

Title

Setting up a Personal Development Plan (PDP) ¹

Short description

Compilation of a Personal Development Plan is a planning process, in the course of which the professionals develop the student, and the student is also made concerned during it. This is one of the basic theories and basic conditions of the successful development. There is more chance for a change and successful learning if the student is aware of what is going to happen to him/her, what he/she is expected to do, and what he/she can expect from the others around him/her.

Planning the evaluation of the help and the development as a process, and sharing, rethinking it with the students and the parents is essential, because this way the student will become a responsible participant of his/her own learning and developmental process. Drafting, summarizing, taking notes, and finally signing the document containing the fields to be developed can make the student be aware of the process.

The PDP helps to support the student in a systematic, well-planned way.

Detailed description of the tool and required materials, attachments

Material to be handed out: Personal Development Plan – a SAMPLE, which means that the PDP can be modified freely, since in each case it should apply for the persons involved (helpers and helped.)

The PDP is the documentation of the personal development process. It is essential for personality development that the student can perform activities adequate for his/her actual personal developmental stage at school, that is the external effects will reach him/her at the appropriate developmental level. This will make him/her not only more successful in learning, but his/her willingness to work will also increase.

Personal development is an activity, in the course of which we intervene in the

¹ Author: Edit Győrik, FSZK Nonprofit Ltd.
Translated from Hungarian by Márta Erdész, FSZK Nonprofit Ltd.

development process of the youngster in a way which is tailored to his/her own characteristic and actual developmental process.

The basis of the consistent development is the PDP, periodically evaluated and redesigned by the development team.

Principles

The following principles are suggested to follow during the PDP planning :

- The PDP should be discussed and elaborated in a **development team**, the must-be members of which are the **student, the parents/relatives/guardian, the teacher (form master/adult person trusted by the student /mentor, etc.)**, none of them could be left out. If possible a school-psychologist, child-protection officer, family supporter, etc. should also be involved. The development team is a form of cooperation between its members that is between all the persons who might be a potential supporter from the point of view of the student. It is important to think over who is invited to be a member. Setting up the team and keeping in touch with the members is the responsibility of the adult person trusted by the student.
- It is inevitable that the student participates in the development team, since this is where the mapping and ensuring of the motivation bases which inspires the cooperation between the students and parents take place. During the developmental team work there is a way and possibility to focus on the needs and to search for solutions motivating the person.
- The compilation of the PDP is a **planning and realization process**. There is bigger chance for successful learning, if the student is aware of what he/she is expected to learn, how he/she is expected to change. The process-like planning of the evaluation, and sharing it with the students, parents, is essential, since this way the student will become a responsible participant of his own learning-developing process. Wording, summarizing, taking notes, and finally signing the plan will make the student be aware of the process.
- When planning the first PDP the timeframe of the whole development process should be stipulated, and also its evaluation periods should be agreed on. Before planning the first PDP – beyond the observations of the pedagogues – it's **worth getting information about the student from other sources than**

the family, e.g.: previous school carrier, child protection, education counsellor, SEN expert committee.

- **The ways of getting information cannot be one-sided**, for example they cannot be based only on the observations of the pedagogue. **The most important source of information is the student**, the information we got during the interviews and the daily work play dominant role when planning the PDP.
- The PDP is **available** for professionals in touch with the student and also for the parents/adults in charge for the student.
- It is practical that the evaluation of the elements of PDP and the planning of the forthcoming period we perform in parallel. Experiences gained from the evaluation can right away be included into the development plan of the next period.

There are 3 key elements of the compilation of the Personal Development Plan:

1. Getting to know the student in complexity – data collection
2. Defining the possible ways of help
3. Evaluation of the previous period.

The compilation of the PDTP is a team discussion, where all the persons involved into the development process of the student and/or into the problem actually raised with the student are present. These are the followings:

the student, the person supporting him (mentor, the adult person trusted by the student, etc.), the persons concerned (family, peer, teacher), the professionals necessary to solve the problem. Why?

- we consider not only from one but from several aspects the student's personality, his/her situation, family conditions;
- during the compilation period we can rely on more sources, the information are not one-sided;
- we do not get stuck at one (usually problematic) field, but we can have ourselves familiar with the possible problems of the student in a holistic way, as part of a system, thus realizing the scope of the helpers;

- it initiates us not to rely only on our own impressions, but to take into account the opinions of the colleagues, parents, and above all the opinion of the student – thus the development will be based on the team-work of the persons surrounding the student;
- the planning will make the support process more transparent;
- the student is also playing a role during the whole process, his/her responsibility can be strengthened by this document as well;
- by the periodical re-evaluation we can follow and correct the process of development and help;
- the process of development and help is transparent not only for the teachers, but also for the parents and students;
- besides the concept of small steps the PDP thinks in the long run, it makes its authors to consider the possibilities for further steps.

What we should keep in mind during the setting up of the PDP?

- Our development plan should be aimed at the solution of a real and concrete problem! We should not necessarily expect the student to acquire certain information, but to develop his/her certain competencies,
- Let's not aim to change everything at once! Considering the "hurry up slowly" slogan we had better set up short, realistic goals to be reached by small steps! The goals should always be agreed on by the student. Let's set them up together.
- We should always name the person who is responsible for the development! Keep in mind the deadline! When selecting the person responsible, besides the professional competences it is very important to notice, who is the person the student is able to cooperate with!
- "Let's not leave the trouble to one man!" The development is a team work, one professional cannot be responsible for the fate of a student!

There are typical mistakes during preparation of the PDP, which one should avoid, therefore it is worth to consider:

- We often might fail to exactly describe the initial situation, or we state a general behaviour like impatience, but we do not detail, in which situation we

have experienced it. Or when, in which field is the student diligent;

- When thinking about the student we concentrate on the negative things, we hardly rely on his/her strengths, however this would serve as a strong basis for the cooperation;
- We do not set up the PDP in a team, but rather a teacher/expert does it;
- During the planning we do not word the concrete goals and tasks, we do not name the exact person responsible, we do not set the deadline, or we set the goals and deadlines too general, unobservable for the participants. The goals, the tasks should be very concrete, small and planned for a short deadline, so that the feedback, the tracking of the development could be realized.

User's guide, equipment

Equipment	Quantity
PDP - sample	1 copy per participant
room	1
table	1
chair	1 per participant

Level of difficulty (easy, medium, advanced))

Advanced

Tags

intervention on student level, personal development plan, development team, case management

This tool was made in the framework of CroCooS – Prevent dropout! project. This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

This tool can be found on the project website: crocoos.tka.hu

CroCooS Toolkit by [CroCooS partnership](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#). Based on a work at <http://crocoos.tka.hu>. Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at <http://crocoos.tka.hu>. For more information about this CC license, visit [this site](#).

