



Speech Pathology Tools

Newsletter 1 - January 2019

INTERACTIVE TOOLS FOR TEACHERS AND CHILDREN AT INITIAL EDUCATION Project

Release of the first research document -
Speech and Language Therapy Childhood
Education Report

The first phase of the project has been completed resulting in the first document output of the project. It presents the results of an extensive survey of teachers and therapists across the partner countries, detailing their observations and requirements for technological developments in the field.

The survey results supported the need for the project and highlighted the worth in the development of tools to assist with both assessment of child's speech to determine any need for speech therapy intervention, and for tools to assist teachers with implementation of therapist-led interventions for speech irregularities. It has given direction towards the development of an app which will be used for practicing communication skills, as well as assessment of them.

We give more details of the findings of the survey on the second page of this newsletter.

Project Flyer Now Available



The team have compiled a project flyer to explain the goal of the project to prospective interested stakeholders. It is available in pdf format from the project website translated into all project languages (English, Serbian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Dutch and Slovenian). Available [here](#).

Enhancing the Skills of Youth with Learning Disabilities Event



In the context of the "Intelligent Serious Games for Social and Cognitive Competence" project (ISG), PhoenixKM our Belgian partner, organised the event "Enhancing the skills of youth with learning disabilities" on 22nd

June 2018, in Brussels, Belgium. The event highlighted a whole range of initiatives that have a common goal to enhance skills of youth with (learning) disabilities. The Speech Pathology Tools project was highlighted at the event to a target audience of people with disabilities, and their families and friends; Teachers / Trainers / Tutors from inclusive and special education; Youth and disability organisations; Personal caregivers; and ICT and AT experts. Further details of the event are available [here](#).



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International Conferences



The project has been introduced at some major international conferences in the education and disability fields including INTED (International Technology, Education and Development)

in Spain in March 2018 and ITAG/ICDVRAT (Interactive Technologies and Games/International Conference for Disability, Virtual Reality and Associated Technologies) in Nottingham in September 2018.

World Disability Day



Our Turkish partners (REDVET) attended the World Disability Awareness Day activities at Istanbul Medipol University raising awareness of the project among the many diverse interested stakeholders present. There was a lot of interest in the project, and

contacts made, and we look forward to presenting the applications at this event when developed.

Raising awareness at September

The Turkish partner team (REDVET) participated in "September" a charity walk organised with people with disabilities, their families, supporters and donors to raise funds and awareness. The activity was organised by the Turkey Cerebral Palsy Association and the team raised awareness of the project talking with participants about "Speech Pathology Tools" project during the 10k steps walking together.





Speech and Language Therapy Childhood education report

Based on both online and paper-based surveys of 192 Speech and Language Therapists and guidance councillors, 236 teachers and educationalists, and 85 parents across the consortium countries the first report has been produced.

The vast majority of the professionals surveyed were female, reflecting the domination of females within the teaching and child therapy workforce in Europe. The age ranges of the professionals surveyed were broadly spread, suggesting the opinions expressed will be representative of the workforce.

Major findings from the survey:

- Excluding Turkey, the partner countries reported high percentages of multilingual children in counselling/therapy for Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), ranging from 41% in the UK to 11% in Bulgaria. Multilingualism can have an influence on speech and sometimes be a cause of speech impairments.
- The observed Speech, language and communication needs of the children were evenly spread across the broad categories of comprehension of spoken language, speech sounds and fluency, expressive language and social communication.
- Very low percentages of the Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs)/guidance counsellors or teachers surveyed had used any form of online tools for detection of SLCN (<10%), or for SLC skills practice (<21%). The main reason (50% of SLTs, and 70% of teachers) expressed for this was that they were not aware that the tools existed. Around a fifth said they did not have access to the appropriate technologies (a problem which seems highest in Bulgaria specifically).
- 71% of parents surveyed were unaware of SLCN detection online tools, and 49% were unaware of SLC practice online tools. 20% of parents of children with SLCN said they were not interested in online tools to help their child practice SLC skills.
- Only 35% of SLTs and 29% of teachers had used mobile tools in their professional practice; however, most (88% of SLTs, 87% of teachers) said a mobile app for detection of SLCN would be helpful, and most (95% of SLTs, 94% of teachers) also thought a mobile tool would be useful for the practice of speech, language and communication skills. This was mirrored by parents where 77% said they thought a detection app would be helpful, and 84% said that a practice app would be helpful.
- Only 8% of parents surveyed had used online tools for detecting their child's SLCN, but 16% had used them for the practice of SLC skills.
- 60% of those parents using the online practice tools with their children said they were using them every week or more frequently than that.
- Key features required in apps were identified by all three groups surveyed (SLTs, teachers, and parents of children with SLCN) as ease of use, flexible (cross-platform), and free to access.

- All professionals surveyed perceived there to be an increase in demand for the SLT services with time. This suggests there is a need for some automation in detection and therapy in order to relieve the pressure on staff in both schools and speech and language therapy where in many cases staff cuts are actually being made.

How will it guide future developments?

The low instances of the use of both online and mobile apps by therapists, teachers, and parents with their children are mainly due to the lack of knowledge of what exists out there for them to use. An important part of this project should be to highlight some of the tools that are available, and to ensure high dissemination and therefore the impact of the tools that are developed later in the project. All those surveyed expressed a high desire to use both a speech, language and communication skills practice app and a speech, language and communication needs detection app. The former was seen as slightly preferable/more useful in the case of all three surveys.

The speech, language and communication needs encountered by professionals and teachers were evenly spread across the broad categories of comprehension of spoken language, speech sounds and fluency, expressive language, and social communication, suggesting that any apps developed should try to be broadly useful across these categories rather than focussing too strongly on one particular aspect.

The survey has supported the need for this project and highlighted the worth in the development of the suggested tools, and it has given direction towards the development of an app which can be used for practicing communication skills, as well as assessment of them.

You can download a full copy of the report from the project website:

<http://www.speechpathologytools.eu/downloads.html>

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