and to work to identify and meet those goals through the digital tools made available to them.

e-mentoring benefits

- It erases barriers.
  It allows for greater flexibility in the relationship between mentor and mentee as the participants do not have to physically coincide in the same place. This is also applicable in the case of participants with some kind of disability, avoiding displacements.

- It is more concrete.
  This same flexibility also allows for better matching of mentors and mentees without depending on them being from the same country, city, etc., which multiplies the possibilities of finding suitable and matching profiles based on specific skills, features, or needs.

- The different models of traditional mentoring can still be applied.
  It allows group mentoring, individual mentoring, express mentoring, peer mentoring, reverse mentoring, personal development mentoring, career counselling, etc. to be developed. It can even be combined with face-to-face mentoring. In all these variants, technology can be applied to improve communication or the resources to be used during the programme.

- Different types of digital communication
  It can work with asynchronous communication (participants do not coincide in the same temporal instant) or synchronous (when it occurs at the same time for both participants).

e-mentoring challenges

- Commitment
  The lack of the need to be present in person at a certain time, the dependence on internet availability or not meeting the other participants in person, can reduce the mentee's commitment. Therefore, the warmth of the mentor-mentee relationship must go beyond the screen.

- Digital accessibility
  As this is a methodology where technology is applied either in the form of communication or in the resources or tools to be discovered and used during the sessions, it is very important to ensure that the participants have the capacity to use them and the availability of these resources: good internet connection, access to a computer, apps, software, devices, etc.

- Technical problems
  In addition to the above, dependence on technological resources can make it impossible or delay the performance of a function or activity if there is no technical assistance to solve these problems.

- Privacy and cybersecurity
  All tools, apps, platforms, and resources used must guarantee the privacy and security of participants' personal data and information.
  Both when matching mentors and mentees, as well as at the end of the mentoring relationship, this information must be treated in accordance with the GDPR and not used for any other purpose outside the objectives of the mentoring relationship.

Pedagogical approaches

Technology, collaboration, inquiry, and connection are the pillars on which an e-mentoring relationship should be built, therefore the recommended pedagogical approach to improve the e-mentoring basis, digital competences of mentors and, in that way, to improve the skills and resources of mentors to offer e-mentoring solutions to unemployed young people, are active methodologies.

Combariza (2000) highlights that active or experiential methodologies intertwine learning and action through a specially designed set of activities in the classroom and in the field (let's apply to e-mentoring sessions). The essence of this type of methodology is the direct action and participation of people and its aim is to provide information and tools for the management of specific problems (the objectives set at e-mentoring sessions).

That is, applying a experiential learning approach in the activities developed during the programme, learning on reflection of doing, inquiry-based learning in collaborative settings, discussions, problem solving, project-based learning, analysis of real-life examples and experiences. An important aspect to remember is that emotions should be integral to learning, recognizing the individual differences to enable e-mentors to establish the best model and structure for their e-mentees.

With these approach, methodologies and practice, experiences, experimentation and above all, the mentees' proactivity, will take the mentoring programme and the activities developed within it to a better version adapted to the mentee's reality and objectives.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Unit 1 aims to understand the meaning of e-mentoring and the types of programmes that can occur in the digital environment, to guide the future e-mentor on what his/her role is and how to structure a programme and its sessions.

To do this, it is essential to start from the notions of traditional mentoring, ensuring its understanding and fundamental elements. Thus, the digitalisation of these elements presents different approaches and methodologies to the traditional ones, requiring the mentor to be able to provide the mentee with proactivity, to create collaborative workspaces where experience and reflection are the main axes.

E-mentoring has gone from being a specific mentoring model to being an accessory to the rest of the mentoring models, where the combination of presence, technologies and resources is infinite to adapt to any space, distance and need of young people.

UNIT 2. e-Mentoring Tools

Introduction

This learning unit shines a light on the particularities of different types of digital tools that may be used to support and facilitate the e-Mentoring process. Therefore, the tools described in this learning unit are structured as follows:

- Communication tools e.g., voice, video-chat, email, messenger services, and chat tools.
- Tools for documentation (visual and in writing) e.g., questionnaires, notes, mind-maps etc.
- Tools to support the process and establish rapport e.g., videos, blogs, games.

Whichever type of digital tool is being used it is important to understand its impact on the key dimensions of the (e-)mentoring process:

- relationship ("rapport")
- communication and
- structure

Please note that these topics (e-Mentoring Basis, Communication and Digital environment) are covered in more detail in other learning units. This unit focusses on the potential effect of digital tools on these aspects is being pointed out.

The theoretical fundamentals and pedagogical provide information on how digital tools can be of use to overcome common problems in a mentoring relationship (Part A). Furthermore, considerations how to promote the development of competencies based on these problems can be promoted (Part B).

Finally, the information provided here contains specific recommendations regarding the use of tools and the framing of the context in the digital realm.

