

MENTORING

*The professional friendship guiding education,
the labour market and the many choices in life*

Learning to navigate education, the labour market and life.

Mentors help to prepare young people for the labour market, teaching them to navigate the many choices that they are faced with in the midst of secondary education and strengthening their personal development.

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MENTORING

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INTRODUCTION

Learning to navigate education, the labour market and life

This inspirational guide has been developed by the Think Tank DEA for the Capital Region of Denmark, and its aim is to retain students in education as part of the region's internship placement effort. This effort is part of the Capital Region of Denmark's goal to ensure skilled labour. This inspirational guide is based on interviews with representatives from Danish, German and Dutch mentoring experiences and a desk research, summarized in the background note "Talent retention, development and support by means of mentors."

Mentors can help strengthen people for the labour market, prepare them for the process of seeking internships and complete their vocational training. At the same time, mentors support young people in making the many choices they have to make to navigate the educational system. Vocational education is unique in this sense, as it also involves the transition from school to the labour market.

This guide introduces different types of mentoring and highlights important mentorship elements. At the same time, it also contains stories and anecdotes about mentors and mentees (people who get advice and guidance from a mentor), as inspiration for educational institutions and companies.

Have fun reading.

EUD: Vocational education and training

STX: General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (A-Levels)

HHX: Higher Commercial Examination

HTX: Higher Technical Examination

EUX: Vocational education and training combined with a General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (A-Levels)

WHY USE MENTORS?

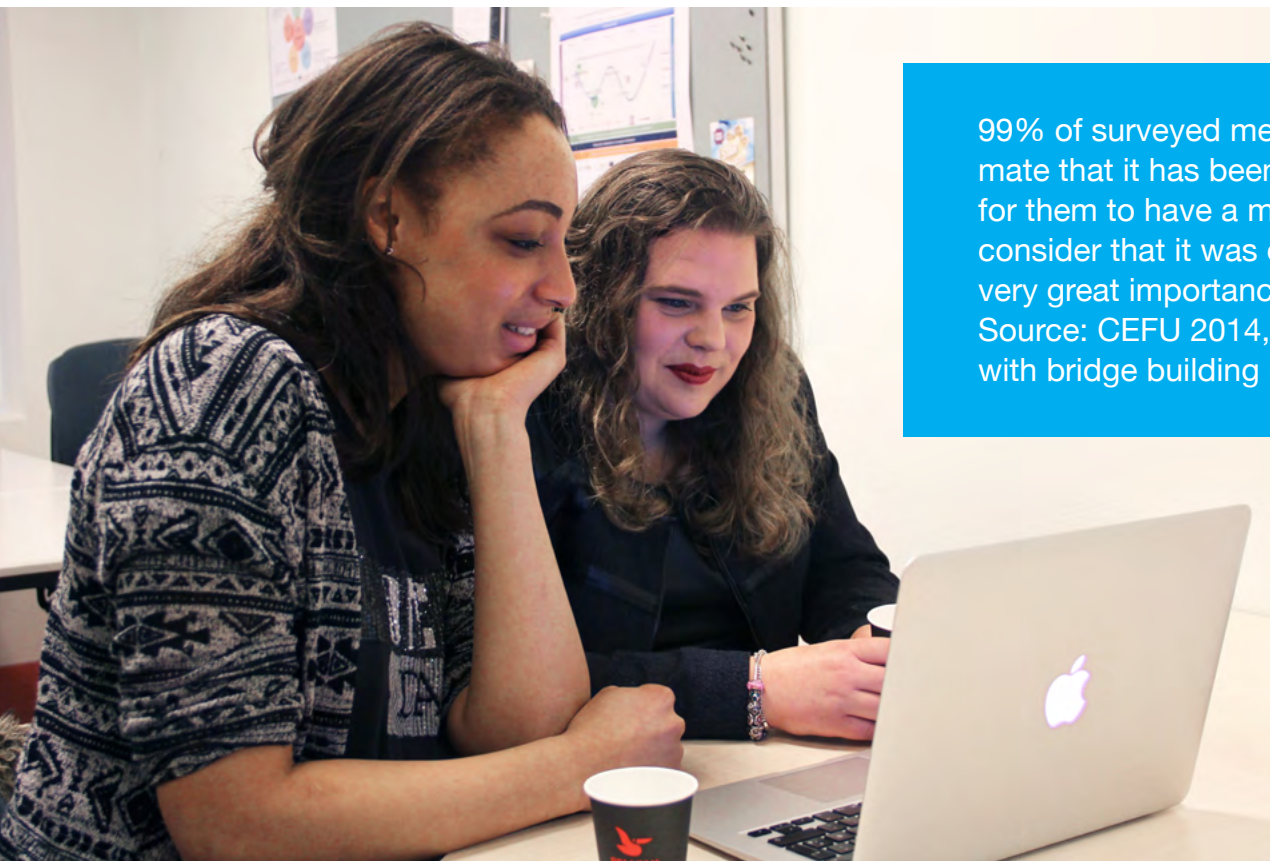
When apprentices and students get a mentor, they are retained in internships and education. They develop both professionally and socially and receive support from adults when they have questions about work, school or their private life. On the other hand, mentors make a difference in the lives of young people, and gain insight into another generation. Mentors anchored at their workplace often also experience increased job satisfaction and commitment.

"We talk about everything between heaven and earth and can get guidance. He is like my father out here."

Rasmus, 20 years old, bricklayer apprentice at the bricklaying company Øens Murerfirma

Mentors:

- Create increased strength and self-esteem
- Teach the mentee how to make educational choices, also called career learning
- Contribute to retention, both in internships and education
- Are role models that pass on their own life experience
- Support talent development
- Strengthen the chance that the mentee will continue their studies
- Are very important for young people, according to mentees



99% of surveyed mentees estimate that it has been important for them to have a mentor. 64% consider that it was of great or very great importance to them. Source: CEFU 2014, Experiment with bridge building in EUD.

WHO IS A MENTOR?

Mentors are people with greater experience in life, business and education than the mentee. They may be a slightly older student, a significantly older colleague or a professional mentor, for example a student counsellor or contact teacher.

A mentor:

- Has more life experience than the mentee
- Wants to be a role model
- Is interested in young people
- Wants to help make a difference
- Can support young people's choices in many different aspects of life

There are many ways to organise mentoring:

1. Youth to youth mentor, most often volunteer
2. Adult to youth mentor, volunteer
3. Professional mentor, paid
4. Group mentor, paid or unpaid
5. Workplace mentor, paid through their job in the company



HOW IN A COMPANY?

It is not so complicated to get started with a mentoring scheme in a company. Perhaps you already have something similar, for example, an instructor or supervisor.

- Think about what the purpose of mentoring is and what its framework should be like
- Find out who wants to be a role model, and maybe already is
- Be aware that it may be a good idea for the mentor not to have supervisory responsibilities towards the mentee.
- Consider letting the mentor/instructor participate in a training course

AMU courses for mentors

It's a good idea to prepare new instructors to join the role of mentors. This can be done, for example, at the AMU courses Internship Guidance for EUD Students and Apprenticeship and Internship Supervisors' Communication with Students/Apprentices.

"It is nice when you start that there's somebody who can guide you and introduce you to everything, because everything is new."

Tina, office apprentice at Danfoss

John and Tage take care of the apprentices at Danfoss

Often it is the apprentices' first meeting with the labour market, when they start at Danfoss. And it can be a challenge when you are a young person.

"It is important that the apprentices trust the mentor - and then it is important to listen and guide them in a right direction. They are young and new to the labour market, and sometimes, in addition, they have private things to deal with. This we can also discuss with them."

John K. Boisen, instructor at Danfoss



Øens Murerfirma: "The most important thing is to speak properly."

Øens Murerfirma has 20 apprentices, who are under the care of Jan, the apprentice instructor. The apprentices can talk to Jan about everything, from professional questions to heartaches:

"The most important thing is to speak properly. There are 20 different apprentices here, and it is important that I handle them differently."

Jan Seremeth, instructor and bricklayer at Øens Murerfirma

HOW ON AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION?

There are many functioning mentoring experiences anchored in schools. But there are also mentoring examples that ceased to exist with the expiry of project funding.

- Make sure that mentoring is strategically anchored within the management.
- Make the purpose of mentoring clear, for example, to support the students to adulthood
- Setup a clear mentorship framework, including expectations and limits for the mentor's role
- Remember that higher education students or older students at the school can also have a great potential as mentors.

Contact teachers at TEC Frederiksberg

Contact teachers set their own limits as to when they cannot help any more, and after this the student counsellor is contacted.

"Help should be available where the student is, and it is the contact teacher who is closest, and therefore able to notice something. Therefore, the smartest thing to do is to make the contact teacher the first step in relation to what it takes to help the student. If this goes beyond the teacher's competence, you must resort to counselling."

Max Mader Hansen, Academic Educational Manager for Young People, Counselling and Occupation at TEC

Full-time mentors at SOPU Copenhagen

At SOPU Copenhagen, there are two full-time mentors at the school, and the offer of a meeting or mentoring process is for all students.

"It is a big advantage for students, as we are full time mentors and thus not responsible for learning and assessing students."

Mentor at SOPU Copenhagen

Girl Network at KNord

At the business school Knord, they have had good experiences with the girl network. A girl network typically consists of 6-8 girls, who meet once a week during the school day.

