

**Leadership interaction in
sustainable partnership that
enhance continuous
improvement of vocational
teacher education**



LeadVET

Mentoring program in Haaga-Helia



Haaga-Helia mentoring program development in a nutshell

1. Developing a mentoring model for Vocational Teacher Education (VTE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). DL in September 2023. Model is a result of utilizing PR 1 and PR 2 and research done in PR3.
2. Creating a mentor pool for improving and testing the model in practice. DL in February 2023.
3. Developing mentoring program together with mentors and VTE. Organizing meetings and events with networks enhancing the goals defined in the mentoring model.
4. Investigating pros and cons of the model and recognizing the national differences.
5. Writing articles (2) on the essentials of the mentoring structure and the experiences on testing the model.
6. Organizing meetings and events for discussing and presenting the the model for utilizing VET teachers as mentors in developing VTE, closing the theory practice gap between VTE and VET, enhancing recruitment in VET and developing networks' utilization in VET leadership.

Project results so far

- Six partner Vocational Colleges: Vantaa Vocational College Varia, Business College Helsinki, Helsinki Vocational College and Adult Institute, STEP Education Vocational College, Ekami Vocational College, Diakonia College of Finland
- At the moment 25 mentor teachers from partner Vocational Colleges.
- Training and discussion session with mentors. Joint platform for sharing ideas and collaborative work (Teams group) Training and planning events for mentor: 11.4. 2023 / 2. and 3.5.2023/ LeadVET Multiplier Event in Helsinki 20.-21.9.2023/ 13.12.2023 / 14.3.2024 Alumni event.
- Published text in eSgnals: <https://esignals.fi/kategoria/pedagogiikka/verkostojen-johtamisella-vaikuttavuutta/#5f37c07e> (Effectiveness by utilizing networks in leadership)
- Podcast "Is professional teacher training part of the pulse of vocational training and working life?"
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/0ocHpwaJlSEhpF6zHFRczk?si=68ba8aea088744cd>
- Preliminary research results and the model for mentoring presented in LeadVET Multiplier Event in Helsinki 20.-21.9.2023. Presentation also in webinar.

Spring and Autumn 2024

- **Mentoring practices and model is under further development based on surveys (2), experiences, mentor training events and the results of PR1 and PR3.**
- **Mentors are in co-operation with teacher education groups.**
- **Two articles under preparation on mentoring. One on mentoring as a model for systematic use of networking in leadership. The other is on general benefits of mentoring in the context of educational institutes and network co-operation.**
- **Expanding mentoring practices to alumni networks. Some of the benefits of mentoring can be considered belonging to active alumni practices. This is part of the analysis on the best practices in utilizing networks in leadership.**

Some essential results so far

- Mentoring could be described as informal semi-official networking. It may contain formalities but it is essentially informal. Thus the crucial question is, that how to utilize this informal semi-official networking in a way that is resource effective, productive and useful tool of leadership.

Elements under investigation in testing the model

- The most important task of a mentor is to act as a contact person for the practical teacher's work. The official nature of this network can vary. There should be systematicity to some extent.
- The mentor is contacted when an expert is needed on the current phenomena of the teacher's work and its different dimensions. A mentor's tasks can range from peer mentoring to expert representation in working groups.
- Flexibility and innovation are essential in the development of tasks. Participating in the tasks of the mentor's role requires trust and flexibility from the organization.
- The development of the structure must therefore have the support of the management of VET:s, and freedom of action within the framework.
- VTE network coordinates mentor network, maintains connections, follows the flow of activities regularly and conveys information to the steering group and from the steering group to mentors.
- Structure is official but functioning is informal. Mentors need official status.
- Recognizing the mutual benefits is crucial. Extra resources should be an exception.
- How to utilize Teacher Training's Alumni networks?
- National solutions can vary but the benefits of informal semi-official networking are crucial.