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STUDENTS



THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY



Newsletter

International Association of Applied Psychology Students Division

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EDITORIAL

Dear colleagues,

Well, four months have gone by since division 15 published the very first issue of its newsletter. This means that its time to go on with the next one, right? I believe we are all very excited with the work we are doing for students all over the world. I am very pleased that in this issue students from different countries made their contributions regarding very different topics. As you can see, this issue contains also two scientific articles, one about e-therapy and the other one about non-formal education. Besides, in this issue you can also find articles about travel network, common framework for psychological education in Europe, as well as an article about first experiences in teaching psychology.

Finally, I would also like to take advantage of this opportunity to remind you of our third and fourth issues. The third one is planned for July and the fourth one for October. So, keep these dates in mind and write something you want to share with all our members. I am really looking forward to read your contributions.

Kristina Potocnik, editor

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

Pedro Neves, President of Students Division

Dear colleagues,

Our student division has been growing since its creation. Growing not only in the number of affiliated members, but also in the number and type of activities we offer. We have been trying to reach students throughout a number of activities.

We are preparing activities for several international congresses that will take place during this year (e.g. 19th European Congress of Psychology Students, 30th Interamerican Congress of Psychology, 9th European Congress of Psychology), with the purpose of not only increasing the number of members but also to enhance the international ties that help us do more and better.

Another example is our newsletter, which has its second issue out now. We hope you find our articles interesting and appealing. Plus, we are counting on you to help us make it more and more attractive. How can we do this? Send us news from your region. Help us promote what has been happening in your country, in your part of the world. Those news will help us have a broader view of what has been done in psychology, thus helping applied psychology to become more global.

In the meantime, have a nice time reading our articles...

European Diploma in Psychology: a common framework for psychology education in Europe

European Diploma in Psychology represents a system of standards for the education and training of professional psychologists in Europe. This goal is conducted on the initiative of European Union (EU) and European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) for greater mobility of professionals across Europe. Also the EuroPsy project team was established to develop the contents of this diploma.

The project in general proposes a common framework for training and education of psychologists in Europe, divided in three phases. The first phase (duration of 3 years) offers a basic education in all of the psychology areas, more precisely, in the major psychology theories and techniques. The second phase (duration of 2 years) prepares the student for the independent professional practice in the field of psychology. In this phase the student also has to show the capacity to acquire skills in research. The last phase consists of one year of supervised practice within a particular area of professional psychology. Altogether, the university curriculum should last at least for 5 years (300 ECTS) and the duration for supervised practice should be at least 1 year.

To sum up, in the first phase the project team had considered both 'input' (curriculum) and 'output' (competence) approaches to develop proposed common framework. On the other hand, in the second phase the project team has elaborated this common framework, consulted on it, and prepared a plan to implement it.

In general, current psychology students and graduates as well as future psychology students and psychologists, already working, will benefit from the proposed EDP, which will have impact on student mobility as well as on psychologists' mobility in Europe, on university level teaching, and on employers who will benefit from higher standards of training and competence. Besides, one of the most important benefits of the EDP refers to more work opportunities. Namely, psychologists holding an EDP will have more work opportunities compared to psychologists holding only national diploma.

For more information about the EDP, please visit:
www.europsych.org.

Kristina Potocnik

Travel Network, a new way of travel for psychology students

Once a great idea, today we are proud to say that it is accomplished - the travel network service defining itself as a habitual instrument of psychology students to travel all over Europe. More precisely, travel network (TN) is a service, which helps European psychology students while travelling around Europe for exchange of offering their homes to others psychology students. TN has 28 countries (Spain, Slovenia, Switzerland, Poland, France, Estonia, Germany, Denmark...) with more than 300 places to sleep in many cities all over Europe.



The TN service is coordinated by Triin Ulla and Nikola Babic, Executive Board (EB) members of EFPSA. The idea of TN was born at the EB meeting of EFPSA (European Federation of Psychology Students' Association), taking place in Belgium in 2003. However, the service was presented as such at the last European congress of psychology students, which took place in Kopaonik (Serbia and Montenegro). The main topic of this congress was "Communication", and precisely communication is one of the fundamental pillars of our society, which as a matter of fact is also one of the main aims of the travel network; the communication and exchanges between students from different countries.

Travel Network is totally free of charged and financed by the EFPSA. TN is one of the principal services of this federation along with research network, study and work abroad and activities services. EFPSA links almost all national psychology students' associations in Europe, promoting the interests of approximately 300.000 psychology students.