"In the network, the girls in the last semester of their education, will be motivated to end their final semester successfully, and the girls in the first part will be motivated to go to school."

Adia Akhtar Bakhsh, Master of Social Science and mentor at KNord



MENTOR STORIES

A bricklayer is a mentor for apprentices

Every Thursday, Jan drives around to many of the apprentices of Øens Murerfirma, talks with them and provides sparring if needed. The rest of the time he is a bricklayer, and this combination is appealing to the apprentices.

You learn best when you are comfortable

At Danfoss, the two full-time instructors, John and Tage, take care of the company's industrial apprentices, and make sure they have a good introduction to the company. The instructors provide professional, personal and social support and they focus on the transition from school to the labour market.

The girl network that works

Adia is a group mentor for KNord's girl network, with focus on implementation, professionalism and social activities. The network's focus is on retention and good social experiences within the school environment.

Two full-time mentors at the school

SOPU's two full-time mentors are based at the school and are available 37 hours a week. When students ask for a meeting with a mentor, it rarely takes more than 24 hours, before the student is contacted by a mentor.

Between student counsellor and contact teacher

At the TEC Frederiksberg, all classes have a contact teacher, working closely with the student guidance counsellor. Here, students can talk to mentors and, if necessary, students can contact relevant external parties.

Senior mentors support young people in internship

Senior mentors in the VerA program in Germany work as volunteers, and most of them are retired. They have a life experience and work experience, that they use to support young apprentices and students.

University students as mentors

Rock Your Life! connects students in higher education with young people who need a professional friendship with a more experienced person. Mentors help navigate both educational choices and private life.

Large network of volunteer mentors in the Netherlands

In the northern Netherlands, MentorProgramma Friesland has organized a large and varied network of volunteer mentors. Matching takes place based on relevance between the mentee's expressed learning goals and the mentor's concrete life experiences.



INSPIRATION
& REPORTS

WE MUST TAKE CARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Workplace Mentor

Øens Murerfirma

Øens Murerfirma is a construction firm in Copenhagen, which on average employs 150 workers paid per hour, 37 employees, and 20 apprentices and students.

The company has three instructors, who are mentors as part of their work hours, but also have regular tasks. Caring for young people - both those well inserted in society and those at risk - is part of the company's goal of assuming social responsibility. One of the instructors is Jan Seremeth, who is the mentor of the 20 apprentices of the company. Apprentices can always resort to Jan if they need to talk. It can be related to anything, from work to private problems or leisure.

Jan is a different adult from the supervisors - and that is good

One day a week, Jan drives around to visit the company's apprentices at construction sites and schools; the rest of the time Jan is a fellow bricklayer. The apprentices are happy with this combination, because Jan has his professional skills and because "he talks in a different way than a supervisor¹". Mentees experience the fact that Jan is not a manager as something very positive. The internship instructor ensures that the apprentices are feeling happy at the workplace, and that there is somebody who is not their immediate boss whom they can ask for advice about everything - from how to report sickness to how to deal with heartaches.

1. A supervisor is a leader in the construction industry.

Respect for the instructor's experience

The company has trained five bricklayers as mentors or internship instructors, including Jan. Jan points out that it is very important for the instructor to have years of bricklaying experience, and that there should also be an age difference. A good relationship between instructor and apprentice can be characterized by the apprentice's respect for the experience of the instructor after many years in the industry; apprentices do not necessarily have this respect for someone who does not have the professional experience and knowledge.



"We talk about everything between heaven and earth and can get guidance. He is like my father out here."

Rasmus, 20 years old, bricklayer apprentice at Øens Murerfirma



"It is nice to know that Jan is there if there are problems. But otherwise I do not use the function of the mentor so much, maybe due to my age."
Victor, 27 years, structural apprentice at Øens Murerfirma

"There are 20 different apprentices, and it is therefore important that I handle them differently. There are the protesters, the quiet ones, and the ones who are happy and doing their work, but they must all be listened to. And I help with that."

Jan Seremeth, internship instructor at Øens Murerfirma

YOU LEARN BEST WHEN YOU ARE COMFORTABLE

Workplace Mentor

Danfoss

Danfoss is an international technology company, producing climate and energy-efficiency solutions. The company has approximately 25,000 employees globally, and 130 apprentices and students in Denmark. All apprentices start in the internship department, where John Boisen and Tage Christoffersen are full-time instructors. Besides the instructors who train students and apprentices within the technical fields, Danfoss has about 75 employees responsible for training and education. The instructors participate in the apprentices' first day, and follow them throughout their internship. A key element is that the instructors do not have supervising responsibilities over the apprentices, because it makes it easier for the apprentices to talk to them about anything between heaven and earth. According to Burkhard Winski, HR Manager at Danfoss, it is important for apprentices to thrive, because this is the best way for them to learn. And learning is a central concern for Danfoss.

Employees who take care of the apprentices

All Danfoss apprentices - from office to industrial technicians - have training officers (workplace mentors) assigned responsible for them. The mentors ensure that the apprentices have a good transition to the labour market, and an adult who is not their direct boss to talk to. And they talk about everything, from relationship issues to professional challenges.

Labour market robustness and business understanding

The purpose of the system is to ensure that the apprentices thrive, are introduced to Danfoss and, at the same time, strengthen them for the labour market. Often, the apprentices' first meeting with the labour market is when they start at Danfoss, and this can be challenging for young people.



"It is important for the apprentices to trust the mentor, and then it is important to listen and guide them. They are young and new to the labour market, and sometimes, in addition, they have private things to deal with. We can also talk to them about these."

John K. Boisen, instructor at Danfoss

"I talk to the apprentices about everything, of course professional issues, but also about private subjects such as heartaches. That is how it is with young people, what you give is what you get back tenfold, so it depends on what kind of mentor and person you are."

Tage Christoffersen, instructor at Danfoss

Trained instructors

Instructors and training officers are well-prepared to face young people, e.g. by participating in a relevant AMU course, lasting two days at Mommark Business School. In practice, they are present at Danfoss' production area, where the apprentices are also working, so that they pursue their daily routine together.

"Many apprentices are 16 years old and have never been in a production company before. It's crucial that their first assignment is a success, so they will feel encouraged to learn more."

John K. Boisen, instructor at Danfoss

THE NETWORK THAT WORKS - FOR GIRLS

Group Mentor
KNord

The business school Knord offers STX, HHX, 10th grade, vocational education and EUX. Knord has approximately 3,000 students and departments in Lyngby, Hillerød and Frederikssund. The school has had good experiences in retention through the girl network. A girl network typically consists of 6-8 girls, who meet once a week during the school day. As they are from different semesters, they are not always quite the same age. Some participate in shorter periods, while others participate throughout their entire studies.

Group mentor for a girl network

The network is run by Adia Akhtar Bakhsh, full-time employee at Knord, and she works on the girls' motivation and learning. The network includes both girls who are tired of school and girls who may be at risk of dropping out for

other reasons. and it has a social educational aim to reduce dropout and absenteeism. Thus, the network works to motivate girls who are at risk of losing their desire to go to school.

Mentors and teachers recruit for the network

The pedagogical approach to the network, is tailored for the girls participating in the network. This means that the methods differ, depending on the girls participating and their needs; for example, extroverted girls, quiet girls or girls that may be subject to social control. The girls are recruited by the school's mentors and teachers, but those who are already participating in the network also suggest other girls who may need the support the network provides.

"In the network, the girls in the last educational semester will be motivated to go through the final educational phase, and the girls in the first part, will be motivated to continue their studies".

Adia Akhtar Bakhsh, Master of Social Science and mentor at Knord

"Social activities are central to a well-functioning network. We cook, go to the cinema and drive go-carts together. It is the social relationships and the support they give each other that drives the network."

Adia Bakhsh, Maser of Social Science and mentor at Knord

TWO FULL-TIME MENTORS AT THE SCHOOL

Professional mentor
SOPU København

SOPU Copenhagen offers education within the field "Care, Health and Educational", and has approximately 1,000 students. Students range from the 10th grade to vocational education and EUX Welfare. There are two full-time mentors based at the school and available 37 hours a week. The main purpose of mentoring

"It is important for a mentor, to be employed by the school. Then we can work better with empowerment in relation to the student, because we can experience the students in more contexts. In cooperation with the students, we have the opportunity to consider more perspectives."

Mentor at SOPU Copenhagen

is empowerment: to support the students' well-being and to help them to complete their education. A meeting or course with a mentor is always tailored to the individual student's needs, and all courses are therefore different.

"We are available in the students' learning areas and their daily lives during their studies. This is where we distinguish ourselves from external offers, where agreements have to be made for selected days."

Mentor at SOPU Copenhagen

Full-time mentors and academic cooperation

It is seldom that more than 24 hours pass, before the student is contacted after a request for a meeting with the mentor is made, and in most cases, an appointment is made within

"It is a big advantage for students, that we are full-time mentors and thus not responsible for learning and assessing students."

Mentor at SOPU Copenhagen

the following week. According to the mentors, it is necessary to respond quickly, and while the student is speaking. The mentors collaborate with other professional groups at school, such as educational consultants, contact teachers and teacher teams. The mentors also cooperate with external professionals, such as psychologists and social workers, when a student has broader needs.