Description

To provide some fundamentals and pedagogical advice, we will point out some of the most common problems is in a mentoring process and highlight how digital tools can be of help to avoid these pitfalls. These examples will provide basic insight on how to successfully frame, plan and follow through a mentoring relationship.

Issue 1 - Meeting up in person and as scheduled.

Mentoring requires an effort from both parties participating in the mentoring process. The mentor and the mentee must make the time to meet up. To do so in an analogue process, they also must find a common space and travel there.

Mentoring using digital tools, especially when the session take place online through a digital communication tool this can facilitate much of the process. All the sudden there is no more need to physically go to another place and the sessions can be joined basically from wherever there is a stable internet connection and a communication device of some sort.

Issue 2 – Find the right amount of time and sessions.

At the beginning of a mentoring process the participants are often tempted to increase the frequency and length of their mentoring sessions. The initial motivational push may be the reason for this. However, the recommendation is to rather stick to the plan with a sensitive amount of flexibility. Mentoring processes often have their logic and suggest a rough structure and include spacing to reinforce the reflection with additional experience. An excessive time and energy commitment can backfire easily.

A digitally supported process can help both the mentor and the mentee to draft an overall plan of their process and to agree on the schedule as well as the big picture together. This could be written out in some sort of shared document or online whiteboard.

Issue 3 – (Unrealistic) expectations

Expectation management is generally an important topic. It is very helpful to clarify what both parties, the mentee, and the mentor, expect from the process, from themselves and from each other. Each participant in this process can review his/her expectations on his/her own but the clarification of expectations can also be an explicit part of the process. If unrealistic expectations are identified at an early stage, it helps to align timely.

Once again digital tools such as online whiteboards or shared documents can help to take note of the framework including the goals and expectations of the process.

Be aware however, that unfulfilled expectations are sometimes not explicitly expressed. They often show through non-verbal cues. These are a little more difficult to identify in online communication or through chats. If there are indicators that wrong expectations are hindering the process, it's highly recommended to address this issue as soon as it's identified and to clarify.

Issue 4 - Over-dependence on the mentor/mentee

Even though the mentor guides the mentee it is important that this relationship maintains a healthy balance. A mentor is neither a superior nor a teacher. The mentee is neither the child nor the inferior. It can happen that certain dependencies develop.

The most effective countermeasures at this regard are a) expectation management and b) good "framing" of the process/relationship.

Digital tools can contribute very little to this. However, an indicator for a disbalance or dependency from either side can be that there is a disbalance in the communication efforts from one of the parties. When the process also takes part in writing (through chats or emails for example) this can be reviewed very easily.

Issue 5 - Unfair manipulation

At times the mentor and the mentee are also connected systemically. They might be in the same business, belong to the same organization or are acquainted elsewise. This is not negative per se; however, the participants need to be aware that it can lead to a conflict of interests and both may be tempted to manipulate the other (purposely or unconsciously) for their personal benefit.

A well-documented process may make things more transparent and be a good measure against compliance.

Issue 6 - Ineffective mentoring pairs

The relationship between the mentor and the mentee is the main ingredient for success of a mentoring process. This relationship is influenced by many factors. Communication plays a very big role in this. Also, the time and place where the encounters take place have an impact on how the people relate to each other. Many of these factors can be modified and adjusted but sometimes a mentor and a mentee simply don't work well together.

Entering in a digitally supported mentoring process there is more flexibility regarding switching "channels". This means if it looks like communication is not flowing well and the "rapport" is not good enough, it is possible to change the way the mentoring sessions take place. For example, if the participants have started with audio chats and notice that this doesn't work for them, they can try to have video calls or written chats.

The benefits of digital tools in e-Mentoring

These common issues that may affect a mentoring process described above show up some potential benefits of digital tools. To summarize find a list of these positive contributions as follows. Digital tools in mentoring can:

- Make it easier for participants to engage in the process e.g. Because they can online sessions from wherever they are.
- Help to document the process (through shared online tools).
- Contribute to transparency of process and topics discussed.
- Provide flexibility in choosing the communication channel and modify the setting as required.

Part B – How to promote the development of competencies for e-mentoring

Literature review and status quo check

There is a broad variety of literature about mentoring and e-mentoring available. First, we recommend getting acquainted with the material provided by this project. It is essential that mentors are familiar with the basics regarding communication, building a relationship and the use of digital tools in mentoring. It may be useful to introduce some sort of quick evaluation e.g., multiple choice test to verify how familiar the people involved are with the theoretical framework relevant for this process.

Experiential learning

From the pedagogical and methodological point of view in the development of competencies in this area experiential learning is favoured. This means particularly through the reflection of the doing. Therefore, it is recommended to guide the applicants in the process of reflection. The Experiential Learning Model by David Kolb[1] suggests focussing this process in the following areas:

- Concrete experience – What the learner experiences.
- Reflective observation – Reflection about the experience (failure and successes).
- Abstract conceptualization – What can be concluded from this experience and how to improve it next time?
- Active experimentation – Try again and with the reflection in mind.

