

PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

**HOW TO MAKE OUR STUDENTS FULFILL AND IMPROVE
THEIR EXPECTATIONS ON THEIR STUDIES**

STRATEGY PAPERS

How to make our students fulfil and improve their expectations on their studies

Strategy Paper

Product of The Erasmus+ project The School Improvement Partnership

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The School Improvement Partnership Project (SIPP)

The SIP Project, led by LPUK and involving partners from Ireland, Spain, Finland and The Czech Republic, has produced a Grade Predictor Tool which can be implemented in the partner countries through training teachers and other associated staff in its usage. The tool is then implemented with students who are making decisions about their future pathway choice or are at risk of drop out and need help/support in their current study or to be directed elsewhere. The Grade Predictor methodology is based on data from grades that students in the partner country have received. It is then used to predict students' performance in the future based on their achievement in the past.

LPUK has created a Grade Predictor tool for each partner which is customised to the educational system in their country, their qualifications and availability of data. The tool was trialled on students in all partner countries Ireland, Finland, Spain and Czech Republic to see were there any issues with the tool.

As part of SIPP, each partner also produced three Intervention videos which showcase the relevance of the Grade Predictor and other interventions. They outline the effectiveness of Grade Predictor in a teaching context particularly the guidance element accompanied with interventions in each partner country. Research tells us that short and simple videos are a very powerful way to put a message across to staff in schools who have limited time in a busy schedule. These videos are very effective in accompanying training and bringing the Grade Predictor tool into reality in the school situation. The videos aim to reflect issues of equality such as the under representation of young women in particular subjects and those with disability in particular careers. All videos are available on the SIP Project website, partner websites and through a YouTube channel created by the lead organisation for this task Xabec. The videos are a central resource for staff across partner countries.

Issue: Early School Leavers & Recognition of Youth Unemployment**Rationale:**

The dropout rate in Spain, according to data provided by the Ministry of Interior, is one of the highest in Europe though it has been falling for several years in a row from 26.1% in 2011 to 17.9% registered in 2018.

Currently, and according to the same sources, only 40.2% of our students complete higher level studies (at least level 5 according to EQF).

It is urgent to find mechanisms to complete the studies that students intend to carry out, improving not only their technical skills but also the personal ones.

Recommendation:

In our school, due to the experience accumulated throughout last years, we have assumed that many of our students abandon their studies as a result of the lack of confidence in themselves. Thinking that they are not able to finish what they started can be a remarkable reason to get frustrated and give up.

The Personal Improvement Plan can help to empower our students through the various tools that are developed in it, such as conversations with the tutor, parents or grade predictor tool

Issue: Identifying at risk students**Rationale:**

The tool is useful to identify risk students, since it has several procedures that, carried out properly, provides you an image of the attitudes and capacities that will help him or her to complete the studies and his or her weak points.

A specific analysis of the data allows us to perceive what are the main points to insist on in order to support the student, promoting his strengths and lessening his weakness.

Recommendation:

Along the development of the tool, we have noticed that some expressions used in the Personal Improvement Plan do not really adapt to the language that the students nowadays understand, so at the end of the day you talk about generalities and vaguenesses.

On the other hand, many teachers have asked us to simplify the procedure in a simpler way and expanding gaps to write down their own considerations.

Issue: Solid Use of Data Focus and the Impact on Early School Leaving

Rationale:

We cannot establish a direct and linear relationship between the data used and the impact on the decrease in school drop-out, though we can definitely conclude that the data allow us to give students much more confidence since they see cases of students who obtained their same grades and they managed to finish the course.

Recommendation:

In our case, as we are a small school, we realised that there are courses that do not have much data from previous students, so the robustness of the data is minimal. However, we see that the effectiveness remains the same, as they show enthusiasm when they see the results

Issue: Improve Student performance and strengthen teaching

Rationale:

The Personal Improvement Plan (grade predictor tool included) does not affect the specific way of teaching a specific science or technique. Rather, It is a tool for the personal follow-up of each student according to their specific characteristics.

It permits early identification of students at risk of dropping out according to the expectations that have been generated and proceeding to interviews and planned contacts.

The improvement in the development of tutorials and student follow-up has been widely noted by all teachers and has also been grateful for all students. Many of them admit that they would not have finished the course if it was not for the figure of the personal tutor and the follow-up performed.

Recommendation:

It is possible and desirable to improve the monitoring of the number of tutorials that are carried out and the way tutors complete the Personal Improvement Plan.

It is highly important to ensure in all cases the confidentiality of the data.

It is also important to make sure that all available data are destroyed once the tutoring and personal monitoring of the student is completed.