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RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL MENTORING IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA (2014 -2025): AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

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The article presents an integrative review of research on educational mentoring in the Republic of Moldova, based on 47 scientific articles, PhD theses, methodological guides, and papers from academic conferences published between 2014 and 2025 and selected according to PRISMA criteria. The aim of study is to analyze thematic directions, methodological approaches, and the main results of national studies on mentoring, as well as to identify directions for future research. The results of analysis highlight a gradual increase in the complexity and diversification of research topics, as well as their alignment with the educational policies promoted by the Ministry of Education and Research during specific periods. The methodological analysis indicates the predominance of qualitative and exploratory studies at the beginning of analyzed period, followed by a gradual increase in quantitative and mixed-methods studies. The analyzed research shows relative conceptual convergence, but remains less developed from an empirical and methodological perspective. The results of integrative review highlight the main gaps in the field and outline directions for the further development of research on educational mentoring.

Keywords*: mentor; educational mentoring; professional development; teaching staff; Republic of Moldova.*

CERCETĂRILE PRIVIND MENTORATUL EDUCAȚIONAL ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA (2014 -2025): O REVIZUIRE INTEGRATIVĂ

Articolul prezintă o analiză integrativă a cercetărilor privind mentoratul educațional în Republica Moldova, realizată pe baza a 47 de articole științifice, teze de doctorat, ghiduri metodologice și lucrări din conferințe academice, publicate între 2014 și 2025 și selectate conform criteriilor PRISMA. Scopul cercetării: analiza direcțiilor tematice, a abordărilor metodologice și a rezultatelor principale din studiile naționale privind mentoratul și identificarea direcțiilor de cercetare viitoare. Rezultatele analizei evidențiază creșterea graduală a complexității *și diversificarea* temelor abordate în cercetări, precum și alinierea tematică la politicile educaționale promovate de MEC în perioade concrete. Analiza metodologică arată predominanța studiilor calitative și exploratorii la începutul perioadei analizate, cu o creștere a studiilor cantitative și mixte ulterior. Cercetările analizate sunt relativ convergente în plan conceptual, însă mai puțin dezvoltate empiric și metodologic. Rezultatele revizuirii integrative evidențiază principalele lacune ale cercetărilor din domeniu și conturează direcții pentru dezvoltarea cercetărilor viitoare privind mentoratul educational.

Cuvinte-cheie*: mentor; mentorat educațional; dezvoltare profesională; cadre didactice; Republica Moldova.*

Introduction

Educational mentoring is internationally recognized as an essential practice for the professional development of teachers [3]. TALIS study data show that mentoring supports the development of teaching competences and increases job satisfaction [12]. According to the same study, the majority of school principals consider mentoring to be an important practice for the professional development of teachers.

Research on educational mentoring has developed significantly in the international literature in recent decades. The international literature provides a solid theoretical framework. The theories of experiential learning and reflection on practice, as articulated by Dewey and Schön, emphasize the role of reflection in professional development [2, 14]. The theory of situational learning and the concept of communities of practice, proposed by Lave and Wenger, show that novice teachers learn through gradual participation in the activities of professional communities [10, 15]. Kram described mentoring as a relationship that fulfills both career development and psychosocial functions [9]. Feiman-Nemser highlighted that mentoring helps novice teachers integrate

into the profession and develop their professional identity [4]. More recent studies confirm that mentoring supports the development of teaching competences and teacher retention in the education system [7, 8]. However, it is noted that there is no unanimously accepted definition of mentoring and the mentor's roles. Approaches differ depending on the context, professional traditions and educational policies [1].

In this context, the recent study by Mitescu-Manea and colleagues compares mentoring practices in Romania and the Republic of Moldova [11]. The authors highlight differences related to pedagogical traditions and educational policies, but also similarities in terms of support for novice teachers and continuous professional development. The study shows how mentoring is adapted to the national context, highlighting both similarities and local specificities [8]. During the Soviet period, in the Republic of Moldova, there was the concept of *nastavnicestvo (guided induction)*. It described a hierarchical relationship between an experienced and a novice teacher. Modern mentoring does not have such characteristics.