It is very easy to become a member of TN. The first and the most important requirement is to be a psychology student and to be keen of travelling. The first step is to go to the website of the service (www.efpsa-travel.net), and then follow the given steps. You see, it is very easy to use! Besides, in some minutes you have the possibility to plan your trips or exchanges in other European countries; only with one mouse click you have an opportunity to contact the potential hosts.

Many European psychology students use the Travel Network while travelling around Europe. Here we summarize the experiences (from the TN visit book) of two TN members:

Alexandre Peyre from PARIS, France has been visited by Piret Rebassoo, Estonia.

Thank you Alexander, for your warm hospitality and for finding time for us even when you were very busy! Thank you for the room and the bed and the wonderful view! Thank you for the excursion in Paris V psych department and lunch in Resto U! Thank you for your patience, I hope it wasn't too annoying, that we, Estonians, like to sing so much ;) Hope to see you again one day, you're welcome -9in Tartu anytime! – quatre estoniennes

Angel Barrasa from Madrid, Spain has been visited by Marija Sulajkovski, Serbia and Montenegro

Well, since I've been to Spain two times at once :) because my flight was canceled and I had an extra day in Madrid, I can say that I enjoyed both of my stayings with Angel and the other companeros - Kristina, Samuel, Juanjo, Banesa, Sonsoles, Maite, Karlos... very much! I just love the weather in Madrid in December, and there is so much to see (don't miss the Retiro Park with the statue of the devil on the one side and a romantic lake on the other) so I'm pretty sure that I'll be coming back again very soon for a longer staying this time. And Angel is a wonderful host, with a lovely apartment where you can listen to music while taking a shower. He will cook for you whatever you want, as long as it is something from the fridge :) and make you eat and drink until you burst (so, be prepared) :) And he introduced me to the VIP of his university and made me feel very welcomed and important... In a word – what a guy! :)

Without no doubt TN might be considered as one way and one step more towards the future integration of European countries.

Further information at:

www.efpsa-travel.net

www.efpsa.org

www.cep-pie.org

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Applied psychology in the classroom... a first hand experience

It seems that it was yesterday that I was going to my undergraduate classes, listening to all the teachers (the good and the bad ones), choosing the lectures I would attend and the ones I would never step foot in... those days when I looked at some teachers and thought “wow, so this is what psychology is all about” or, on the other hand “I hope I will never be like this”... the days of doubts and choices – what to do, which area to choose, which classes to go to, which teacher to be my mentor, which party to attend to – that somehow made me what I am today, the best and the worst of me.

So, one of these days, I found myself on the other side... although still a student (graduate though) I am now lecturing undergraduate students at university. It is strange to suddenly change positions, especially when you still think about the time you spent sitting on the other chair.

This is something I always wanted to do. It was a dream comes true.

But of course, like all things in life, it has its downsides. Not everybody likes the subject you are teaching (which makes you invent something every week to attract them), not everybody is still awake at 6 p.m. after having classes since 10 in the morning, not everybody participates actively in class and so on...

All this to tell you an experience some students of mine did a couple of weeks ago. Imagine a class with 20 students. Usually 5 or 6 of them participate, ask questions, and raise doubts about the exercises and subjects we are talking about. This group makes the class very active (the others are not necessarily sleeping, but nodding, taking notes, paying attention and once in a while complementing what the others said) and all exercises we make (and there are quite a few) raise a lot of discussion and we spend quite some time working on them...

Now imagine you handout a case with some questions they have to answer in groups. After some time, you open the discussion on the case and you find... silence. So you ask again and again and some students make some brief comments and stand quiet. So you try to put the questions in a different manner, you try to use other examples from real life to see what happens... and once again you find... silence. This silence comes with the usual nods and notes, so you see they are all paying attention but just not speaking.

This is when you start wondering “are they sleepy because of lunch?”, “did I do something wrong and they decided to do some passive resistance?”... so you ask them what is happening and they just say nothing, nothing.

This went on for one hour.

As the class was going on (and obviously I was running out of solutions...) I noticed that all the members of the group that usually participated more were whispering and laughing... so I thought everybody was definitely loosing their minds.

When the class was finished, that group of students came up to me and asked if they could have a private talk with me. Getting stranger and stranger I thought... sure. So they came up to me and asked me if I noticed that they didn't participate during class (it was quite obvious...) and explained why that happened. They were trying to find out who were usually the class dynamizers so they all decided not to participate during one class and see the effect. Now that they knew the effect of it they were happy. "It was just a little experiment we had in mind"... I couldn't help smiling.