---

[1] Kolb, D. (1984). Experiential Learning: experience as the source of learning and development.

Peer exchange

Furthermore, we encourage users to get engaged in some sort of peer exchange regarding their experience as mentors. It is not an integral part of the mentoring process to supervise the process, however, to provide guidance for peer review about the way the mentors interact with the mentees can strengthen the relationship building and improve the overall quality of the process.

Good practice research

Finally, we would like to recommend the provision of good practice information to the mentors. Particularly regarding the use of tools in an e-Mentoring process it is helpful if mentors are being informed about things that have been proven to work well in this context.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Here are some recommendations for applying digital tools in an e-Mentoring process based on the considerations listed above:

- **Get familiar with the tool first.**

Most importantly mentors and mentees need to become familiar with the tools applied. It is important that enough time and attention is used that the participants in the process feel comfortable in the use of the tools. Always remember that "form follows function". This means that the form is less important than the impact it has on the process. If you discover that

- **Each tool has its particularities.**

Whenever engaging in a process with digital tools in between, it is recommended to take time and reflect on the effect this will have on the factors stated above (relationship, communication, structure). Ask yourself the following questions:

- How will the use of this tool potentially affect the relationship, communication, structure?
- How can this be used in advantage of or to facilitate the process?

For example: An e-Mentoring process that is only based on video chat over the smartphone is different than a combined approach when video chat is supported by chat- or email communication.

- **Choose the tools you feel comfortable with**

It is important to feel comfortable with the tools that are being used. For example, it may create complications, if the communication takes place through chats but one of the participants is a very slow typer.

- **Combine tools.**

It is highly recommended to use a set of tools. Video- or voice chat together with digital shared notetaking is much more effective than simple video chat.

- **Pause and reschedule when necessary (technical problems)**

The probability of facing technical issues in any process that recurs digital (communication) tools is very high. If you encounter those make sure you address and fix the problem first before pushing further.

UNIT 3. e-Mentoring Communication between mentor and mentee

Introduction

This unit aims to address some of the basic principles and practical approaches to interpersonal communication and establishing a trusting mentoring relationship in virtual settings. It provides a brief overview of asynchronous and synchronous forms of communication, and the developmental and instrumental approaches to mentoring relations.

The overall goal is for the learner to understand how to establish a mentoring relationship in a digital setting, and how to navigate potential challenges related to digital communication that future mentors may encounter.

Description

It may be helpful to consider the process of entering as like "the initiation of friendships and love relationships in terms of communicating appropriate relational expectations."[2]   Establishing boundaries or setting basic rules provide mentors and mentees with a common understanding of their roles and allows them to form realistic expectations. This in turn, can be a highly effective way of preventing potential misunderstanding or conflict.

Through active listening, concentrating, and focusing on the mentee's ideas, goals and the challenges they experience, the mentor can identify areas in which they can provide encouragement and support. A mentor who has a good understanding of who their mentee is as a person, is better able to provide guidance that is effective and relevant.

The term "digital native" is used to describe those who have grown up with digital technology-computers, the internet and virtual social interaction[3].

---

[2] Kalbfleisch 2006

[3] Margaryan 2011

While the literature on e-mentoring often mentions the challenges of creating meaningful relationships, numerous studies indicate that youth often feel more comfortable communicating personal or complex issues in remote, digital settings, saying they felt it provided a 'safe distance,' as well as time to process emotions and craft more thoughtful responses.[4]

Synchronous communication
A real-time communication session, such as a video or voice call in which participants actively receive and respond to messages. Examples include Facetime Video call, Zoom meeting.

Asynchronous communication
Communication which takes place over a period and does not require participants to be simultaneously present. Examples include Email, Facebook Messenger, or text messages.

Synchronous communication allows for real-time communication, meaning mentors and mentees can provide immediate feedback, or quickly answer questions. Furthermore, video-based synchronous communication facilitates "face-to-face" interactions, which – to a much larger degree- enables participants to observe non-verbal or physical cues. Asynchronous communication provides a large degree of flexibility, time to process information and provide thoughtful responses. Having a written record can be useful for future reference and reflection. Related challenges include extended response-times, differences in writing abilities or style (tone and non-verbal cues), and thus an increased potential for misunderstandings to occur.

Developmental and Instrumental Approaches

Mentoring programs exist in a wide variety of formats, settings, and overarching goals. Broadly speaking, they can often be characterized as having either a developmental or instrumental approach. Where they differ is largely in terms of the initial relational development process. The developmental approach is characterized by prioritizing interpersonal relations between the mentor and mentee, while the instrumental approach generally follows a more skills-focused structure. Research suggests both approaches are associated with positive mentor program outcomes, and that a combination of the two is more beneficial than strictly adhering to one. Overall, they are very similar in that they emphasize active listening, positive interactions, regular contact, relationship-building, goal-oriented activities, and adapting the program according to the needs of the mentee.