In the Republic of Moldova, research in the field of educational mentoring has evolved significantly since the approval of the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014, which defines the concept of mentor and mentoring and regulated mentoring activity, through Articles 3, 19, 55, 58, and 134 [13]. Since then, research in the field has intensified, analyzing both theoretical and applied aspects. The specialized literature includes scientific articles, academic studies and methodological works that analyze the role of the mentor, the competences required for this role and the impact of mentoring on the professional development of teachers. However, this research is dispersed, and synthetic analyses that provide an overview of the evolution of research in the field are relatively few. In this context, this article aims to analyze the literature on educational mentoring in the Republic of Moldova by applying the PRISMA guidelines, which allows for the rigorous selection of relevant studies and ensures the transparency of the review process.

This integrative review aims to identify and analyze research on educational mentoring conducted in the Republic of Moldova during the period 2014-2025. The review examines the thematic areas addressed in national studies, the methodological approaches used, as well as the main results reported, in order to outline the current state of research in the field and identify relevant directions for future investigations.

Research Methodology

The integrative literature review was conducted in accordance with the recommendations of the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guideline. The identification and analysis of scientific publications related to educational mentoring in the context of the educational system of the Republic of Moldova was carried out in accordance with the PRISMA criteria. The literature search was conducted in two academic databases: Google Scholar and the National Bibliometric Instrument (IBN). In both databases, several search queries in Romanian, English and Russian were used. In Google Scholar, we applied queries such as *"mentorat educațional Moldova", ("educational mentoring" OR "teacher mentoring" OR "mentorat educațional") AND (Moldova OR "Republic of Moldova"), "intitle: mentoring Moldova education",* as well as *"наставничество образование Молдова"*. The advanced search option was also used to identify studies published in the period 2014-2025. To complete the results, the *Cited by, Related Articles and Bibliographic Lists* of relevant publications were also analyzed.

Through this strategy, 116 publications were identified in Google Scholar and 86 publications in the IBN database, resulting in a total of 202 papers. After merging the results from the two databases, 97 duplicate publications were eliminated, leaving 105 papers for the screening stage. During this stage, the titles and abstracts of the studies were analyzed, and 42 publications were excluded because mentoring was not the primary focus of the research.

Thus, 63 papers were assessed for eligibility through full-text analysis. Following the application of inclusion criteria, 16 papers were excluded, for the following reasons: essay-like or reflective articles without scientific substantiation (n = 2), studies on mentoring conducted or presented at scientific conferences in the Republic of Moldova that analyzed the specifics of mentoring in other countries (n = 5), and papers on mentoring in other professional fields, such as social work, medicine or entrepreneurship (n = 9). Finally, 47 studies were included in the systematic literature review. The PRISMA diagram illustrated the study selection process for the integrative review.