On student ground

Meetings with mentors take place primarily one-on-one, but also in groups, in situations when this is meaningful. The contact between mentor and mentee is largely based on the student's initiative, and can be agreed upon, for example, via text messages. Success criteria for a course are established jointly with the student and may, for example, be the completion of an internship, less absenteeism, or a more personal or practical completion of their education.

EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment means being able to take control over your own life. Empowerment is the cornerstone of the work of the mentors at SOPU Copenhagen. Part of the task of a mentor is to provide students with tools to meet the challenges they face, both now and maybe later in life.

MENTORSHIP ANCHORED BETWEEN STUDENT COUNSELOR AND CONTACT TEACHER

Professional mentor
TEC Frederiksberg

The TEC offers 10th grade and vocational education in the main areas of technology, construction and transportation. The primary goal of counselling and mentoring is to keep students in their studies and coach them in relation to the challenges they will face. Counselling may also have a more definitive role, with focus on educational readiness or the choice of a different educational path. While at TEC previously there were full-time mentors, more and more contact teachers and student counsellors are being used now. Following the latest vocational education reform, the function of the contact teacher seems even more important - especially in the first course, where emphasis is placed on the students completing their studies on time. In addition, discussions with students regarding the choice of study and study readiness are held earlier, if there are any doubts as to whether the student has chosen the right education.

Study counselling as the focus of the counsellor's function

Study counselling is the main function of the counsellors at TEC. Here students can have conversations with their mentors and, if necessary, they can contact relevant external parties. At TEC, all classes have a contact teacher working closely with the administration and the student counsellor. The contact teacher

has an overview of the student's absence from class, and is aware of the student's well-being. Therefore, the contact teacher is usually the first to take action if a student shows signs of misconduct. A contact teacher sets his/her own limits for when they cannot help any more, and once this happens, the student counsellor is contacted. Talks with counsellors and mentor talks are offered to all students needing them.

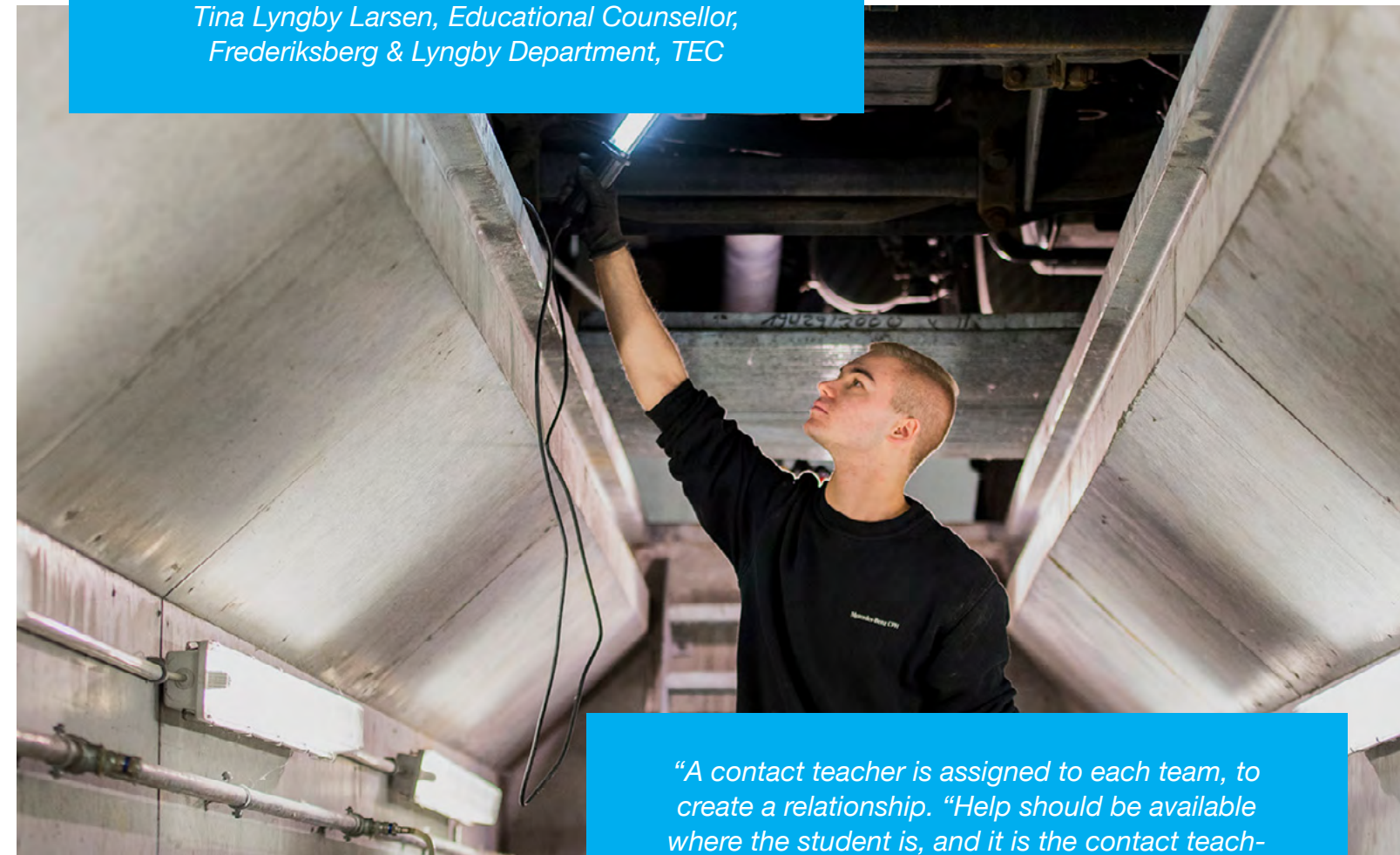
Help should be available where the student is

Counselling is focused on the student's needs, and therefore there is no standardized course. But the primary goal is that help should be available where the student needs it. Students are informed about the counsellor's function within the first 14 days of school, while at the same time the counsellors are visible at the school. As full-time counsellors are used, students can always find a counsellor.

Extra attention is paid to the students during the transition between course 1 and 2, and in the transition to internship. These times can be particularly difficult for some students. The contact teacher is also in dialogue about the student's wellbeing with the company where the internship takes place.

"Student counselling is a central function, they can come and have an unbiased conversation, which is what we call a mentor conversation. We can do the follow-up, and the student can come back the next day or week, and we can involve the mother, the father and other people. We can deepen on things where the contact teacher cannot spend the same amount of time, because the contact teacher also teaches. So, in this way, we complement each other."

*Tina Lyngby Larsen, Educational Counsellor,
Frederiksberg & Lyngby Department, TEC*



"A contact teacher is assigned to each team, to create a relationship. "Help should be available where the student is, and it is the contact teacher who is closest, and therefore able to notice something. Therefore, the smartest thing to do is to make the contact teacher the first step in relation to what it takes to help the student. If this goes beyond the teacher's competence, you must resort to counselling."

Max Mader Hansen, Academic Educational Manager for Young People, Counselling and Occupation at TEC

SENIOR MENTORS SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE IN INTERNSHIPS

Adult to youth mentor, volunteer
VerA (Germany)

VerA is an adult to youth mentoring system, focusing on young people in internship in conjunction with vocational education. The scheme is anchored in the volunteer organization Senior Experten Service (SES) in Bonn, but operates in most of Germany. VerA is supported by the Ministry of Education and Research², and exists since 2009. There are about 2,500 senior mentors who work as volunteers and receive a symbolic monthly remuneration to cover expenses. VerA's goal is to prevent dropout, thus ensuring better internship experiences and a skilled workforce. The initiative aims to intervene early, so that young people are equipped to face the challenges that arise during their studies.

Volunteer mentors with life experience

VerA is an offer for all young people who have problems of professional or personal nature or challenges with the transition to the labour market, and the typical target group is young people between the ages of 16 and 20 years. For the young person to be able to get a mentor, as a rule, an internship agreement must exist. Most mentors are retired and have a life and work experience that can contribute to the young person's life. Before seniors start as mentors, they participate in a seminar (two days) focusing on tools for managing young people. In 2016, 3,200 mentor/mentee matches were established through VerA, and 80 per cent of the mentees continued their vocational education³.

2. Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). VerA is part of the "The Education Chains" initiative.
3. The general picture in Germany shows that 25% of young people in vocational education do not complete the educational program; for young people associated with VerA, the figure is 20%. Source: VerA

The best possible match

There are about 80 volunteer regional coordinators at country level who are responsible for recruiting mentors and matching them with the young people. Coordinators are usually retired, and can rely on a large network of local companies. Coordinators are recruited through major business organizations or companies in the area. Mentors and young people are matched with focus on geography, the young person's needs and, as far as possible, similar professional skills and industry. It is up to the individual mentor and mentee to agree how often they meet, but in most cases it is a couple of times a month. In addition to physical meetings, mentors and mentees often communicate through WhatsApp, for example.

"The mentor program is relevant both from an economic and human viewpoint, because many students drop out due to causes that can actually be solved with external help with no need to abandon their studies."

Simone Albrecht, coordinator at VerA's main office

"Why senior mentors? Because of their life experience, their experience with family and children, their work experience. When they leave their jobs as 65-year-olds, why should everything go to waste? And maybe they still know somebody in the companies who can help find a job for young people."