Outline and Define

Ensure that both the mentor and mentee understand the goals and purpose of the mentoring relationship, their respective roles, and obligations (e.g., a mentor is a guide providing advice, not supervisor giving orders). This lays a solid foundation for a productive relationship and serves to prevent potential misunderstandings.

---

[4] Garringer et al. 2019

Mentoring relationships often consist of a more experienced, older mentor paired with a younger, less-experienced mentee). Mentors should be cognisant of how differences in gender, race, religion, nationality, and socioeconomic status can affect the dynamics of mentoring relationships. [5] Identify the real or perceived barriers a mentee may navigate regarding accessing opportunities or achieving their goals. Research indicates that openly recognizing and addressing these factors is conducive to more positive relationship outcomes, especially in cross-racial or gender mentor relationships[6].

Communication: Be specific and practical

Ask the mentee which platforms or types of digital communication they prefer. Choose platforms that both mentor and mentee are already familiar with. It is easier to stay in touch if it is already a part of your daily routines. Previous research indicates that frequency of interaction has a major impact on mentor relationships, both in terms of quality and level of satisfaction[7].

Lay out specific expectations concerning frequency of contact and responsiveness (i.e., weekly meetings or conversations; a certain window of time to respond to messages, what time of day messages be sent or received. Remember, these do not have to be set-in-stone and can be changed as the relationship progresses.

---

[5] Dahlberg and Byars-Winston 2019; Parker 2003

[6] Parker 2003

[7] Garringer et al. 2019; Kalbfleisch 2006

Lack of privacy may prevent a mentee from feeling comfortable sharing private information. Some mentees may be dependent on public locations to connect for their mentoring sessions. Not everyone has a living situation that allows for personal space, or access to the internet. If using a shared device, there could also be a concern that written or recorded communication could potentially be accessed by others.

Be Open

If possible, have the first meeting be a virtual "face-to-face" (i.e., video). Keeping an informal tone can create a more relaxed and comfortable setting, be fully present and engaged in the conversation. Learn about their background. A good place to begin is by asking the mentee about their interests, role models, milestones, experience with mentoring, and desired program outcomes. How does their background inform those? Take the time- it is key to better understanding of the motivations of the mentee. As a mentor, be open about your own challenges and experiences.

Know Your Online Voice

A lack of verbal and non-verbal to cues that are experienced in-person are not visible or perceived in digital communication- and can be a source of misinterpretation or miscommunication.

Stay informed and aware of discourse styles, online trends, length of text communication, how to use GIFs or memes and meanings of certain emojis.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Some general points to keep in mind for the first meeting and throughout the mentoring relationship:

- Define The Relationship

Make sure both mentor and mentee have a clear understanding of their roles, obligations, and expectations of each other.

- Meet Often

Shorter, but more frequent sessions are preferable to longer, less frequent ones. Use platforms or channels you are both comfortable with.

- Listen Actively

Learn about the mentee's motivations, goals, and objectives. Use this information to provide advice, encouragement and support that is both relevant and productive for the mentee.

Ask open-ended questions (i.e., Instead of "What jobs do you find interesting?" try "Tell me about jobs you find interesting").

Successful mentoring relationships, as with other kinds of relationships, are based on active listening, personal connection, clear expectations, and shared respect.

UNIT 4. e-Mentoring Unemployed Youth

Introduction

Learning unit 4, e-Mentoring Unemployed Youth, is focused on developing and/or improving the knowledge, skills, and competences to conceive e-mentoring programmes for unemployed youth. To do so, mentors and youth serving organisations, at national and European level, shall be aware of the most relevant and innovative theoretical fundamentals and pedagogical approaches on non-conventional teaching-learning methods and resources tailor made to build capacity on the following subjects:

- Social location and intercultural awareness.
- Job searching skills and techniques.
- Active participation.
- Netiquette.

By devising e-tools to assess the needs, social location, and cultural competence of the mentee, the mentor can determine the goals for the e-mentoring relationship, and better plan the e-mentoring sessions that aim to boost the mentee job searching skills and job searching techniques needed to conduct an effective job search.

Last, but certainly not least, it is important to use the e-mentoring sessions to support the mentees in reflecting on their own active participation skills as well as to create guidelines for mentees concerning appropriate and safe internet communications, *i.e.,* Netiquette, thus orienting the mentees in building an appropriate digital footprint.

The theoretical fundamental and pedagogical approaches presented in the next pages serve as basis to accomplish these objectives.

Description

Knowing that many mentors are left to self-train through the mentoring process, i.e., learning as they go along, the E-MENTORING project did extensive research on the relevant skills mentors need to support unemployed youth trough effective online mentoring.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

30

According to the "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people" report, that analyses the key youth labour market indicators and trends, the global youth unemployment rate is estimated at 15.6% in 2021, more than three times the adult rate. The relatively low labour force participation rate of young people is primarily driven by their pursuit of an education that can improve their chances of achieving higher labour market returns later. However, more than one in five young people are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), and alarmingly, in 2020 the youth NEET rate jumped to its highest level in at least 15 years. This fact is of relevance, since young people in this situation tend to miss out a crucial early stage of their personal development and risk facing severe disadvantages in the labour market in the future.