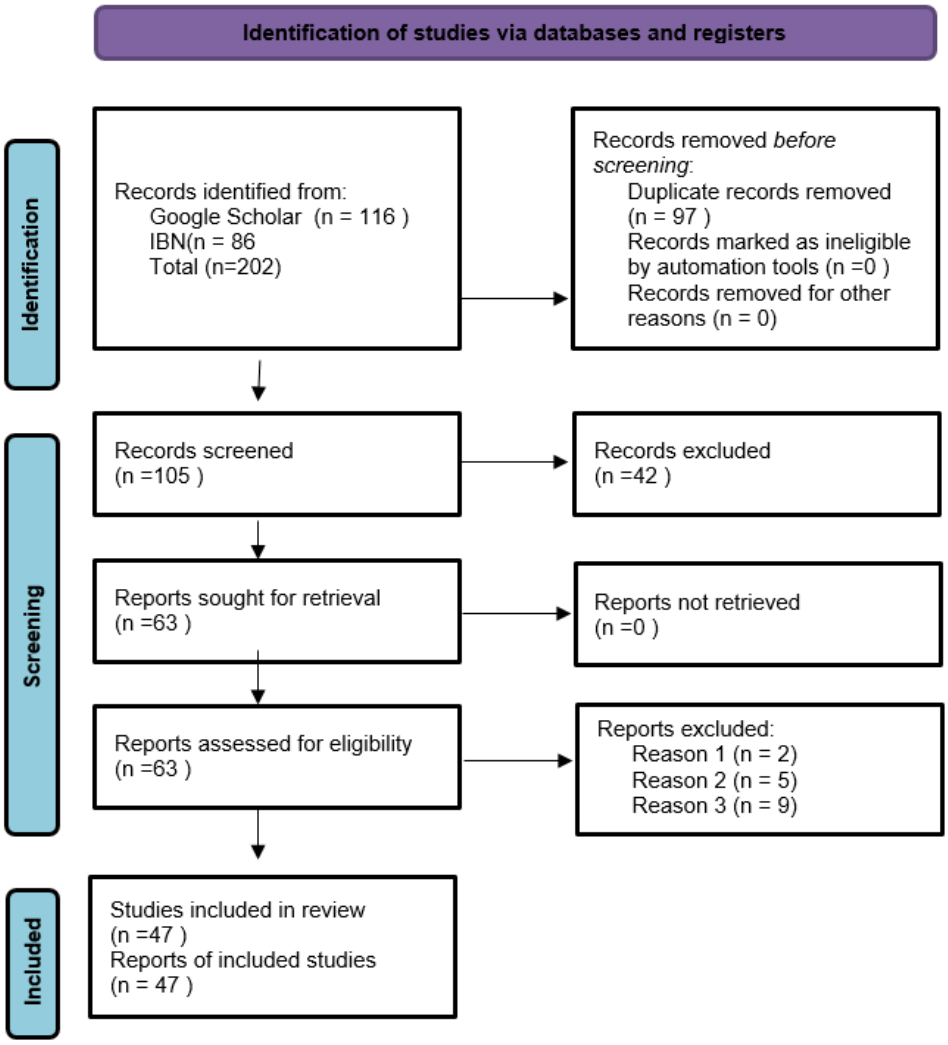


Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram

The studies included in the final sample (n = 47) are presented in *Appendix 1.* For each publication, the year of publication, type of publication, research objective, methodological approach used and main results were recorded. The main characteristics of the reviewed studies are presented in the following section.

Results of Integrative Review

a. *Dynamics of Studies' Publication*

The analysis of studies on educational mentoring in the Republic of Moldova shows a fluctuating trend in scientific interest over the period 2014-2025. The dynamics of study publication highlights two moments of significant intensification of research. The first peak, recorded in 2016, can be interpreted as a response of the academic community to the introduction of concept of mentoring in the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 152/2014 [13], which established the legal framework for the development of mentoring activities in the educational system. For the first time, mentoring was explicitly included in the national regulatory framework, which contributed to the increase in interest in the analysis of this phenomenon in the specialized literature. The second peak, recorded in 2024, coincides with the consolidation of institutional and regulatory framework on mentoring in the educational system. During this period, important normative acts were adopted, such as Government Decision No. 807/2023 on the organization and functioning of the Public Institution National Institute for Education and Leadership (NIEL) [6] and Government Decision No. 608/2024 on the approval of the Regulation on mentoring activity [5]. This evolution suggests that research on educational mentoring is influenced by the dynamics of educational policies and reflects the structural changes occurring within the education system of the Republic of Moldova.