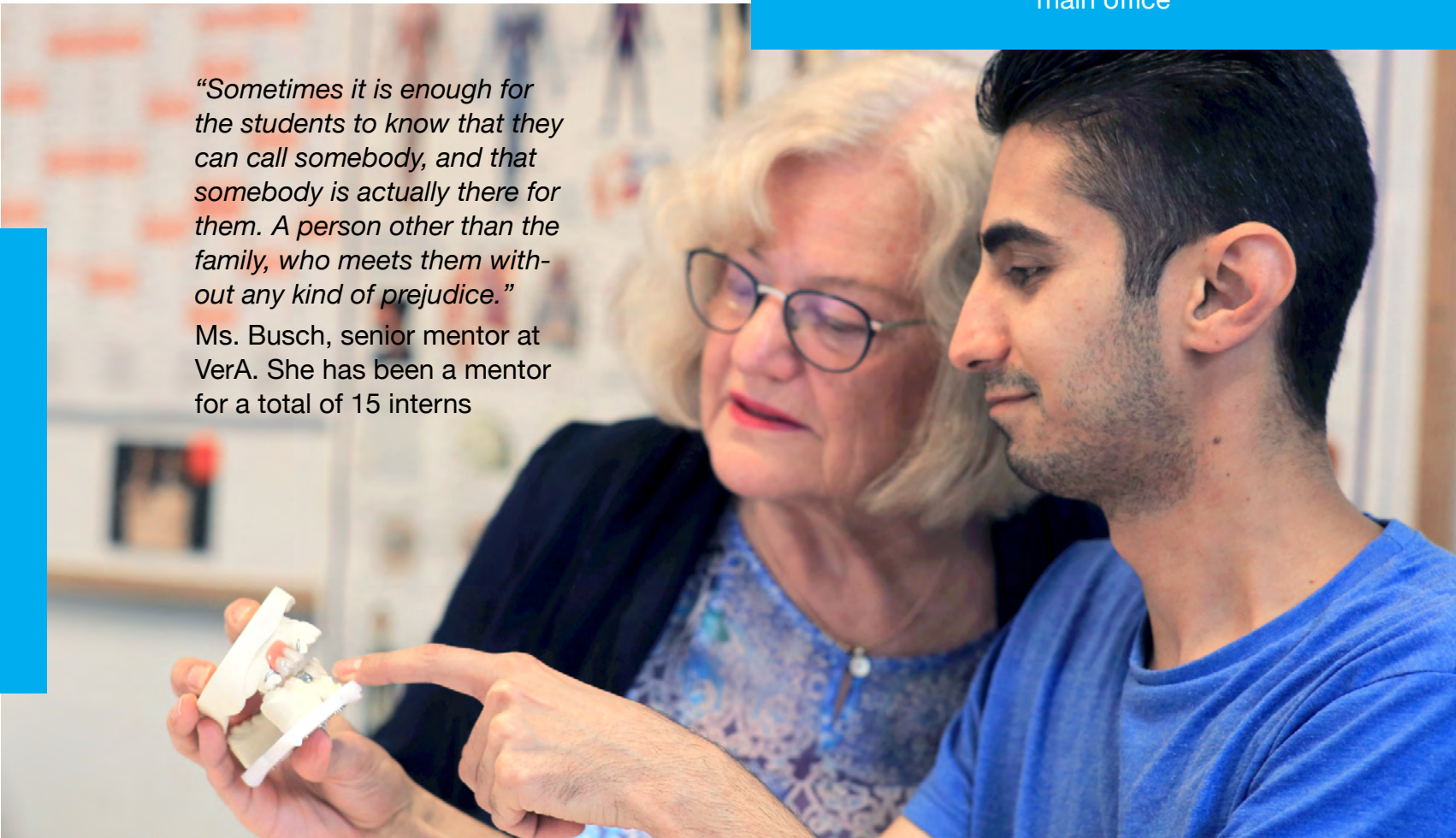
Simone Albrecht, coordinator at VerA's main office

"The most important partners for us are vocational schools. Most people get to know VerA through their teachers at school. Internship companies are also important. More and more companies know about VerA and report about the program, or help the student to write a job application."

Simone Albrecht, coordinator at VerA's main office

"Sometimes it is enough for the students to know that they can call somebody, and that somebody is actually there for them. A person other than the family, who meets them without any kind of prejudice."

Ms. Busch, senior mentor at VerA. She has been a mentor for a total of 15 interns



HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS ARE MENTORS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth to youth mentors
ROCK YOUR LIFE! (Germany)

ROCK YOUR LIFE! (RYL) coordinates mentoring between students in higher education and graduating students (14-16 years old) who in a variety of ways, are not qualified to proceed to vocational education.

Social franchising

RYL has 46 locations in Germany and 6 in Switzerland. It is a social franchise organization⁴ that coordinates the recruitment of mentees and mentors. Mentors can be found, for example, through higher education institutions' newsletters or short introductions to RYL at the start of higher education programs. Mentors are unpaid, but the administration of RYL is financed by the schools paying a small amount for a training course for both mentor and mentee.

Strengthens the robustness of the labour market for young people

The aim is to strengthen young people for the labour market, as well as their skills for the selection of their future studies and career learning. It involves learning to navigate the education system and make choices, but also to gain general knowledge, about what the different educational programs can offer. About half of the mentees have foreign parents and 70% have at least one parent who is not from Germany.

4. The RYL concept can be transferred to other actors, but the focus must always be on making a positive social difference, and not on economic profits.

Cooperation and training

RYL cooperates with local schools, where they visit classes and inform about the project. Once the match between mentor and mentee has been established, RYL recommends weekly meetings between mentor and mentee, but these meetings are often held every two or three weeks.

Introductory course for mentor and mentee

Both mentor and mentee participate in a training course over three weekends, with the mentor arriving one day before the mentee and participating in a special mentoring course.

1. The first weekend is an introduction to the mentoring course: what is to be expected from a mentor, and what is beyond the mentor's responsibility.
2. The next weekend is about job orientation: Exercises and conversations aimed at getting the young person to orient themselves to a job - and an education.
3. The third weekend concerns targeted learning, how to behave during a job interview, and how to write a resume.

"Mentorship is valuable to all, and the benefits for mentors are at least as great as for mentees. Mentors get insights into parts of a world they may not be familiar with. Relationships seem to be a cultural eye opener for mentors. In addition, they acquire valuable social skills, that they would otherwise not have learned at the university."

Maximillian Grotz, leader, RYL

"Mentorship opens up a new world both for mentors and mentees, and that is why we offer a training course. The first session is about mentorship: what it is and how it can support young students on their career paths, but it is also about the limitations of mentoring."

Maximillian Grotz, leader,
ROCK YOUR LIFE!

"It is not about the character of the mentees at school, but about the young person's finding their own values and potentials, and then supporting the mentees in pursuing their path."

Maximillian Grotz, leader, ROCK YOUR LIFE!



A MIXTURE OF FRIENDSHIP AND LEARNING

Adult to youth mentor

MentorProgramma Friesland (The Netherlands)

MentorProgramma Friesland is an independent mentoring organization, anchored between vocational schools, universities and companies in the northern Dutch province of Friesland. The organization has existed since 1997 and works to get more young people to start a higher education. The organization has a broad understanding of mentorship and believes that everybody needs a mentor at some point in their life.

A large and varied corps of mentors

The organization is connected to a larger corps of volunteer mentors, of mixed age groups and with different types of employment. Some mentors are students, while others have many years of professional experience. Common to the mentors is that they have experience in education and/or work, as well as general life experience and a passion for working with people. The organization co-operates with local educational institutions and companies and other mentoring organizations and researchers across countries in Europe and the United States.

It addresses everybody

The main purpose of mentoring is to help young people in terms of education, labour market readiness and general well-being. The system is aimed at all those young people who in one way or other need advice and contact with a person with experience in education, work and life in general. The relationship can be both formal and informal. Success criteria are individual, and therefore always vary according to the needs of the individual young

person. For example, young people from homes where education is not prioritized, may need help in navigating the education system. However, the relationship can also focus on how to create and use a network in an internship or on talent development. In addition to new relationships, mentors also gain skills in guidance and leadership.

Shared friendship and mentorship

The match is made based on a specific and formulated learning goal based on the needs or ambition of the mentee. The mentee is then matched with a mentor who has experience in a similar area. It is therefore not necessarily a match based on, for example, gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic background. Prior to the process itself, the expectations of mentor and mentee are compared, and if there is no chemistry, the mentee will get another mentor. Meetings between mentor and mentee can take place at the school, a café or over the phone, and the conversations may be more or less formal. Mentor and mentee enter a social, friendship-like and long-lasting relationship, based on trust.

“Think about why you would like to be a mentor. Be honest and give advice based on your own experiences. And keep in mind that it must be possible for you to find the time for it. And set limits, because it is far easier to say yes than no.”

Willy, 23 years and mentor

“I learned to develop and use my network. She guided me through my studies and helped me to qualify my choices. We got close because we had lunch together, and we talked about private things.”

