

Abstract No. 6.3

Thursday 7th September 2017 at 14:15-15:00

Title: Autonomy support for students with congenital and acquired deafblindness: how can it be assessed and addressed?

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Main focus: Mainly research/Both congenital and acquired deafblindness

Abstract: In this workshop, I will discuss the key role autonomy plays in the education of students with congenital and acquired deafblindness. Autonomy refers to having the opportunity to make your own choices and to express your own ideas. Autonomy is often linked to a host of positive outcomes, including higher quality of learning.

I have conducted five studies on the interactions students with congenital or acquired deafblindness have with their teachers. These studies examined the ways in which teachers foster students' psychological needs to feel autonomous, competent and related to others. These three needs determine the extent to which people flourish, are satisfied and experience personal well-being.

In the classroom, these three psychological needs determine a students' motivation to learn. Teachers of students with congenital and acquired deafblindness find it less difficult in making students feel competent and related to others. However, they often find it more difficult to support autonomy. Therefore, in this workshop I will highlight how to support autonomy in the classroom with students with deafblindness.

I will start this workshop by explaining the concept of autonomy as described in the theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory. Thereafter, I will explain how an observation scheme was developed and used to assess teachers' autonomy support and students' motivation. Furthermore, I will briefly present the coding procedure, interpretation of the coded data, results and the implications of the findings. Additionally, I will focus on two essential questions: What makes it so difficult for teachers to provide autonomy support?; What are the possible ways to make it easier for teachers to provide autonomy support in order to make students with deafblindness feel more autonomous in the classroom?