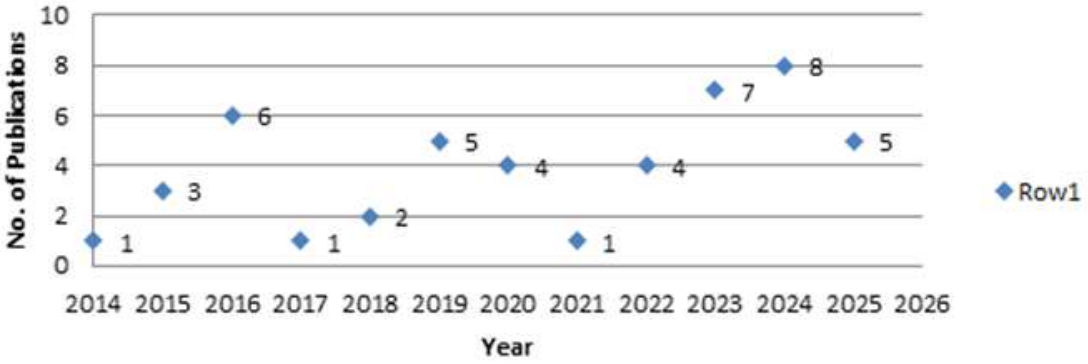


Figure 2. Dynamics of Research in Educational Mentoring Field in 2014-2025 Period

b. ***Typology of Publications***

The analysis of the type of publications highlights the main channels for the dissemination of research on educational mentoring in the Republic of Moldova. Of the total of **47 studies** included in the analysis, **19 (40%)** are articles published in national scientific journals, and **4 (8.5%)** articles were published in international scientific journals. A significant number of studies **(22 - 47%)** are published in **conference proceedings,** which indicates the important role of these academic events in promoting and discussing research results in the field. At the same time, the analysis also identified **a PhD thesis** and **a methodological guide,** which complement the corpus of analyzed studies and reflect the interest in developing theoretical foundations and practical tools regarding educational mentoring. The distribution of publication types suggests that research in the field of educational mentoring is disseminated predominantly in the national academic space and at scientific conferences, while its presence in international journals remains relatively limited.

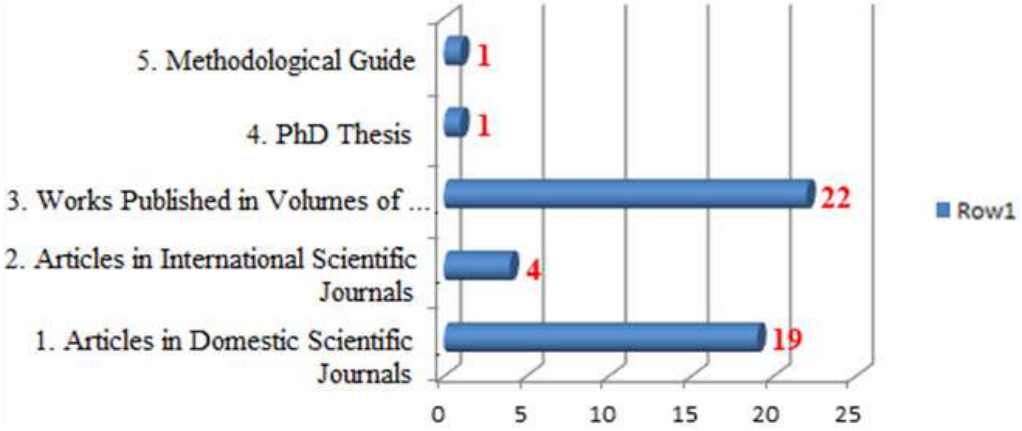


Figure 3. Typology and Number of Publications

c. ***Methodological Approaches***

The analysis of studies included in the integrative review highlights the diversity of methodological approaches used in research on educational mentoring. According to the criterion of research method, the most frequent are qualitative studies (36 – 77%), followed by mixed studies (7- 15%) and quantitative studies (4 – 8.5%).

From the perspective of the research purpose, most studies are explanatory (18 – 38%), followed by descriptive studies (15 – 32%) and exploratory studies (14 – 30%).