Sakar, 28 years old and former mentee

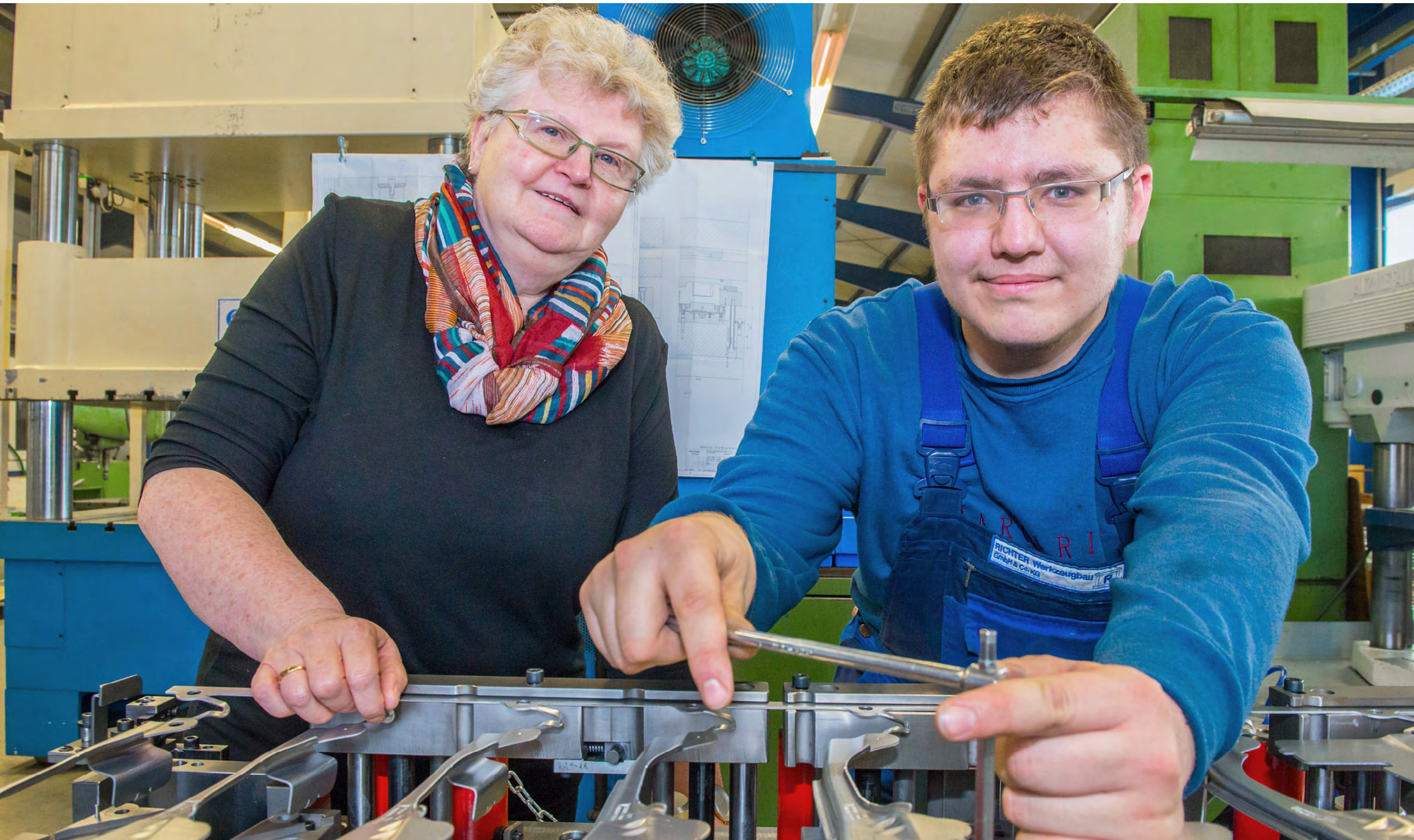
“The mentor relationship is very different than talking to a teacher. My mentor is much more down to earth and easy to communicate with. At my school, the meeting with the student counsellor is always limited in time: 20 minutes. And my counsellor does not know much about other studies, or what it is like to be a student.”

Joyce, 20 years and mentee

“Mentoring is a good tool, but it should not necessarily be the only one, but one tool among others to help and guide students. It has a special role in a lifelong learning perspective, where self-management skills are very important.”

Ali Tilma, Head of Student Counselling, ROC Frieseport Vocational School





RETENTION, DEVELOPMENT & TALENT SUPPORT THROUGH MENTORS

Background Note



MENTORING

Several projections suggest that Denmark is going to lack skilled workers in the near future, but young people still choose upper secondary education over vocational education and training (VET). In spite of the reform of the Danish VET-programmes and the introduction of grade requirements in Danish and mathematics, only 18.5% of young people in 9th and 10th grade chose to pursue a vocational education. At the same time, there is a high dropout rate and the choice of new options in VET, which makes it vital examine how to help young people choose the right education, and how to retain them. Mentoring is often referred to as a tool for retaining young people, developing them, strengthening them for the labour market and supporting their talents, both during their internships and in school. It is therefore the purpose of this note, to outline selected studies and best practices in the field, with a particular focus on volunteer work.

This background note has been developed by the Think Tank DEA for The Capital Region of Denmark, and its aim is to retain students in education as part of the region's internship placement effort. This background note is based on literature research and interviews with representatives from Danish, German and Dutch mentoring experiences. Based on the background note, an inspirational guide on mentoring for schools and companies has been developed.

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BACKGROUND NOTE: RETENTION, DEVELOPMENT & TALENT SUPPORT THROUGH MENTORS

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1 INTRODUCTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The mentor offers role models, counselling, confirmation and friendship, which helps the young adult to develop a sense of professional identity and competence.

(Kram & Isabella 1985: 111)

Mentor, contact teacher, role model, coach or supervisor - Having a professional friendship has many names, and there are different opinions around the definition of a mentor. Mentor schemes are a broad concept; from buddy arrangements to grandfather

arrangements and from peer-to-peer to the professional, learning mentor. Purpose and mentee also vary; while some efforts focus on vulnerable children and young people, others focus on talent support, integration or unemployed people who need employment.

Three Million Mentees in the United States

More than three million young Americans were estimated to be associated with a mentoring program in 2011 (DuBois et al. 2011).

Common to mentorship is that the overall purpose is to "help another person to gain more experience and insight - both personally and professionally " (Toft 2016: 27).

Knowledge about the influence of mentoring is, to some extent, underexposed and fragmented, so the examination relies on experiences and knowledge from several different types of mentoring systems. However, both Danish and international studies and experiences indicate that mentoring - or professional friendship - have a positive influence on youth, both in terms of retention in education, education clarification, labour market readiness, talent development, desire and willingness to learn and personal development.

Many different systems have been tested in Denmark, as well as abroad. This mapping tries to convey knowledge about mentoring systems aimed at students and apprentices in vocational education and training without special needs. The note is based on desk research and interviews, including knowledge from several major Danish and European mentoring projects.

Selection of Larger Danish Mentoring Projects

- Relationer der forpligter
- Brobygning til videre uddannelse
- Vi holder fast
- Talentvejen.nu

1.1 Recommendations and 5 Tips

Mentoring works. Although knowledge from studies and research is somewhat scattered and fragmented, a study by Rambøll shows that young people drop out of their studies to a lesser extent if they participate in a mentoring program. In line with this, a study from CEFU shows that 99% of young people find that mentors mean something to them, and 64% believe that they are of major or very significant importance. Other studies find that mentoring supports professional and personal

skills. Mentoring can be a good tool for retention, career learning, increased labour market resilience and, to a large extent, the ability to navigate the educational system.

Passionate People

- contribute positively to mentoring but the most stable and long-term mentoring system requires a strategic link to the educational institution.

1. **Young people with moderate adult relations benefits most from mentoring**

And they can respond well to volunteer systems, such as youth to youth or senior to youth mentoring.

2. **Strategic anchoring is fundamental**

Mentoring must be anchored in management, as well as with teachers, supervisors and other actors. Many programs have been run by passionate people or have been allocated project funds, and many have been shut down once the project funds have run out.

3. **Clear frameworks and training**

When it comes to formal but not professional mentoring, it is important to match the expectations between mentor and mentee and to set up a framework for mentoring. In addition, it is a good idea to prepare both mentor and mentee for what the mentoring relationship entails.

4. **Match based on common interests**

Concerning voluntary systems, experience shows that mentor and mentee must be matched more by interests than by gender or ethnicity: The personal match between mentor and mentee is vital for a successful relationship.

5. **Students from higher education are good role models - and mentors**

Unlike abroad, Denmark does not use students from higher education as unpaid mentors for VET-school students to a high degree, even though students have untapped potential as volunteer mentors.

2 ABOUT THE PROJECT

The purpose of examining the knowledge and best practice in mentoring is to support the internship placement of The Capital Region of Denmark's vocational students, while gaining more knowledge about how they are retained in internships, strengthening them and making them ready for the labour market through mentoring. In view of the stagnant number of applications for admission to VET-schools, in conjunction with projections that show a shortage of skilled workers in the near future, it is also important to retain young people in school and companies.

2.1 Vocational Education and Training in The Capital Region of Denmark

The VET-reform implemented in 2015, introduced an entry requirement of an average grade of at least 2.0 in both, Danish and mathematics, for the 9th or 10th grade school graduation examination.

Despite the grade requirement, the Act on vocational education and training still focuses on mentors and retention consultants. Without any doubt, there are still fragile young people in the entire educational system, vocational education and training included, but at the same time, there must also be room for talent care and talent-support. Most young people still need advice, guidance and role models in a VET-system which includes more than 100 majors with over 300 minors or specialisations, internships in the adult labour market and many different opportunities for further education.