When thinking about a transition to a greener and more digital economies, one must understand that the youth employment in the digital economy is characterized by the relatively large share of skilled workers with concomitant high levels of education. This calls for a broad-based approach to digital literacy coupled with promotion of the acquisition of appropriate technical and digital skills by young people so that they can take full advantage of the new opportunities created by the investments in the green, blue, digital, creative and care economies that aim to support a human-centred recovery of the COVID 19 crisis.

In this sense, youth serving organisations can take advantage of online mentoring to ensure that young people are actively involved by addressing their needs, while supporting them in setting goals and choosing their career paths. Nevertheless, this can only happen if trust is built between the mentor and mentee, so it is fundamental to build a good rapport by taking in account **social location** and **intercultural specificities**.

Social location refers to the social position of a person within any given society. It identifies to the social characteristics regarded in social contexts like gender, ethnicity, religion, or class position, to name a few. To develop a good intercultural relationship, one must become **intercultural aware**, i.e., understanding the similarities and differences between our own culture and other cultures, both in terms of values, beliefs, and/or behaviours. This leads to the importance of celebrating diversity i.e., recognising how the different backgrounds, skills or/and experience, can better serve the collective. Quoting authors Wu and Marek (2018), four levels of intercultural competence can be defined [8]:
1. *Awareness of superficial or very visible cultural differences, stereotypes.*
2. *Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one's own.*
3. *Understanding of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one's own.*
4. *Understanding of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the insider.*

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

31

Author Hanvey (1976) concluded that at least level 3 is required to experience empathy with another culture or group of people. Acknowledging that intercultural understanding is a process that people move through, based on their experiences, it is fundamental that the mentor develops an awareness of his/her own views, assumptions, and beliefs, and how they are shaped by the culture he/she belongs to.

Moreover, the mentor must admit that he/she may not know best, to without judgements start taking interest about other countries and cultures, researching the differences and similitudes between cultures.

These same principles apply to social location, the ways we connect and experience various groups because of our place and/ or position in society that is our individual's combination of different factors like age, gender, social position, religious beliefs, and geographic location.

As **job searching** isn't just applying for a job and wait to get an interview, it is important to develop among youth **job searching skills and techniques** that help them thrive in a competitive and network-driven job market. These skills relate mainly to preparedness, networking and conducting and effective job search, something that can be developed through self-rection and roleplaying. The mentor can challenge the youngster to reflect about its skills, strengths, attributes, and unique experiences to present themselves in a more efficient way.

By knowing his/her profile, the youngster can start to study the market and salary ranges of the geographic area to align its expectations with its potential employers. This is especially relevant to guide job search, either online or offline, by speaking with personal and professional contacts, i.e., networking. Networking is the key to find a good job, based on past contacts from internships, past jobs, family, friends, schools, etc.

Online settings are the perfect scenario to lead young mentees in practicing different job searching techniques like online networking (this can be done via social media pages, LinkedIn), online job boards, online referrals (asking someone to make recommendations on your professional profile). Other non-online job searching techniques can also be considering such as participating in job fairs and volunteering can also be suggested to the mentee.

In case of the online practices, the mentor is advised to plan e-mentoring sessions aiming to assess the mentee job searching skills and then conduct the mentee practicing those skills using online platforms. For example, mentors can ask mentees to:

- Have an updated contact information of co-workers, friends or anyone who can support them find or identify a job opportunity.
- Write, prepare, and send letters of recommendation.
- Create a professional profile using LinkedIn and ask for recommendation on their profile.
- In alternative, create an online curriculum using the appropriate platforms; reinforcing the need to update it and adapt it to the existing job offers.
- Have a ready an online business card.
- Develop an "elevator pitch" about own background and what they are seeking in.

- Prepare to online, and onsite, interviews.
- Negotiate a salary offer.
- Sending follow-up e-mails and how to keep track of their job applications.
- Learn about SEO and explain them about job keywords.
- Be fully aware of their online presence.

All the practices mentioned above will require from the mentee netiquette knowledge. **Netiquette** is a combined word from the word "net" and "etiquette". Thus, netiquette describes the rules of conduct for respectful and appropriate communication on the internet, referring to as etiquette for the internet. The digital age has brought new dimensions to our life, in which netiquette has (or should) become the new etiquette. Netiquette entails non-technical skills, and it is highly interconnected with the **21st century skills**:
- **Learning skills**: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication.
- **Literacy skills**: information, media, technology.
- **Life skills**: flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, social skills.