The data by year indicate an increase in mixed studies in the period 2022–2024, what suggests a growing interest in the in-depth analysis of the mentoring phenomenon and in understanding the institutional contexts in which it develops. This interest can be explained by the system-wide implementation of mentoring programs, a process coordinated by NIEL. Most of the mixed studies analyzed mainly highlight connections between variables, without validating cause-and-effect relationships. In addition, the unit of measurement is often subjective, based on the perceptions of participants involved in the mentoring process, such

as novice teachers or mentors. This affects the robustness and generalizability of the findings. The implementation of mentoring at the system level is still in its early stages. Mixed and quantitative research on this process is also in its infancy. However, this is not an justify the lack of solid studies; rigorous research can be conducted even in the early stages of a program, providing important evidence for the improvement and development of mentoring.

Compared to the international literature, research from the Republic of Moldova is still empirically limited. The number of studies based on mixed methods or longitudinal analyses is relatively small, which limits the assessment of mentoring's impact of on the professional performance of teachers and on the quality of educational process. In this context, the development of broader research programs and the use of diversified methodological tools could contribute to advancing understanding of the mentoring phenomenon and to the substantiation of evidence-based educational policies.

d. ***Thematic Directions Addressed in Analyzed Studies***

The analysis of research on educational mentoring in the Republic of Moldova shows a clear transition from conceptual concerns to complex and applied approaches. Between 2014 and 2016, studies focused on the theoretical foundation of mentoring. Researchers clarified the concepts of mentor, mentee and mentorship, argued the need for mentoring and highlighted the essential competences of the mentor. During this period, more specific themes began to emerge, such as mentoring for teachers in the context of inclusive education, the development of theoretical models and the introduction of *coaching* concept into discussions about mentoring. These directions reflect the concerns of educational policies of the respective period. Between 2017 and 2019, research was mainly exploratory and explanatory, with a qualitative predominance. Mentoring had not been officially implemented, and studies focused on understanding the phenomenon. Topics covered included the influence of mentoring on internships in higher education, evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring programs, the impact on teacher motivation, student behavior, and competences' development. This stage contributed to building a conceptual framework for mentoring.

The 2020-2022 period highlighted the focus on mentoring for the professional insertion of beginners, including in early childhood education institutions. Studies analyzed mentoring from pedagogical, sociological, and interactionist perspectives. Throughout the 2014-2025 period, approximately 10 research studies dedicated to mentoring beginners were identified, signaling a constant interest in this topic.

Although the 2014 Education Code mentions three types of mentoring – pedagogical practice, professional insertion and continuous professional development – research dedicated to mentoring for professional development appeared only in 2022 and was approached tangentially until 2025. This indicates a later understanding and acceptance of this type of mentoring.

In the period 2023-2025, research became more complex and diversified. Topics targeted mentoring in higher education, mentoring focused on pedagogical reflection, program optimization and the development of methodological guides. Recent studies explored the challenges and solutions for implementing mentoring programs and for continuous professional development, while maintaining attention to the mentoring of beginners. This stage reflects the maturation of the field and the transition from exploratory analyses to interdisciplinary and applicative approaches, aligned with recent reforms and the current educational context.

In conclusion, the analysis of themes highlights a coherent evolutionary path. Initial conceptual concerns were gradually complemented by applied and multidimensional studies. Mentoring of novices remains a central theme throughout the period, while themes related to professional development, mentoring in higher education and pedagogical reflection appear only in recent years, signaling the progressive adaptation of research to new educational contexts and the needs of the education system.