Young People at the VET-institutions in The Capital Region of Denmark:

- The average age for students starting at the basic courses¹ in Region H is 22.4 years. The national average is 21.8 years. These figures are calculated on the basis of the influx of VET- students from 2007 to 2015 (EAK, Ministry of Education).
- 55% of students are 15-19 years old when they start their vocational education, 24% are 20-24 years old. The figures are likewise calculated on the basis of the influx of VET-students from 2007 to 2015 (EAK, Ministry of Education).
- 12.8% of 9th and 10th grade students in 2017 chose to apply for admission to vocational education and training as their first priority. The national average for 2017 is 18.5% (FTU, Ministry of Education).
- There are 16,625 ongoing internship agreements in The Capital Region of Denmark (January 2017) (PRK, Ministry of Education).

¹ Average for basic course 1 and basic course 2

- There are 1,075 students seeking internships in The Capital Region of Denmark (January 2017) (PRK, Ministry of Education).
- In February 2017, there were 8,384 students in school internships throughout the country, while in The Capital Region of Denmark there were 1,858 students in school internships. (PRK, Ministry of Education).
- Girls account for about 45% and young people with an ethnic minority background for about 19% of VET-students. Both figures have been stagnant for the last 10 years (EAK, Ministry of Education).

3 MENTORING: PURPOSES AND EXPERIENCES

Mentoring and role models for young people are not a new phenomenon. But in these years, we are witnessing major changes in the labour market, the education system and society, which may increase the need for mentors. DEA has previously studied what characterises the generation we call *Generation Next*, and which currently constitutes a large proportion of the young people at the country's educational institutions.

Generation next are the young people born in the years 1995-2002 and who are now between 14 and 21 years old. This generation spans from the oldest students in elementary schools to the youngest in higher education.
(DEA 2016: 16)

Generation Next is a polarised generation, where some young people thrive with the growing demands for independence and strong professional skills.

The Mentor can:

- Be a role model
- Help to get an overview of educational opportunities
- Give advice concerning educational choices
- Maintain commitment and dedication
- Give advice concerning professional behaviour
- Prepare the mentee improve at problem solving

From a mentor's perspective, these young people may be obvious candidates for general or talent-oriented mentoring. However, there is a large group of young people who are having difficulty coming to terms with their educational path. To ensure that these young people can also navigate the educational system on the path to a good working life, mentoring can be a decisive factor in maintaining young people's commitment and dedication. Polarisation among young people therefore means that there may be a need for a differentiated mentoring effort. The mentee has several advantages through having a mentor. For example, the mentor helps the mentee to behave professionally and to prepare for a workplace. In addition, the mentor can advise and help the young person to improve at problem solving and to navigate educational opportunities. There may also be some kind of friendship in the mentoring relationship, and finally, the mentor is a role model for the young person (Kram 1985). If we are to ensure that the mentoring process offered to Danish young people makes a real difference, then the quality of this mentoring process must systematically be worked on. Therefore, Danish and foreign experiences with mentoring processes are important, so that the existing knowledge and experience can be built on.

Educators and Trainers

Internship companies must have somebody responsible for education, in charge of apprentice/student education. Many companies work with trainers and instructors. It is essential to distinguish between who has the formal responsibility for apprentice/student education, and who supports the student without having formal leadership responsibilities. It is the latter who most resembles a mentor.

The purpose of this project is to facilitate knowledge sharing and to present a section of the mentoring processes existing today, to inspire educational institutions, companies and others working with young people.

3.1 From a Focus on Vulnerable Students to a Focus on Labour Market Resilience and Role Models

In the years preceding the vocational education and training reform, focus was placed on mentoring for disadvantaged students at VET-schools, in order to reduce the rate of dropout (Regeringen, 2006: 38, Albæk et al., 2012: 26). Following the introduction of the requirement of a minimum grade of 2 in Danish and Mathematics in 2015, the executive order still requires that

Full-Time Mentors and Contact Teachers

Many VET-schools have professional counsellors employed. At SØPU there are two full-time mentors, while other schools have teachers who also act as contact teachers or part-time mentors.

contact teachers and mentors be provided *for those students who are in need of support and guidance from such contact persons, to be able to complete a commenced course of studies. The school sets limits for the activities of the contact teachers and mentors* (Act on Vocational education and training, section 58). However, the reform of the VET-programs also focused on talent management and the possibility of talents and subjects at higher levels, where mentoring can also play a major role. Internationally, the use of mentoring varies too, with more widespread and general access than focusing exclusively on supporting those young people who face the highest challenges in school and daily life. This wider approach in the use of mentors thus includes a variety of young people with very different backgrounds, and it often also means that mentorship is not a taboo subject among young people, or associated with stigmatisation. A shift to a wider use of mentors may also be relevant in Denmark after the VET-reform and the international experience found by DEA in its interviews, points to the fact that there are many benefits associated with it. Mentoring focusing on young people with moderate or good adult contact or as a talent-supporting effort, not only strengthens young people but can also make it less taboo and stigmatising to be associated with mentoring.

3.2 Several Definitions of a Mentor

The definition of what a mentor is, can be interpreted widely. Generally, it is agreed that a mentor is a role model who, due to their longer life experience can help or teach the younger mentee to become better at navigating the labour market, at school and in private life. In addition, it must also be distinguished between formal and informal mentors, with informal mentors being persons, e.g. parents or teachers who are naturally within the young people's circle of interests, and formal mentors being "professional friends" who can be either an older student or a volunteer or paid part or full-time mentor (Rhodes & Schwartz 2016, Gardiner 2008).

3.2.1 Youth Initiated Mentoring

Youth Initiated Mentoring (YIM) is a method of mentoring: Recent research indicates, that there is good reason for formal mentors to cooperate with informal mentors, as informal mentors often support and counsel emotionally, while formal mentors support and advise on issues such as job market, education and careers. At the same time, this also teaches the mentee to utilise his/her existing network and the informal mentors already in the personal network of the young person. In programs focused on YIM, the mentor teaches the mentee to identify possible informal mentors in his/her network and to develop the relationship into an informal mentoring relationship.

Research shows positive and longer-term results with mentoring programs that include YIM, presumably because many mentoring projects are time-limited and lack anchoring when the project is over. If a part of the time is used to develop the young person's network of informal mentors, this will create longer and more stable relationships, as the relationships originate from the young person's own network (Rhodes 2016). Youth initiated mentoring is thus a method that can be used by all types of mentors.

However, there is still a lack of agreement on whether mentors should be remunerated, and Toft (2016: 28) points out that *the uniqueness of mentorship is that the mentor works for free, so that in principle there is no unequal relationship, such as in coaching, where one party pays to talk to the other*. On the other hand, a lot of research is being done on the learning mentor, which means a mentor employed, paid by and affiliated with the school, a local project or other public body as a paid employee. In the grey zone between the paid mentor and the volunteer mentor, there are remunerated mentors, as seen, for example, in the Näktergalen organisation², which is part of the international Nightingale Mentoring Network, located in Malmö and anchored at Malmö University.

3.2.2 The Professional, Learning Mentor

Gardiner (2008) and Schulin (2013) focus on the learning mentor: This is the paid, employed mentor, and the focus is most often on vulnerable young people via a one-to-one relationship.

Through support strategies such as the professional friendship, where values such as respect, trust, empathy and confidentiality are present (Gardiner 2008), the mentee learns how to search for internships, how to behave at a workplace or how to decide on educational choices:

The idea here is that the mentor should contribute to retention in studies, while at the same time being able to "teach" the student what it takes to complete an education. Therefore, the relationship between mentor and mentee is not directly equal, in the same way as in a mentoring relationship between two resource persons.

(Schulin 2013: 28)

² Näktergalen focuses on socially disadvantaged children between the ages of 8-12, who are matched with a university student who acts as a mentor. Mentors and mentee meet 1-2 times a week during the period between October and May, and the university student receives 3000 SEK.

4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF MENTORING

The mapping has shown that different types of mentoring are used, varying in relation to purpose, anchorage, mentor background and mentee target group. There are youth to youth mentors, senior mentors, professional mentors and workplace mentors. Some are anchored at the VET-school or in the company, and others are project-organised or run by NGOs.

1. **Youth to youth mentor, most often volunteer**
2. **Adult to youth mentor, volunteer**
3. **Professional mentor, with a salary**
 - a. *Including group mentors*
4. **Workplace mentor, paid through their job in the company**

1: Youth to Youth Mentors, Unpaid

These are mostly older students, who are mentors for younger students. In a Danish context, this mentoring system is not widely used, but it is internationally, for example, buddy systems, big sister or big brother systems, older students from a higher education institution or older students, who are mentors (tutors) for an entire class. Youth to youth mentors often focus on young people who do not face many social or professional challenges or on talent-supporting. This system can help create relationships and assist the student in navigating, for example, educational choices, and strengthening labour market resilience (Paaske et al., 2008: 19). It is crucial for student mentoring arrangements to be well organised, for young mentors to be prepared, and that the expectations between mentor and mentee are matched.

This is to ensure that students are not left alone to handle those problems and challenges that may arise in the mentoring relationship.

2: Adult to Youth Mentor, Volunteer

This mentor form has been tested in different places in Denmark, and is also widely seen abroad. The mentor is either still active, also known as vocational mentor/business mentor, or a senior mentor, also known as grandfather system. The mentoring system may be anchored at the school, but it is characterised by the fact that the mentors are not employees of the school.

