EU Education of Fluency Specialists
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Overview
• Background & rationale
• Goals
• Project management
• Harmonization core BA/Ma courses
• Development specialization course
• Specialization course
• EU, participant & external review
• Current development & future goals

Background
• Evolution in the field of SLT
  Broadening of SLT field
  More specialized knowledge available
• Specifically for fluency disorders
  ASHA 2001 Omnibus Survey: SLT caseload
    For SLT in all settings combined, 65% see fluency cases
    45% voice
    27% aphasia
  For SLT in school setting, 78% report to see fluency cases.
  => stuttering is a disorder that SLTs commonly treat
  BUT Absolute numbers of individuals seen for a specific disorder:
  fluency: absolute lowest of all conditions that SLTs treat: 2.4%
  (Bernstein-Ratner 2006)

Background: EU specific
• Bologna declaration (European Higher Education Area; Bologna, 1999)
  1. System of easily readable and comparable degrees
  2. HE: 2 cycles: undergraduate (3Y., >employment) & graduate (Ma. or PhD.)
  3. Credit system (ECTS) to ensure student mobility
  4. Student mobility and free movement shall be promoted.
  5. European co-operation in quality assurance shall be established.
  6. European dimension (curricula, interinstitutional co-operation, and
     student/teachers mobility schemes)
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Goals ECSF- project

- 8>10 partners in 5>7 EU countries
  - Belgium: Lessius U College, U of Leuven, U College Bruges, Artevelde U College
  - Finland: U of Oulu
  - Germany: RWTH & U Clinic Aachen
  - Ireland: Trinity College Dublin
  - Italy: U of Napoli
  - Sweden: U of Goteborg

  - Goals:
    - Harmonize fluency courses in curricula (BSc) with individual differences
    - Development of a clinical specialization course

Project management

- Structure: Steering committee
  - Workgroups

  - 2y development phase
    - 8 two-day general meetings: preparation, discussion, development
    - 3 two-day steering committee meetings: in between evaluation & steering measures
    - 8 between subgroup meetings & development of work packages/ course content
    - 8 Evaluation: Students, EU commission, external specialist evaluator

  - Steps
    - Acquaintance with partner’s curricula: learning outcomes: knowledge, skills & competencies
    - Core course: Unified learning outcomes (based on professional, CPOL, & IAPL profiles)
    - Specialization course: Unified course

Harmonization core BA/MA courses

- Uniform competencies & learning outcomes
  - Specific competencies for: Prevention / Assessment / Intervention
  - Defined minimal body of knowledge, initial therapeutic skills, attitudes
  - Auxiliary courses

- Minimal amount of credits: 5 ECTS (=125-150h. overall study time)

- Overarching e-platform
  - All courses on joint e-platform, accessible to all BA/MA students
  - Joint discussion platforms for students
  - Future possibilities for joint exercises, research projects, ...

- Clinical internship
  - Not defined (institute or country specific limitations)
  - Through guaranteed through unified competencies
Development specialization course

- Search for:
  - optimal learning environment
  - compatibility with current SLT workload
  - cost-efficient
  - optimal student recruitment

- Needed to include:
  - lecturing + self-study
  - clinical internship
  - evaluation

- Different possible models:
  - Model 1: Uniform course taught at all participating institutes: pros-cons
  - Model 2: One period of intensive lecturing (e.g., 2-3 weeks) at location X, followed by clinical internship: pros-cons
  - Model 3: Several periods of intensive lecturing at different locations with simultaneous clinical internship: pros-cons

Development specialization course

- Model 3:
  - 2 intensive weeks at 2 different locations
  - In-between home-follow-up sessions
  - Clinical internship to start after week 1: observation + documented therapy
  - Evaluation system that best assesses acquired competencies
  - Several therapeutic models

Specialization course (ECSF)

- Content: defined competencies, enhanced proficiency, extra competencies, learning outcomes

- Knowledge & skills: in-depth, extra, international fluency experts

Specialization course (ECSF)

- Specialized clinical training under supervision of a fluency specialist
- min. 120 h. (max 20 observation)

- External mentor:
  - senor professional (or peer mentoring)
  - after formal approval (criteria)
  - min. 8 sessions

- ECSF-coach:
  - guiding & scaffolding of learning process
  - portfolio follow up & evaluation
  - min. 4 sessions
  - oral case presentations during final session

- E-learning platform

Specialization course (ECSF)

- Preparatory reading
- Home & group assignments: Critical reviews, Papers

- Portfolio
  - Objectives:
    - taking responsibility for learning process & demonstrating progress
    - taking control of learning through reflection, planning and execution
    - demonstration of acquired necessary competencies
  - Content:
    - a complete overview of the specialization process
    - 2 case studies + evidence (forms, questionnaires, therapy reports, videos,…)
    - written reports of reflection activities
    - report of the mentor (grandfathering)
    - continuous evaluation reports
EU, participant and external review

- EU commission: "a very well performed and managed project where all planned outcomes are being fulfilled"
- Participants:
  - Overall session formats: all averaged 'very good' to 'excellent'
  - Practical & useful information:
  - Lecturer's ability to present information:
  - Overall course evaluation:
  - Working points: 'long lecturing days', timely feedback, ...
- ASHA fluency specialist
  - Very suitable pedagogical approach
  - More referencing for some topics
  - Redundancies in some of the lectures, readings
  - To add: How to deal with new/controversial Tx, neurogenic stuttering...
  - Overall: "It is simply a miracle to see the level of organization, content and commitment that has gone into this effort."

Current Development & goals

- Partnerships with other EU universities:
  - U of Oulu Finland
  - Utrecht U of Applied Sciences The Netherlands
- Partnerships with EU representative organizations both for clinicians and for clients
  - Sept. '08 & March '09: preparatory meetings with future partners
  - CPLOC: Standing Liaison Committee of Speech and Language Therapists
  - ELSA: European League of Stuttering Associations
  - To ensure that PWS are involved as consultants, advisors...
  - To increase involvement of interested parties from universities around Europe (or broader)
  - To develop content in light of research

Current Development & goals

- To invite evaluations from outside groups
- Setup of follow up system of continuing education of graduates
- Possibly future recognition of EU fluency specialists
- Biennial EU symposium on Fluency Disorders

Q&A

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