Future-Focused Student Guiding Program

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It All Started With a Desperate Teacher...

- The problem: Pupils are bored in school, they skip classes, they do not care about school or grades, they have no interest in school material or future studies.

- They see no connection between NOW and FUTURE.
How Students Choose Their Further Studies

• „Wheel of Fortune“: Choice often based on random suggestions from parents or peers
• Making last minute decisions
• Simple heuristics (e.g. „Go study abroad, it is better!“)
• No first-hand contact
• Result? **High drop out rates** among first-year college students
• **Contrast:** they make excellent choices in other areas
Step 1: Brainstorming

What can we do about this problem?
Brainstorming Session With Psychology Students
College Students Are Perfect For This Job!

- They have recent experience with the process
- They have the experience, yet can still relate to secondary school students
- They have access to an extensive network (collectively they can get a contact person in ANY AREA OF STUDY)
- Inspiration: The Granny Cloud by Sugata Mitra
We should put pupils into an active position.

Their guides should not push, they should nudge.

Get them to start thinking about what comes next in their lives.

„Window shopping“ several viable options of where to study.
Step 2: Designing

We designed a program with 3 components
1. Motivational talks
2. Self-awareness program
3. Peer guiding
Step 3: Testing

Our desperate teacher let us have her class
Guides:
College Students

Participants:
Secondary Students

Talk and listen to their students

Identify their fields of interest

Introduce them to university lectures, academic events, discussions

Arrange meetings with students or lecturers in the chosen field

Befriend their students
Experiment!
But What To Measure?

- Motivation
- Values
- Self-efficacy
- Continuity of Future Self
- Consideration of Future Consequences
Sample: 36 students
Aged 15-16 years

Experimental group (22)
Control group (14)

Quantitative scale: Consideration of Future Consequences
(Stratham et al., 1994)

Qualitative methods: fictional CVs written by students and reports written by tutors
Step 4: Results

It Seems to Work!
Results

• **Quantitative**: Pupils in the experimental group scored **higher in Consideration for Future Consequences**
  - Interest in future consequences of present actions, perseverance and self-control, academic results
  - Focus on future

• **Qualitative**: Pupils in the experimental group had **more realistic and detailed expectations** about their future
Results: One Year Later

Quantitative

• **Before:** 35.59 (SD=6.15)
• **After:** 38.55 (SD=6.26) *[adjusted for followup: 38.7 (SD=6.76)]*
• **One year after:** 38.6 (SD=8.83)

Qualitative

• **CVs** more diverse and more specific
• **Reports:** mentees saw benefits - even those who did not, they reported elimination of some possibilities

Benefits For Guides As Well As Participants
What Now?

• Test again, bigger sample
• Focus on the guiding element
• Try to incorporate as many schools as possible
The program **helped** pupils consider future consequences

**Benefits** for both parties

**Further research:** test the peer guiding principle separately

**Vision:** **scaling out** („How To Set Up Your Own Program“)

Could this concept be **extended** to areas other than career choice?