The week after classes went smoothly as usual and participation went back to normal... the experiment was over.

Pedro Neves

Domesticating e-Therapy

It is undeniable that Internet has metamorphosed various aspects of our life-styles, from booking a flight to arranging a romantic rendezvous with a cyber-acquaintance. Naturally, psychology is not escaping this all-encompassing trend. Yet, this movement encounters the reluctance of its most prominent actors: psychologists themselves and apparently also their younger congeners. Having conducted several focus groups investigating psychology students' attitude towards e-therapy (Ginestet, 2003), I discovered a high level of rejection against online counselling. The latter was readily stigmatised as 'fast-food counselling' or a 'prostitution of the art'. It was even suggested that these developments could lead to the emergence of 'counselling via phone-messages'.

Such acerbic criticisms are, however, comprehensible. The e-revolution is jeopardising the traditional communicative framework supposedly necessary to any client-therapist relationship. In parallel, the lack of evidence supporting the efficiency of e-therapeutic interventions have led many psychology scholars to erect barricades against such developments (Barak, 1999). At the heart of these controversies lie the risks posed by the growing number of 'quacks', who are offering unprofessional psychological services. Albeit chartered psychologists are also represented in a large proportion on the Internet, patients are currently not sufficiently informed to distinguish the genuine e-therapist from the impostor.

This is why some web-sites are providing consumer advice (www.metanoia.com). However, one should not reduce the crux of the debate to the proper dissemination of information to potential customers. Indeed, being a chartered counsellor may not constitute a sufficient qualification to offer online services. The latter encompass several ethical and methodological idiosyncrasies, which are not included in the current counselling syllabi. It will therefore be argued that universities bear the bulk of the responsibilities of, if not regulating e-therapy, at least monitoring its inexorable expansion.

Is this psychotherapy?

As it has been often said of psychology, online therapy seems to have 'a long past but a short history' (Ebbinghaus, 1885). Ever since the invention of writing, correspondence has constituted a suitable vehicle for formal and informal forms of psychotherapy (Skinner, 2001). In fact, changes in means of communication rarely translate into changes in practice. A reluctance to accept new channels of communication as valid vehicles of what is usually understood as 'communication' is, however, a natural reaction of a body of practice. Such evolutions could indeed mean that psychologists' traditional ways of operating are facing obsolescence. As Foucault (1969) conceptualised, novel technologies change our *experience* of communication. But does this necessarily imply that the *functions* of communication are radically different? Indeed, E-mail and Internet chat-rooms have demonstrated that regardless of the nature of the medium, the content of conversation remains overly similar (Weinberg, 2001).

Most of the criticisms directed towards E-therapy gravitate around the fact that e-therapy challenges the three basic premises supposedly indispensable to any therapeutic relationship (Fenichel et al, 2002): visible (face-to-face) contact, synchronous (real time) interaction and talking. One of the few cast-iron facts in psychology is that language represents only 30% of communication, whereas non-verbal cues account for the remaining 70% (Atkinson, et al., 2000). Even if various techniques (e.g. asterisks, trailers, parenthetical emotions, colours, fonts...etc) have been developed by Internet users in order to convey the richness of human communication (Fenichel et al., 2002), such techniques do not hold the comparison with their face-to-face equivalents.

Additionally, sceptics are also voicing serious doubts against the efficiency of e-therapy. It is generally argued that online therapy may be more addictive than curative. The investigation of electronic addiction has evidenced a high correlation between the utilisation of the Internet and a lack of social skills (Griffiths, 1999). However, such a relationship is merely suggestive and not conclusive. This is reminiscent of the chicken and egg dilemma. If these two variables are connected, e-therapy could reveal itself a very useful means of reaching populations in needs of psychological intervention. On the other hand, if online interactions detrimentally affect social skills, online counselling might aggravate this trend. This is why one should delineate the contours of this novel discipline in order to exert an informed control over it.