Members of the Trade Union 3F's Early Retirement Club are Mentors

In Vejle Municipality, a mentoring scheme was started in 2007, where the elderly were mentors for young people. The initiative began as a cooperation between the children's school, the VET-school and local companies. During the project, mentors were mainly recruited from the 3F early retirement club. This was due to the fact, that most young people in the target group considered or sought vocational education and training. The purpose of the system was to assist the young person in training, to retain the young person in education and to help them get an internship.

However, the duties of the mentor were extended to include more than educational conditions: It quickly became apparent that young people need a personal mentor as much as a professional mentor.

3: Professional Mentor

This mentor form is characterised by a high degree of professionalism; it can be either a professional mentor, for example someone with a social education profile working full time or part-time as a mentor or coach at the school or a teacher mentor, i.e. a teacher who also works with mentoring. The professional learning mentor most often focuses on young people with social or professional challenges. Access to contact teachers and professional counselling via a full-time mentor is explained in the executive order.

3a: Group Mentor

Unlike the traditional one-to-one mentor, the group mentor is a mentor for a network or a group. It is seen at KNord, who work with a girl network, and who have reached the conclusion that networking mentors seem to work better with girls than with boys. An analysis from EVA (2009) also points out that experience shows that networking activities strengthen the social environment and thus contribute to better retention. The mentor can be employed specifically for the task or be an employee at the school, a teacher as well as technical or administrative staff, and the mentees' group size is usually 8-15 students. Group mentors are widely used in US high schools, often referred to as "distributed counselling" or "advisory programs" (Tocci et al 2005).

4: Workplace Mentor

In cases where the business mentor and mentee work in the same company, it is important, that the mentor does not have managerial responsibility over the mentee.

The business mentor can focus on talent, normal young people and young people with special challenges. Many companies work with educators, apprenticeship officers and trainers, and there can often be a fine line between them and the functions of the mentor. One of the most important features of mentoring is that the person responsible does not have a day-to-day management responsibility towards the student/apprentice.

Instructors at the Bricklaying Company Øens Murerfirma and the Technology Supplier Danfoss

Both Øens Murerfirma and Danfoss have apprenticeship instructors; employees older than the apprentices, but who do not have direct managerial responsibility towards them. Apprenticeship instructors have the same function as a mentor, and advise and guide the apprentices both professionally, socially and personally.

5 ORGANISATIONS OF MENTORING

There have been many mentoring trials and projects, both central and decentralised, region-based and school-based. Many of them, especially smaller projects, have been driven by passionate people and many projects have ceased to exist due to lack of project funds or lack of ownership. Ownership is essential if a mentoring scheme is to be retained in the institution, and ownership must be anchored in the management as well as with teachers, supervisors and other parties (Gjermandsen & Rømer, 2013).

5.1 Strategic Anchoring

The Netherlands is one of the European countries where, for a number of years, people have tried to establish mentoring in the field of vocational education and training. This is in order to work with the motivation of young people who are at risk of dropping out, and thus reduce the number of students who end up by not completing an education. Between 1998 and 2002, approximately 250 mentoring programs were started in Dutch vocational education and training, of which only two of the programs were still in existence in 2008 (Meijers 2008:237). According to Meijers, the reason behind the short lifespan of the mentoring programs is that there have often been some teachers who have started mentoring independently, by applying for funding from external pools, and the management of the school has thus only been included minimally. In addition, many of the mentoring programs initiated lacked a clear vision and a comprehensive strategy about which specific issues the offer of mentoring support can address.

5.2 Mentors' Limits and Responsibilities

Regardless of the type of mentoring that is being worked with (youth to youth, professional, workplace, etc.), it is important to define the system from the beginning. The framework must clarify the expectations of a mentoring system, so that it can be organised and financed in a way that makes sense. Gjermandsen and Rømer (2013) emphasise that if a mentoring project is to be effective, it is crucial that a common understanding of what the mentor role entails and the boundaries of what a mentor should be able to do are developed.

5.2.1 Initial Training of the Mentor

The literature and practice from Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands emphasise the importance of mentors receiving initial training, maybe for just a few days. In doing so, they become aware of what kind of task they are facing and what tools and strategies are appropriate to establish a present and supportive relationship with the young person in an ethically responsible way (Frimodt & Larsen 2009:4f, Katznelson 2008:8). Depending on whether it is mentoring for young people at risk or talent-supporting mentoring, being a

mentor may be a demanding job; some mentors and mentees meet every week, others meet monthly. This is largely determined by the purpose of mentoring.

5.3 The Right Match

Any good mentor relationship starts with the right match between mentor and mentee, which is why it is important to carefully consider this and have a systematic planning and implementation of this process (Garringer et al. 2015, Stigaard 2010). There are various strategic approaches to the matching process between mentor and mentee.

At Mentorprogramma Friesland in the Netherlands, there is a volunteer corps of mentors consisting of people with very different backgrounds, and matching is completed by matching the mentee with a mentor who has concrete experience in the area in which the mentee has a formulated learning goal. The first meeting is rather formal and is used to determine if the match is right or whether a new matching process should take place.

In the VerA program in Germany (senior mentors), the mentor is matched with the mentee with focus on geography, the young person's needs and, as far as possible, similar professional skills and industry.

An often-used approach is based on a match based on similarities between mentor and mentee. There may be general similarities such as gender, race or ethnicity, but it can also be based on shared interests. Research points out that the interest-based and individual-oriented match is better than matching from more general similarities such as ethnicity or gender (Garringer et al. 2015, Gjermansen og Rømer 2013).

When it comes to full-time mentors anchored at the school (e.g. SOPU and TEC), there are typically only a few mentors available. As a result, students cannot be matched with mentors and counsellors based on personal chemistry. The most important thing about this type of relationship is that mentors/counsellors who take care of students radiate openness and security, and it is further of great importance to apply a professional and non-judgmental approach, as well as using the right tools.

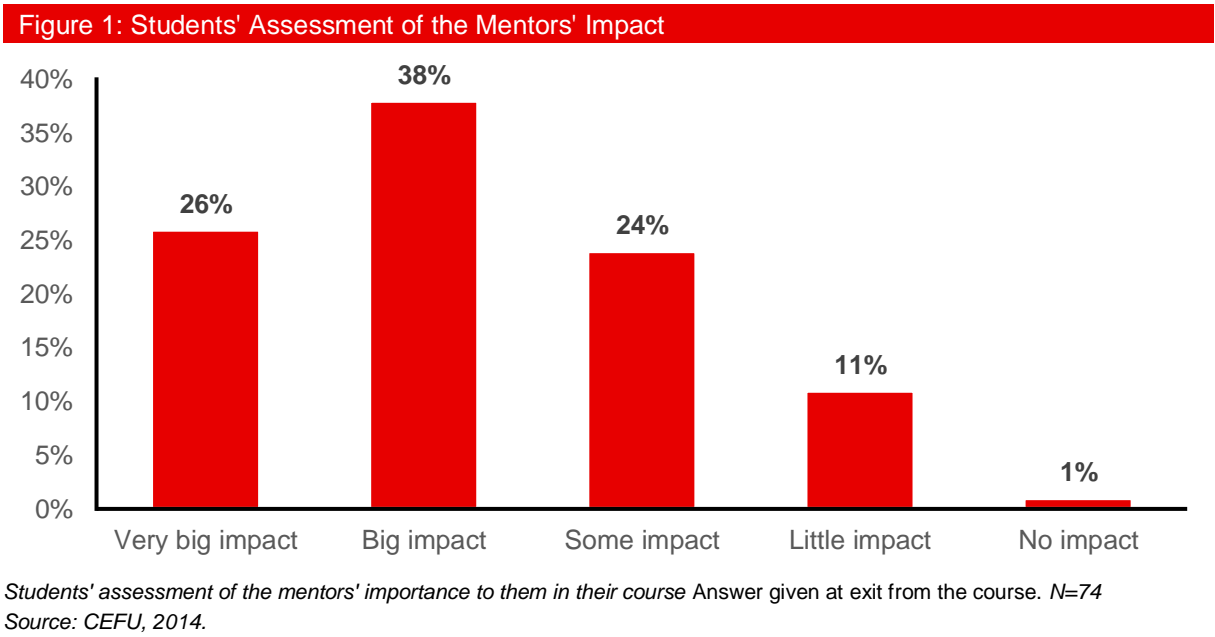
In Australia, Mentor and Mentee are Matched Online

In the MoVES mentoring program at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, they apply the Chronus Tool software, where mentors and mentees fill out a range of criteria from which they are then matched. At the same time, there are some specific questions for the first meeting to get the conversation started.

6 WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF MENTORING?

In the last few years, many and varied mentoring projects have been initiated at VET-schools, with the aim of reducing dropout rates and supporting young people with professional or social difficulties in completing their education (Frimodt & Larsen 2009:4f). The overall experience of these efforts is that the offer of having a mentor, contact teacher or role model has a positive effect on the ability of schools to retain disadvantaged students (Katznelson 2008:7). This also applies to students with a different ethnic background, a group with a particularly high risk of dropping out from a commenced VET-program (Frimodt & Larsen 2009:4f).

In a report from 2014, CEFU conducted a satisfaction survey among students who have had a mentor. The students' own assessment points to great satisfaction, with 99% believing that having a mentor had an impact, while 64% believe that having a mentor had a big or very significant impact (see CEFU's chart depicted in Figure 1 below).