In e-mentoring contexts netiquette should be considered in the conducting rules of the mentorship relation, referring to the rules that will guide the online mentoring relationship: platforms to be used; specific rules to when, how, and why to use such platforms, when and how mentoring sessions are to take place. This in fact can be a good starting point to explain netiquette to the mentee and why it is crucial to our increasingly digital society. It also needs to be reinforced that some recruiting companies can use **digital footprints** to identify qualified candidates. In this context, it is important that the young mentee becomes aware of his/her digital footprint, i.e., the online trails left behind (social media comments, e-mails, websites visited, etc.).

On this matters, mentors are advised to be updated on relevant frameworks like **"DigComp 2.1** - The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens" including netiquette in the competence area communication and collaboration and broadly defined it as the awareness regarding "behavioural norms and know-how while using digital technologies and interacting in digital environments", as well as the capability "to adapt communication strategies to specific audiences and to be aware of cultural and generational diversity in digital environments". All these related to the set of skill mentioned before, who are also relevant to leverage a young person opportunity of being employed.

According to the Digital citizenship education (DCE) entrance, by the Council of Europe, active participation "includes the competences that citizens need to reach a level of awareness of themselves in relation to the environments they are plunged into, in order to take sensible decisions and participate actively and positively in the democratic cultures they live in.". Becoming more active in a designated community must also be highlighted as a key competence needed when trying to find a job. Mentors are advised to use their e-mentoring sessions to support the mentee to reflect on own **active participation skills**, relating them to the skills needed for successful job searching thus increasing the opportunities of getting hired. Although participation is a human right, it is essential that young people take knowledge on the skills they can develop while being fully active. By enrolling in volunteering, or any other community projects young people will:

- Enhance their problem-solving skills by approaching, and trying to solve, common situations or problems that affect a give community.
- Enrich their cultural awareness as they will be challenged to be more open about different ideas, inputs, and ways of working with other people from other cultures and places.
- Could develop their planning and management skills as well as to improve their communication skills (effective writing, presentation and oral skills and active listening skills) and interpersonal skills.
- Be exposed to other like-minded businesspeople.

All these skills are interchangeable with the skills needed to boost their **employability skills**, such as:
- Good communication.
- Proactivity (motivation and initiative).
- Leadership and self-leadership.
- Reliability.
- Teamwork.
- Adaptability and resilience, etc.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Mentors and youth workers are advised to incorporate in their mentoring session experiential learning as a preferred pedagogical approach. **Experiential learning,** or "learn by doing, provides mentees with a set of hands-on reflections connected to real-word situations, and in specific this can include job interviews simulation, recording employment interviews, etc. For that purpose, a mentoring session can include the following cycle:

Phases of a e-mentoring session	Experiential learning cycle
1. Check-in	
2. Decide on the session topics	**1. Knowledge**, set of concepts and facts
3. Review points agreed during last session 4. Explore the challenges 5. Creating an action plan 6. Reflect on progress	**2. Activity**, the knowledge application to a real-world setting
7. Decide on actions for next session	**3. Reflexion** on the knowledge gain trough analysis and synthesis processes with the aim to produce new knowledge
8. Check-out: booking next session	

This process cycle can also benefit from activities to reinforce **metacognition processes**.

Phases of a e-mentoring session	Experiential learning cycle	Metacognition processes
1. Check-in		
2. Decide on the session topics	**1. Knowledge**, set of concepts and facts	
3. Review points agreed during last session 4. Explore the challenges 5. Creating an action plan 6. Reflect on progress	**2. Activity**, the knowledge application to a real-world setting	1. Assess the task 2. Evaluate strengths and weaknesses 3. Plan the approach 4. Apply strategies
7. Decide on actions for next session 8. Check-out: booking next session	**3. Reflexion** on the knowledge gain trough analysis and synthesis processes with the aim to produce new knowledge	5. Reflect

KNOW YOUR ROLE

UNIT 5. Motivation in digital environments

Introduction

The unit refers to the theoretical approach of motivation, which is a fundamental component of the 'Self-determination Theory' first grew by psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in 1985. It covers the basic elements, concepts and definitions of the Theory focusing on the idea of motivation. It distinguishes between the definitions of 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' motivation and their determining factors. The Unit also explicates the potential benefits that e-mentors gain from the accrued knowledge of the theoretical components of motivation with references on the benefits in the digital environment. It lastly discusses the pedagogical approach of the unit by illustrating the fundamental components of motivation – i.e., activation, persistence, and intensity – and provides concrete examples that may help e-mentors to start, remain and maintain a guidance process with their mentees within the digital environment.

