Good Start in the Mentoring Process for Mentors

The quality of the relationship between mentors and mentees mirrors the outcome of the mentoring process. A successful conversation is the basis of a well-established relationship. Therefore, please pay attention to the following aspects:

Basic attitude of respect
Make sure that you encounter the person in front of you with an open, accepting and appreciative basic attitude. This invites people to contribute their own topics and to build a trustful relationship.

Authenticity
Be authentic and pay attention to your body language. Also, reflect on what has been said before. To this end, think about areas which could be interesting for the mentee in giving him deeper insights linked to your own experiences.

Empathy
Frequently put yourself into the shoes of your counterpart. By doing so, it is easier to understand his or her thoughts and feelings and go along with her or his experiences.

Methods for building relationships

Proposal 1: Walking together

- Go for a walk together and exchange personal and professional topics, e.g. both of you could tell how you got motivated to participate in the intercultural mentoring program.
- Inquire about the resources of your counterpart - often it is easier to talk about things you feel confident with.

Be creative and tell the opposite person four of your strong or specific character traits, only three of which are true. Afterwards, let the opposite guess which one of the character traits was made up.

Proposal 2: The board of expectations

- Collect your own expectations with the support of metaplan-cards.
- Make a note, e.g. of your fears or limitations on red cards and your hopes and desires on green cards. Please ensure that you have enough cards so that every specific content gets its own „space“. The formulation of the questions should be simple and clearly stated, e.g., „What do I expect from mentoring?“, „What do I want to learn from here?“ or „What should not happen in any case?“
- Together, create a board of expectation(s) after discussing single cards and assembling them to an overall picture. With this, you should take all fears and limitations very seriously.
- Keep the results fixed.
- Before you meet up again, think about what every party can contribute to realize all the wishes and avoid fears. Write the ideas on additional, e.g., white cards.

Thus, you are actively working on how to deal with each other and get ideas for topics to discuss or activities which you could plan and do together.

Advantages:

- The persons involved, especially all mentees, will be able to define their expectations and write them out.
- Mentees recognize that an active participation in the mentoring program is desired.

Mentees feel as an active part of mentoring, because they have the possibility to express wishes and expectations, both seen as getting implemented certainly. As a result, their motivation increases, which subsequently can lead to a regular active participation.

Kompetenznetzwerk Studierendenmentoring

The Kompetenznetzwerk Studierendenmentoring (student mentoring competence network), founded in 2012, promotes various mentoring programs, including different target groups and experience levels. More than 6,000 mentees have been supported in their personal and professional development.

Intercultural mentoring is one of the programs initiated by the student mentoring competence network. Within this program experienced students (mentors) support international students at the beginning of their studies (mentees) on a personal, professional and social basis for one term.

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