6.1 Long-term Effects and Self-Management Skills

[Mentor programs] have a special role in a lifelong learning perspective, where self-management skills are very important.

Ali Tilma, Dean, Vocational School Friesepoort, The Netherlands

Mentorprogramma Friesland has evaluated how mentoring contributes to long-term success for mentees, and among other things, the benefits that mentoring efforts create in relation to self-esteem and social and cognitive skills have been investigated (Vos 2014). The study is, among other things, based on surveys and semi structured interviews with former mentees, the majority of which come from vocational education and training. The figures show that the majority of previous mentees are either in employment (51.9%) or in the process of completing their studies (38%). It is also emphasized, that 43% of the mentees who completed their vocational education continued on to higher education; the average for Dutch VET-students continuing on to higher education is approximately 30%. There are indications that the mentoring relationship, at least in part, influences the completion of vocational education, but also that it has an effect on the working and educational life after vocational education and training.

Mentoring Strengthens Transition from VET to Higher Education

A study from the Netherlands shows, that 38% of former mentees continue their studies; the average for the whole country is 30%.

The participants in the study also point out that the mentoring relationship has had a positive impact on their self-esteem, cognitive skills and the creation of professional networks, and that they gained competences they have taken with them to their working life. Thus, in the study it is pointed out how mentoring not only helps young people here and now, but also influences education and employment in the longer term.

According to Vos' (2014) research and a perspective on lifelong learning and career competence, mentoring be a tool to strengthen young people's self-management skills, and thus enable the mentee to make qualified choices in a longer perspective. Similarly, more of the interviewed mentors (e.g. from SÖPU Copenhagen and ROCK YOUR LIFE) emphasise the concept of empowerment in mentoring, and that one of the success criteria for mentoring is to enable the mentee to make independent decisions on an informed basis. Newer approaches to mentoring are also more about self-propagation of mentees, so that they can make their own decisions and open their network instead of being a form of treatment (Schwartz and Rhodes 2016).

Career Learning and Competence

Career competence is the ability to understand and develop oneself and make qualified choices in education, work and life in general in a changing world. This has been a concept that has gained popularity over recent years concerning guidance research and practice, and it moves guidance from having a 'here and now' focus, where the supervisor helps young people to make a choice, to having a learning focus, where young people learn to make the choice by themselves, and the guide thus takes the form of a learning course (Thomsen 2014).

6.2 Adult Support is Social, Personal and Professional

DuBois et al. (2011) concludes that the different types of mentoring schemes all have a positive effect. In American research, more studies have been conducted on the effects of mentoring on young people. It is emphasised, inter alia, that mentoring has positive effects on areas such as absenteeism, grades and peer relationships and that it is central to forming significant relationships with non-family adults (Wheeler et al., 2010: 13). In a major meta-analysis of 73 evaluations of mentoring programs targeted at children and adolescents, DuBois et al. (2011) has systematically gathered evidence-based knowledge about the effects on young people participating in mentoring. The study shows that in the evaluations there is evidence that mentoring schemes have a positive effect and lead to behavioural, social, emotional and professional progress in young people with mentors. The biggest effects are identified when:

- The mentee has had previous difficulties
- The evaluations have had larger samples of young men
- The objectives of the mentoring program have been consistent with the mentors' educational and employment background.
- Mentor and mentee are matched from corresponding areas of interest
- Mentoring programs support the mentor's teaching or counselling role for young people

The academic progress in mentoring is expressed by the fact that young people perform better when tested at school, where social and emotional progress may be that mentoring relationships help mentees to better understand, express and regulate their feelings and thus better engage in relationships with others. It is also highlighted how a mentor can act as a good adult support by helping young people change their view of themselves:

By modelling, caring and providing support, for example, mentors can challenge negative views that young people may hold of themselves and demonstrate that positive relationships with adults are possible.
(Dubois 2011: 62)

The group of students who benefit most from mentoring relationships in schools is, according to another American study (Rhodes et al. 2010), students who already have moderately strong relationships with significant adults (e.g. teachers and parents). According to the study, the group experiences progress in terms of academic performance, prosocial behaviour and cognitive skills such as learning progress in terms of both literal, practical and identity development. Both the group of students with the strongest prior adult relationships and the group with the weakest prior adult relationships benefit from having a mentor, but the first group is the one that gets the least benefit. The quality and result of mentoring are thus different according to the target audience, which is why mentoring should not necessarily only be an offer for the most vulnerable young people. It is suggested, that most young people may benefit from having a mentor.

It should be emphasised, that young people with strong adult relationships are most likely already meeting their need for advice from their adult network, and that they therefore do not need a mentor in the same way. An explanation why young people with weak adult relationships do not get as much benefit from mentoring as the middle group, may be that

this group has previously had bad experiences in their relationship with adults. However, a mentoring relationship may change this and act as an example of a good adult relationship for the mentee (DuBois et al. 2011). An adult to youth mentor can therefore be beneficial for young people who do not already meet their adult support needs in terms of education, work and life in general. Strong adult relationships are generally an advantage for young people when they need to find their way and navigate between education, work and private life, and a mentor can be a tool for this.

6.3 Influence on Dropout and Retention

There seems to be broad agreement at schools, institutions and in various studies, that mentoring has a positive effect on dropout in Danish vocational education. However, it is harder to find comprehensive numbers or evaluations that support this claim when limiting research to mentoring in vocational education and companies. Mentoring efforts often do not have a single specific focus, but are included together with other measures such as transition programmes and supervision, and sometimes it is not called mentoring, even though it is organised as mentoring. Thus, the effect of mentoring on dropout rates and retention can be highly isolated, although it is suggested that it has an effect. A report from CEFU (2008) focuses on the impact of mentoring on young people with a different ethnic minority background than Danish. The study shows a significant reduction in the dropout rate at TEC's basic course, both among ethnic Danish students and among students with a different ethnic background than Danish. The survey is based on the basic course in the years 2005 to 2007, where a total reduction from 34% to 28.4% is reported. (Katznelson & Olsen 2008:16).

There are indications, that mentoring in Danish VET-programs has a certain effect on the dropout rate, but it is still not an area that has been the basis for larger and more quantitative studies. Looking at higher education, an internal study from VIA University College in Aarhus shows mentoring to have a positive effect on the dropout rate in the Construction Architect program. The measurement made over one year shows a decrease in the dropout rate of two percent after applying the mentoring scheme (Krogh Andersen, 2015). Rambøll Management has also evaluated an experiment with various mentoring schemes in youth education. The overall evaluation indicates that mentoring progress has had a significant impact on the retention of young people, and that retention is partly attributable to the use of mentors that support the young person's motivation and clarification (Rambøll Management, 2007: 5). Thus, based on seven pilot projects, a total retention rate of 85% has been calculated and the conclusion of increased retention is supported in interviews with contributing mentors and mentees (ibid.: 40).

7 CONCLUSIONS

There is potential in mentoring, both for professionally and socially challenged young people as well as for strong young people; but it is young people with moderate adult contact who gain the most from a mentor. Where the professional learning mentor represents an appropriate response to vulnerable young people, volunteer mentoring efforts positively contribute to talent development of strong young people and support labour market resilience and personal development/career learning for the middle group. Both Danish and international studies have shown that having a mentor has a positive influence on dropout rates, further education, electoral competence, social competencies, labour market resilience and networks, which for example can lead to internships or work.

The biggest challenge in implementing mentoring is the project form and the lack of strategic anchoring at a managerial level. These two factors have contributed to many different, shorter mentor schemes that have been difficult to evaluate. Youth Initiated Mentoring (YIM) is a way in which a shorter mentor project can have longer-term effects; In the demarcated mentoring period, mentor and mentee spend time identifying possible informal mentors in the student's own network and they try to establish a network that is also there when the formal mentoring system is completed.

7.1 Overall Findings from the Desk Research

1. MENTEES FIND THAT MENTOR HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

99% of mentees believe that having a mentor has an impact, while 64% believe that having a mentor has a big or very significant impact. (CEFU 2014)

2. GREATER CHANGE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A MENTOR WILL CONTINUE STUDYING

Young people with mentors continue their studies after completing their VET more often than young people without mentors. (Vos 2014)

3. MENTOR RELATIONSHIP HAS A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON RESILIENCE AND CAREER LEARNING

The mentor relationship has a positive influence on students' self-esteem, cognitive skills and the creation of professional networks. (Vos 2014)

4. MENTORS GAVE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON RETENTION IN EDUCATION

Mentoring affects retention and reduces dropout rates; accurate results are difficult to achieve because mentoring is most often part of a multilateral effort. (Katznelson & Olsen 2008)

5. STRATEGIC ANCHORING IS CRUCIAL

Mentoring must be anchored in management as well as with teachers, supervisors and other actors.

6. CLEAR LIMITS ARE IMPORTANT

There must be a common understanding of what the mentor role entails, and what the mentor should be capable of.

7. MATCH BASED ON COMMON INTERESTS

The best match between mentor and mentee is achieved based on common interests as well as a chemistry created on the basis of a professional and safe relationship.

8. THE MIDDLE GROUP BENEFITS MOST FROM MENTORING

The group of students with moderate adult relationships are those who benefit most from a mentor. (Dubois 2011)

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