

Mentoring for inclusion: a relational model for learning, agency and social participation

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Abstract

In increasingly fragmented and unequal societies, inclusion cannot be addressed solely through access to education or formal participation in training pathways. It also requires relational devices capable of supporting agency, continuity in learning, and the development of key competences across vulnerable transitions. In this perspective, mentoring can be understood as an inclusive educational practice that combines personalised guidance, dialogic support and competence development. This abstract presents a theoretical contribution that explores mentoring as a relational model for inclusion in educational, professional and intergenerational contexts. The argument builds on literature concerning mentoring, lifelong learning, key competences and social participation, and highlights how mentoring may foster self-efficacy, reflective learning, motivation and a stronger sense of belonging. Particular attention is paid to the role of mentoring in supporting individuals at risk of exclusion, such as students with weak learning outcomes, adults in reskilling pathways and older people exposed to digital marginalisation. The contribution outlines an integrated framework in which mentoring acts not only as support for individual growth, but also as a pedagogical and social lever for more inclusive learning ecosystems. In this sense, mentoring may contribute to strengthening participation, empowering learners and reducing forms of educational and social marginalisation across diverse learning environments. It may also support more equitable transitions by valuing personal potential, recognising vulnerability and fostering meaningful relationships that connect learning processes with social inclusion and long-term participation.

Keywords: Mentoring, inclusion, lifelong learning, key competences, agency.