The Self-determination Theory of motivation has been applied in many domains of life including work, education, family life and sports. In all domains of live, people – including parents, mentors, teachers, and coaches – seek to find ways to motivate their mentees whereas mentees struggle to keep their efforts on track. The self-determination theory is very important and necessary tool for e-mentors and their youth service organizations because it equips learners with the required knowledge to take appropriate action and make sustainable changes in their lives achieving their individual goals more autonomously over time. By gaining self-determination skills or been more autonomous, learners feel that have more control over their lives and are driven to act influencing the outcome.
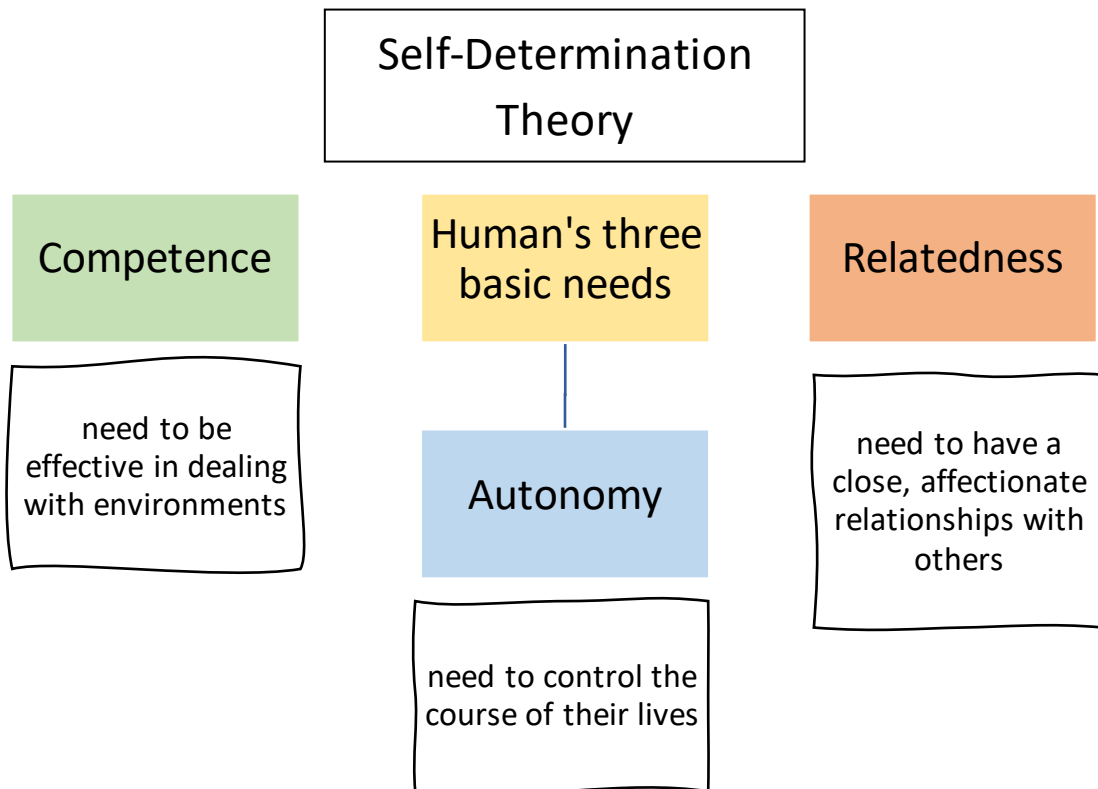
Description of the theoretical fundamental or the pedagogical approach

The **Self-determination theory**[9] (SDT) is a framework for the study of human motivation and personality. It is a meta-theoretical approach that aims to frame motivational studies focusing specifically on different types of motivation.

---

[9] Deci, E.L. & Ryan, R.M. (1985). Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior (Perspectives in Social Psychology). University of Rochester. Available in google scholar:
https://books.google.com.cy/books?hl=en&lr=&id=M3CpBgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&ots=unplhR0VZ2&sig=kZAIninlLRtlUx4hcHgHfFeiGKQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

SDT also focuses on the social and cultural factors that may facilitate or undermine the initiative and/or volition of people to act as well as the quality of their performances. In general, SDT supposes that the universal, innate psychological needs of people – that is, competence, connection, and autonomy – is what motivates them to grow and change[10]. The theory suggests that when these innate needs are fulfilled then the person becomes self-determined (see also the chart below)[11].

Self-Determination
Theory

Competence

Human's three
basic needs

Relatedness

need to be
effective in dealing
with environments

Autonomy

need to have a
close, affectionate
relationships with
others

need to control the
course of their lives

Motivation as a term describes the reasons that people do or act on something. It is the impetus or the inner force that explains human actions. Motivation is a process that drives people to start, keep and maintain a goal-oriented behaviour. It impels people to act to meet their goals. Motivation includes the biological, emotional, social, and cognitive forces that activate human behaviour.

The Self-determination Theory suggests that are mainly two types of motivation – **extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation**[12].

---

[10] Cherry, K. (2022). What is self-determination theory? How self-determination theory influences motivation. VerywellMind website, available at: https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-determination-theory-2795387

[11]Chart: Ackerman, C.E. (2018). Self-determination theory and how it explains motivation, available at https://positivepsychology.com/self-determination-theory/

[12] Deci, E.L. & Ryan, R.M. (2000). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions, *Contemporary Educational Psychology 25, 54–67*

Extrinsic motivation is caused from external factors and usually involves external rewards or external reward systems or tangible and symbolic rewards and punishment (i.e., awards, grades, money, recognition by others, approval, and praise). **Intrinsic motivation** is more of an internal process and involves the pulse to solve, often, complicated problems or deal with complicated issues purely for individual satisfaction, internal curiosity, care, or abiding values.