Conclusions and Perspectives for Future Research in Educational Mentoring

The integrative review of the literature on educational mentoring in the Republic of Moldova highlights a progressive evolution of scientific interest in this field during the period 2014–2025. The studies analyzed reflect the gradual development of research, from conceptual and theoretical approaches to applied and interdisciplinary investigations. Significantly, the research covers all three types of mentoring specified in the Education Code: practice mentoring, which supports the initial integration of teachers into the school

environment and the formation of basic competences; mentoring for the professional insertion of novice teachers, which facilitates adaptation, increased autonomy and the development of professional identity; and mentoring for continuous professional development, which supports the consolidation of pedagogical competences and reflection throughout the career. In this way, the literature shows that the field of mentoring is approached from the perspective of both initial support and sustainable professional development.

The research analyzed highlights that mentoring contributes to the development of professional and personal competences, including teaching, managerial, digital and interpersonal skills, as well as to the strengthening of pedagogical reflection and the capacity for self-assessment and planning. Mentoring also supports the professional integration of novice teachers, facilitating adaptation to the institutional environment, increasing motivation and active involvement in the educational process, while methodological support and value-based mentoring contribute to promoting inclusion and reducing aggressive behavior. The impact of mentoring also extends to the organizational level, by supporting a collaborative culture, strengthening communities of practice and increasing the quality of the educational process, while management's involvement, adequate resources and the appropriate regulatory framework remain essential factors for the success of programs.

However, the literature review highlights several important gaps. Most of the existing studies are qualitative or conceptual, and detailed longitudinal and quantitative research is limited. Studies that combine quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive perspective on the impact of mentoring are still few. There is also an imbalance in the types of mentoring studied: novice mentoring receives the most attention, while other forms – continuing professional development mentoring, value-based mentoring, group mentoring or interdisciplinary mentoring – remain underexplored. Research on mentoring of experienced teachers, mentors, management teams or rural and vocational education institutions is also limited.

Based on these observations, future research should focus on developing longitudinal studies that allow for the assessment of mentoring's impact on teachers' professional development and performance in the long term. The use of mixed methods, integrating quantitative and qualitative perspectives, can generate stronger evidence and support the development of standardized instruments for assessing the competences, motivation and impact of mentoring. In addition, future studies should explore different forms of mentoring, including group mentoring, value mentoring, and interdisciplinary mentoring, as well as mentoring of managers and institutional teams, to understand how individual development can support institutional transformation. Investigating diverse contexts, including rural institutions, small schools, and underrepresented communities, will help ensure the equity and relevance of research results.

At the same time, integrating international good practices, adapted to the cultural specificity and level of training of staff and institutions in the Republic of Moldova, can be a valuable direction for future studies. Developing flexible methodological guidelines, continuous evaluation of programs through direct feedback and analysis of institutional data, as well as promoting integrated mentoring and coaching programs, can support the effective application of mentoring at the system level, with an impact on institutional performance, staff retention, and organizational culture.

Overall, the literature review confirms that educational mentoring is an essential strategic mechanism for the professional development of teachers and for the modernization of education system. Strengthening empirical research and implementing well-founded institutional programs can valorize the potential of this tool, contributing to increasing the quality of education and the sustainable development of the school system in the Republic of Moldova.

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Appendix 1. List of Works Included in Integrative Review of Educational Mentoring

No.	Author	Year	Title
1	Antoci, D., Mislitchi, V., Diacon, M.	2020	Mentoring valorization in combating violent and aggressive behavior in preadolescence and adolescence
2	Andrițchi, V., Balan, T.	2015	Theoretical approaches to mentoring from the perspective of professional development
3	Andrițchi, V., Șova, T.	2025	International and national models and practices in the field of mentoring
4	Armașu-Cantîr, L., Kichuk, N., Ivanova, D.	2024	Mentoring in teaching education
5	Axinte, R.	2017	Career and professional success through mentoring
6	Balan, T.	2015	Historical evolution of mentoring in education
7	Balan, T.	2015	Mentoring for professional development – a perspective for implementing educational reforms in the Republic of Moldova

