Strengths and weaknesses of an Evidence-Based Practice course focused on information literacy

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Context

• To restructure the curriculum in Speech Therapy at the University of Liège (Belgium)

• To provide a competence-based approach
  ▫ List of 5 competencies (Maillart et al., 2010)
    • Develop the expertise required in order to provide quality speech therapy services for each patient and for the community

⇒ New educational activities
Evidence-Based Practice course

Evidence-Based Medicine

“The conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients.” (Sackett et al., 1996)

- Focused on information literacy
  - Essential first steps in Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)

- Targeted audience
  - 4th year students (47 students in 2011-2012)
Objectives of this course

- At the end of instruction, students should be able to:
  - describe the basic principles of EBP
  - formulate an answerable clinical question
  - search and select relevant literature in bibliographic databases
  - critically appraise selected articles
  - argue for or against a particular therapy for the patient, based on evidence from the literature
# Course framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; class</th>
<th>Group work</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; class</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; class</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to EBP</td>
<td>• To formulate a question</td>
<td>• Oral presentation (20 mins / group)</td>
<td>• Consolidation session on PC (1h 30)</td>
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<td>• Reminder about information literacy</td>
<td>• To search for evidence</td>
<td>• Discussion with teachers (10 mins)</td>
<td>• Individual exercises (30 mins)</td>
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<td>• Instructions</td>
<td>• To argue for or against a treatment</td>
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<td>• Help &amp; Forum</td>
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<td>Evaluation :</td>
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<td>90% +</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Learning and teaching assessment

- Fresno Test (Ramos et al., 2003)
  - Translated into French
  - Adapted to speech therapy context
  - Limited to the first 7 questions (out of 12)

- Satisfaction survey

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st class</th>
<th>Group work</th>
<th>2nd class</th>
<th>3rd class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fresno (pre-test) (n=47)</td>
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<td>Fresno (post-test) (n=47)</td>
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<td>Satsis. survey (n=36)</td>
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Strengths of the course (1)

- Students’ point of view
  - Improved skills in information searching
  - Integration of different learnings
  - Perceived usefulness during
    - The curriculum (100%)
    - Future professional life (83%)
Strengths of the course (2)

- Teachers’ point of view
  - Collaboration between specialists: speech therapist, educationalist, librarians
  - Perceived usefulness of EBP by students
Weaknesses of the course (1)

- Observations
  - No improvement in critical appraisal of scientific information
  - Too many students in each group → lack of global view of the process
Weaknesses of the course (2)

- Change of activity timetable
  - individual exercises on PC before the group work

- Lack of time for
  - Feedback
  - Discussion
  - Evaluation of performance in EBP

“Learning environments should promote self-monitoring skills and intra-class feedback that will allow students to regulate their learning and actively engage in the learning tasks.” (Thomas et al., 2011)
Perspectives

• Better integration of EBP into the curriculum
  ▫ Progressive learning (Spek, 2010)
  ▫ Based on real life cases (Thomas et al., 2011)

• Evaluation of spontaneous and correct use of this approach outside of class

• Development of EBP approach by clinicians
  ▫ Models for our students
“Creating lifelong learners is a key aim.”

(Spek, 2010)

Thank you for your attention
Reference list