Intrinsic motivations are not necessarily rewarded with external rewards, but they can drive individuals to initiative a goal or a change in their behaviour, sustain their interest and their passion to achieve their set goals and influences creativity. The actual domain of the SDT is found among the interplay between the extrinsic influencing factors and the individual's intrinsic motives (see also Hagger & Chatzisarantis 2011)[13].

Target users

The target users are youth mentors and youth service organizations that provide their services and guidance to unemployed youngsters and attempt to make a shift from traditional face-to-face sessions to digital mentoring or Blearning, which combines on-line and off-line mentoring sessions and experiences.

Benefits

Mentors and youth serving organizations that gain sufficient knowledge of the theory of self-determination will be able to identify and use the types and techniques of motivation. They will be sufficiently equipped to motivate, in turn, their mentees to act within the digital environment. It will be beneficial not only to the identification of the challenges that the digital environment encompasses for youngsters but to the identification and adaptation of appropriate practices that address the individual needs of e-mentees.

By understanding the ways that motivation functions and the factors that may impact it positively or negatively within the digital environment, mentors will be benefited in several ways as follows:

- Increase the pool of their motivational techniques to use with youngsters within the digital environment,
- Identify the factors that demotivates youngsters to work in the e-learning environment and illustrate alternative paths to mentees,
- Help youngsters in more efficient ways to work towards the achievement of their individual goals and needs,
- Increase their capacities in keeping young mentees in the guidance process with persistence and continues efforts to overcome imaginable or real problems, obstacles and challenges,
- Allow to adapt and function more productively and professionally in the continues changing digital environment and identify opportunities and threats,

---

[13] Hagger, M.S & Chatzisarantis, N.L.D. (2011). Causality orientations moderate the undermining effect of rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 47, 485-489.*

- Identify ways that increases relatedness with mentees and built supporting relations with them within the digital world including the act of exhibiting interest in mentees activities and needs, be empathetic with mentees facing problems and respond effectively with their feelings and conveying messages of care and significance to them,
- Optimize the most appropriate practical activities that can be applied in the digital environment in order to understand mentees in empirical, meaningful and productive ways that increases motivational quality, at the same time, and fulfilment of mentees in the guidance process.

Pedagogical approaches

To maintain the ultimate goal – that is, to work efficiently within the digital environment and support young mentees the best way possible in achieving their individual goals and needs – mentors must be persistent with their pedagogical methods to go through obstacles and difficulties in their own process of learning but most importantly with the guidance aspire to provide to their mentees. To start and remain motivated in the process is not an easy task but getting to know the components of motivation, as identified by researchers in psychology[14], is fundamental. The major components of motivation are:

- **Activation:** refers to the decision of the individual to initiate a behaviour to have a positive impact in his/her life.
  - o *As for example in our case, the mentor is determined to learn the ways, approaches, elements, and individual forces of motivation that would eventually lead to the support that youngsters need in the digital environment.*
- **Persistence:** refers to the individual efforts that lead to the achievement of the goal set by individuals despite the problems, obstacles and challenges that might be appear within the process.
  - o *For example, the mentor in the digital environment insist to provide guidance sessions to young mentees that are discouraged, use alternative self-esteem and motivational techniques, and actively listens to what mentees have to say.*
- **Intensity:** refers to the focus and vigour that it is necessary in pursuing the set goals.
  - o *For example, the mentor in the digital environment takes every opportunity to learn the approaches that are necessary to keep young mentees with low effort/persistent in the track for achieving their goals with more frequent intervention and guidance sessions.*

Conclusions/Recommendations

Mentors that want to be successful with the mentoring processes in the digital environment need to be adaptive and resilient first with the required digital tools that the new, complex, and rapidly changing environment has adopted and secondly with the fundamental pedagogies necessary to motivate young mentees.

---

[14] Kulinska, A. (2020) Students' motivation in distance education. *Forum Filologiczne Anteneu, 1(8)2020, pp 325-343.*

The self-determination theory of motivation provides e-mentors with many and valuable insights to implement with their mentees in the guidance process. It helps mentors to understand the nature of motivation, the ways that motivation may change in the process, the types of motivation that they can apply in their scheduled guidance sessions based on the goals, needs and personalities of mentees and which motivational practices can be more beneficial for them and their mentees than others.

Finding ways to implement the components of motivation in their pedagogical approaches with young people, mentors may influence youngsters to initiate actions with persistent and vigour that may have positive impact on their competencies and skills, improve their employability, make plans, and achieve their employment goals, develop their individual talents and maintain and/or improve their wellbeing. Additionally, mentors applying the self-determination theory in the guidance process are encouraged to use practical activities to allow the transferring of the theoretical knowledge into real-case scenarios and real challenges that young unemployed mentees are encountered.