No.	Author	Year	Title
8	Balan, T.	2016	Peculiarities of valorization of mentoring in the professional development of the teaching staff
9	Balan, T.	2016	System of specific mentor competences for the professional development of teachers
10	Balan, T., Andrițchi, V.	2015	Psychological benchmarks of mentoring activity in the context of professional development
11	Botnari, I.	2016	Role of mentoring in the professional development of teachers
12	Caluțchi, D.	2024	Continuous training of novice teachers in early education institutions
13	Cara, A., Lungu, T.	2016	Mentoring activities implemented within the project "Integration of children with disabilities in mainstream schools"
14	Carauș, I.	2018	Determinants of the effectiveness of internship
15	Cazacu, L.	2023	Mentoring activity in early education - challenges and solutions
16	Cazacu, L.	2024	Experimental benchmarks of mentoring activity in the opinion of teachers from early childhood education institutions
17	Cazacu, L.	2025	Trends in continuous professional development of teachers in preschool education through mentoring activity
18	Cebanu (Slutu), L.	2020	Ways of professional integration of novice teachers in the educational process
19	Cebanu (Slutu), L.	2020	Psychopedagogical benchmarks for professional integration of novice teachers in general education institutions from the perspective of mentoring activity
20	Cebanu (Slutu), L., Baraliuc, N.	2019	Mentoring - a way of training and professional integration of teachers in early childhood education institutions
21	Cebanu (Slutu), L., Robuleț, A.	2025	Mentoring - a way of professional integration of teachers in the educational process
22	Cebanu, L., Cazacu, L.	2024	Educational mentoring: methodological guide
23	Chepyshko, O.	2023	Continuing education and professional development of teachers in the "teacher–teacher" mentoring model
24	Coceaș, S.	2023	Methodists – mentors in the process of certification of teaching and managerial staff
25	Corlade, E.-I.	2018	Educational mentoring between theory and practice
26	Dandara, O., Gogoi, E.	2024	Premises and context for carrying out mentoring activities in higher education
27	Daraban, L.	2019	Concept of mentoring and its promotion in general education institutions
28	Daraban, L.	2019	Motivating teachers for professional development through mentoring activities in general education institutions
29	Dombrovschi, L., Shishcan, Z.	2024	Using benchmarking as a strategic tool in the implementation of mentoring programmes
30	Eremia, E.	2022	Aspects of promoting professional insertion mentoring in early education institutions
31	Garbatovschi, V.	2022	Integration of the novice teacher into the teaching team
32	Gherștega, T., Perliman, V.	2022	Conceptual boundaries and typology of mentoring for professionalization of teaching career
33	Gherștega, T., Perliman, V.	2023	Developing the professionalization path of teachers through mentoring activities
34	Gogoi, E.	2020	Mentoring engineering students

No.	Author	Year	Title
35	Gogoi, E.	2023	Professional development of teachers through mentoring activities
36	Gogoi, E., Dandara, O.	2023	Academic mentoring in engineering education – a mechanism for updating the teaching approach
37	Gogoi, E., Lozovanu, E.	2023	Conceptual reframing of the socialization process from the mentoring activity perspective
38	Goraș, M.	2024	Approaches to psychological and social aspects of professional adaptation
39	Ianioglo, M.	2020	Mentoring in the context of teaching activity
40	Rusov, V.	2026	Educational mentoring as a framework for reflection on progress in teaching the Romanian language
41	Simion, D.	2017	Coaching or educational mentoring in the higher education system
42	Şova, T., Andriţchi, V.	2025	Pedagogical reflection in the conditions of modern mentoring
43	Şova, T., Balan, A.	2025	Mentoring in education – priority of the modern school
44	Tabarcea, A., Rusov, V.	2016	Role of mentoring in the development of inclusive preschool institutions
45	Toma, M.	2024	Connection between continuous professional development and mentoring of teachers in the field of inclusive education
46	Ţurcanu, L.	2018	Mentoring – institutional option in the development of teachers
47	Verdeş, T.	2025	Mentoring in education in the Republic of Moldova: realities, challenges and development directions

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