Ethics and e-therapy

The provision of online counselling detaches itself from traditional therapeutic interventions by its lack of ethical framework. Albeit e-therapy engenders multiple problems of confidentiality and client's safety, its rules are yet to be written. The International Society for Mental Health Online (www.ismho.org) suggests a set of ethical principles for the online provision of mental health services. Counsellors should be able to provide their official name, qualifications and how to confirm these details (e.g. telephone numbers and web page URLs of the relevant institutions). Additionally, clients should be informed about all the possible risks and the potential benefits of such services. Safeguards aiming at protecting the anonymity of the client should also be explicitly specified as well as the relevant means of achieving and maintaining such privacy (e.g. encryption). Finally, the client should be presented with all the possible alternatives to psychotherapy.

Currently, there is no standardisation of the amount of training and experience necessary to practice as an e-therapist. On one hand, certain e-practitioners urge psychotherapists to be experienced in traditional counselling prior to plunge into online service provision (Fenichel et al, 2002). On the other hand, some therapists emphasise the numerous idiosyncrasies of e-therapy and argue that face-to-face experience might not be transferable to screen-to-screen relationships (Hsiung, 2002). The total reliance on verbal cues could potentially confuse psychotherapists, who are dependent on body language as a diagnostic criterion.

As with other social practices such as the use of cannabis or the commercialisation of sexual services, e-therapy poses the recurrent problem of regulating an already existing phenomenon. Here, two options are open to the legislator. Either one utilises repression as a means of regulation, or legalises the practice in order to offer a controlled and secure alternative. In the case of e-therapy, however, an absence of geographical location hinders the utilisation of repressive measures. Numerous attempts to control e-activities have already proven their limitations. The proliferation of paedophilic web-sites has not been prevented, for instance.

Hence, we are left with the second option, namely to accept and regulate the offer of online therapeutic services. Naturally, such an innovation would contradict the ethical duty of providing evidence-based therapeutic services. However, debates regarding whether or not e-therapy is in fact therapeutic are petering out as this type of intervention is already widely used by the population (Laszlo, Esterman, & Zabko, 1999; Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, 1999; www.samaritans.org.uk). Taking a pro-active stand therefore necessitates facing the impossibility of harnessing such developments. Psychologists must tighten their grip on the e-revolution, and universities may constitute the most appropriate arena to organise those changes.

Universities as service providers

Empirical evidence shows that delivering online services necessitates unique competencies (Fenichel et al., 2002; Barak, 1999) (Table 1). Albeit some English and European universities have integrated e-therapy as a module, Griffiths (2001) also heralded the need to follow the current American trend where e-therapy graduate programmes are emerging.

Table 1: Required Therapist Skills for Effective Online Communication (adapted from Fenichel et al., 2002).

- ◇ Training/expertise as a mental health professional, with a theoretical base to draw upon
- ◇ Fast or touch-typing
- ◇ Comfort with Internet modalities and software programmes
- ◇ Tolerance for computer glitches
- ◇ Ability to receive, store, and protect communications from clients
- ◇ Expressive writing and familiarity with other available visual cues
- ◇ Awareness of how others perceive therapists online
- ◇ Experience with online relationships
- ◇ Love of being online

A timely and promising lead, regarding the collaboration between European universities and service providers, has been championed by the Estonian Psychology Students' Association, which created a website proposing cybertherapy, where more than 8,000 e-mails have been exchanged during the first year (www.lahendus.net). More than just an efficient service provider, this student association has successfully threaded together the university pool of students eager to learn through practice and the needs of the local residents. The major strength of this programme is its capacity to fulfil three needs at once. While promoting the use of e-therapy among the local and isolated population, it also provides practical experience to students under the supervision of professional counsellors and continuously gathers data for further research.

Nonetheless, this *tour de force* only constitutes the beginning of a bountiful project, which could benefit all European students. In collaboration with the European Federation of Psychology Students' Association (EFPSA), the Lahendus website may become a steppingstone to aid other European universities establishing similar graduate programmes. This, in turn, could lead to the creation of a common 'European e-therapy' qualification, whereby universities would play a key-role as service providers.

Conclusion

Despite the urging needs for the inclusion of e-therapy in universities' programmes, one should not throw the baby out with the bath water. e-Therapy is unlikely to eradicate traditional psychotherapy and, in all cases, this is not its purpose.

However, the current lack of Internet regulations creates a professional vacuum, which, if left unoccupied, would allow unqualified charlatans to establish themselves, as it is currently occurring. The elevation of e-therapy to graduate status may therefore constitute the sole alternative to such chaotic developments. The success of the aforementioned European project could act as an impetus to incorporate e-therapy courses within counselling curricula. Yet, such adaptations would necessitate a shift in universities' mission statements, as such training, to be efficient, would require the provision of university-based e-therapeutic services. Most of the Internet developments are indeed believed to be provider-driven (Perron, 2002). Albeit the amplitude of the ethical issues and the very nature of the medium do not facilitate such adaptations, the provision of university-based e-therapy nevertheless represents a lesser evil than the pervasion of unregulated e-counselling.

