

<b>Case Study: Reverse Mentoring</b>	
Short description of the challenge that the tool was used to tackle	After participating in a RETAIN project workshop in Turkey about the use of the tool 'Reverse Mentoring', members of the senior leadership team from Vehbi Necip Savaşan Primary School, decided to develop a long-term school-wide project to use reverse mentoring with all staff, including administrative and support staff to with a view to developing a more inclusive learning environment.
Contextual information	<p>Vehbi Necip Savaşan primary school was founded in 1961. It has gone through several changes recently. When compulsory primary education was extended to eight years in Turkey, the school started providing education for children between the ages of 6 to 14. This changed student population was something that the senior leadership team felt staff were not equipped for in terms of the skills and subject knowledge that would be required.</p> <p>Furthermore, although teachers and administrators generally had a positive attitude towards these changes, they agreed that this was insufficient for an inclusive learning environment. Key challenges included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental pressure (resistance to change, having unrealistic expectations, showing no interest in their children's achievement, etc.),</li> <li>• Inadequate regulations regarding disruptive students,</li> <li>• Low-achieving students and students with low motivation</li> <li>• Teachers who felt exhausted, impatient, intolerant, burn-out</li> </ul> <p>Furthermore, analysis of interviews conducted as part of the RETAIN project showed that not only the administrative but also the teaching staff perceived great challenges regarding students who were educationally vulnerable as a consequence of socio-economic disadvantage or needing special care due to certain learning disabilities.</p>
Title of the tool	Reverse Mentoring
How did the school work with the tool	<p>The school started a project named "Anlatmazsan Bilemeyebilirim" meaning "How can I know if you don't tell me about it?" using 'Reverse Mentoring' as a tool.</p> <p>The school manager and one of the teachers, both of whom had participated in the RETAIN project, worked together as mentor and mentee, setting up the project and meeting twice a week for an hour.</p> <p>The aims of the project were to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and understand key areas for improvement across the school</li> <li>2. Encourage staff to inform the administrative team regarding areas that they felt might hinder school improvement</li> <li>3. Give an opportunity to each and every staff member to explain how they may have been affected by issues/events within the school environment</li> <li>4. To prevent gossip or rumor and thus prevent negative, demotivating conversations amongst staff</li> </ol>

	<p>5. Improve sense of belonging amongst the staff and help them feel valued and respected.</p> <p>Accordingly, the school manager and the teacher shared their ideas first with a small group of staff members and then with a general meeting of the whole school staff. The initial small group took responsibility for arranging the production of the materials needed, web site, appointment forms, mentoring reflection sheets and the posters to spread the idea of the project school-wide.</p> <p>Since it was planned to be conducted as a long-term project, the school aims to continue the process until they are sure to have benefitted all the expected positive outcomes. Happily, the project has already become a part of their school culture.</p>
Promoting factors	<p>Through the process of reverse mentoring, mentors should improve their interpersonal skills such as self-disclosure, active listening, empathy, and feedback. Therefore, the application of the tool brings about personal and professional change in these respects.</p> <p>Furthermore, in our case study, both the school manager and the teacher who set up the project, reported that working together as equal learning partners mitigated against organizational hierarchy. As a result, they included a 'real learning' mindset as another requirement of the reverse-mentoring process.</p>
Barriers	<p>Because of the enthusiastic and innovative attitude of the school manager no barriers occurred during the reverse mentoring process. However, potential barriers could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) agreeing and following the progress</li> <li>(b) sticking to planned meetings and implementing actions agreed</li> <li>(c) providing, protecting and respecting privacy</li> <li>(d) being constructive on the issues shared and feedback received</li> <li>(e) not being ready for sharing and respecting another person's personal experience</li> <li>(f) adopting a 'real learning' mindset</li> <li>(g) organizational hierarchy</li> </ul>
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