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A pathway for discovery under the label of non-formal education

N*on-formal education* is defined as any organized educational activity outside the established formal system whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives. (Coombs, Prosser, & Ahmed, 1973). Therefore, non-formal education is linked with community groups and other organizations despite formal education that is linked with schools and training institutions and informal education which is linked to interactions with friends, family and work colleagues. The distinction made between them is largely administrative.

Non-formal education became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It can be seen as related to the concepts of recurrent and lifelong learning. Tight (1996, p. 68) suggests that whereas the latter concepts have to do with the extension of education and learning throughout life, non-formal education is about 'acknowledging the importance of education, learning and training which takes place outside Recognized educational institutions'. Fordham (1993) suggests that in the 1970s, four characteristics came to be associated with nonformal education:

- Relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups.
- Concern with specific categories of person.
- A focus on clearly defined purposes.
- Flexibility in organization and methods.

In many northern countries the notion of non-formal education is not common in internal policy debates - preferred alternatives being community education and community learning, informal education and social pedagogy.

Benefits of the "non-formal education"

The non-formal education provides many aspects of cultural learning. It creates active learning environment, that no teacher could ask for better. The organization of non-formal schools is based on democratic principles

in decision making processes, so that's why it is recommend it to anyone who looks at learning as a lifelong pursuit. Non-formal schools are place where a lot of interesting, nice, outgoing, easy-to-talk-to people can be met. It is a place where great friends can be made – which may be the best part of all. There is a live discussion on different issues about the world around – about what happened before, what is happening today, where things are going and about differences. As the discussion among participants expands and their individual knowledge and self-world expands. They share different values, ideas and philosophies and in the same moment they create new (common) ones. New perspectives are discovered about people, society, institutions, traditions, objects and about others everyday routine of life. From all this participants of this schools gather a great experience through mutual dialogue. Actually, perhaps that is the primary aim of the college. It is a unique possibility to start down a path of lifelong learning – learning that will travel with you to any destination and through any career or life style change.

About the topic, there is a need to emphasize common issues. This can be seen as one of the ways to locate problems that could occur in the years that follow. Also another benefits that can be achieved is the accent of the common approach on finding possible solutions which will result with building close connections between activists, organizations and groups that are doing good things for the society and the culture. Described as above, the non-formal education becomes an eye-opener, and starts to serve as a new different pathfinder that creates knowledge through teaching and transparent dialogue.

Contrasts between “formal” and “non-formal” programmes

Simkins (1976) analysed non-formal education programme in terms of purposes, timing, content delivery systems and control, and contrasted these with formal educational programmes. The resulting ideal-types provide a useful framework - and bring out the extent to which non-formal education initiatives, while emphasizing flexibility, localness and responsiveness remain located within a curricula of education (in contrast with those forms driven by conversation).

Conclusion

The notion of non-formal education has been a significant feature of policy debates around education. It has drawn attention to the importance and potential of education, learning and training that takes place outside recognized educational institutions. There are questions about usefulness of the notion when looking at the process of education.

Educational curricula and policies have concentrated on narrow definitions of politics (especially as state-related). Recently, social scientists have stressed work and civil society as domains of life-experience, and explored links between traditional forms of political participation and the personal, private domain. Learning theorists also have emphasised 'situational' or 'contextual' influences on learning. However, the implications of such perspectives for learning have been little explored.

The output of the non-formal education is to equip adults with attitudes, skills and behavioural patterns which will enable them to participate actively as equal citizens in the “Global Village”, and also to conduct tasks that will identify and develop frameworks which will be used in planning educational interventions.

Today education suffers from many diseases. In this conditions, when education is faced with strong task to built cosmopolitan community which will positively and constructively meet the challenges of global complexity and interconnectedness, a hidden doubt occurs between the choice of “formal” or “nonformal” education.

Concerning this doubt between formal and non-formal education there is a simple solution that exists in shadow. It’s a well-known fact that every medallion has two sides, good and bad, so we should make advantage of this and use the good sides. So that’s why I think it’s important to have balance in life and to combine these two ways of education because that’s the only way to top-notch education.

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