INStAnt!

The quick-and-easy update on attendance issues, developments, activities, and resources

Welcome to Issue 3 of **INStAnt!** We are delighted that you support INSA via your membership and hope that this newsletter helps you in your work. In this September 2020 issue, the INSA Communications Committee is pleased to present a sampling of practical and scientific developments in four countries as well as updates on INSA's work. To contribute to future issues or share ideas for INSA, please contact us at info@insa.network

International

INSA webinars



INSA is excited to launch a webinar series focused on topics related to schooling and absenteeism. 'Absenteeism: Reaching out to parents and students' is the theme for INSA's next webinar on the 21th September (9am EDT, 3pm CEST, 11pm ASET), which will be presented by Fran Morgan and Gil Keppens. We are looking forward to welcoming you for this and future webinars.

The first Webinar ('Preparing to move forward: A webinar for school professionals dealing with a pandemic') was a great success with 52 participants from more than 25 different countries! We thank panelists Michele Capurso and Glenn Melvin for their valuable presentations and all participants for joining and interacting through the chat box. A video recording of this first webinar and other supportive resources will be made available for INSA members on the INSA website shortly.

INSA call for papers

In collaboration with Continuity in Education, INSA is hosting a call for papers. Keep an eye on the INSA and Continuity of Education webpages on which more detailed information will be published in the near future.

News from Denmark



Daniel Johnsen just handed in his dissertation 'The Back2School project: Introducing Transdiagnostic Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for youths with School Attendance Problems'. The Back2School project evaluates an individualized transdiagnostic cognitive behavioral therapy to help youth with school attendance problems increase their school attendance and reduce possible anxiety, depression and behavior problems.

A feasibility study showed high satisfaction with the Back2School program and showed a significant increase in school attendance and a reduction in symptoms of mental health problems. Currently, the effectiveness of the Back2School program is being evaluated in a randomized controlled trial (RCT), and hopefully these results will be available in the fall of 2020. So far the project has provided valuable knowledge regarding the characteristics of a treatment-seeking sample of youth with SAPs. The participating youths have showed high and increasing levels of school non-attendance in the previous academic year, and many presented with clinical symptoms of mental health problems.

The feasibility study, and the study protocol for the RCT study of the Back2School program, are published and available online. Contact: Daniel Bach Johnsen.

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News from New Zealand



The Mattering Project moves into its second phase in October 2020 (depending on Covid). It is an ethno-dramatic political theatre approach to disseminate qualitative doctoral research, which began in 2019. *Mattering*, a play that represented the voices of those marginalised students who truant, was performed over five nights in a secondary school with a reputation for truancy.

Post-performance, the space was opened up to a culturally responsive community discourse - a Talanoa – where Year 12 and 13 mainly Pasifika actors and community members shared stories, ideas and feelings about truancy. The hidden aspects of truancy were examined and some of the seventeen student actors aged between 16 and 18, who performed the stories, were also students who truant. This work provides an original contribution to understand the nature of engaging students who truant through a meaningful, creative learning process in terms of trust, support, and insights gained in the creative process. In the second phase initiative (The Truancy Marketplace), the students, the classroom teacher/co-director, and the playwright/co-director/teacher educator/researcher aim to identify community support to reposition truanting students more positively in classrooms so that they matter to others, and to change their learner identity from being a failure to being an achiever. To learn more about the project please contact project leader, Delia Baskerville.

News from Belgium



A new project is underway in Belgium. Project PEP TALK! aims to help disengaged and vulnerable students in vocational education to prepare for the school--to-work or school-to-higher education transition.
The project uses individualized counseling sessions to guide students who are still in school but who may be at risk of leaving school early or who may have limited career options. The project is managed by the socialist trade union who, through its knowledge of the labour market, aims to bridge the gap between school life and adult working life. Every session starts with answering questions the students has about his or her professional future. The project is about establishing relationships of trust with disengaged pupils and offering information and help - in collaboration with mental health professionals - if needed. The project started in 2016, and thanks to a grant from the European Social Fund, will continue until 2022 when its findings will be published. To learn more about the project please contact co-project leader, Lisa Van Quickelberghe.

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News from the U.K.



In the project 'Enhancing Pupil Attendance at Schools using Artificial Intelligence', a UK team is examining how a data driven approach can be used to manage attendance. By using artificial intelligence algorithms, the project aims to find hidden patterns in large volumes of school attendance data, leverage any found patterns and subsequently put interventions in place that either encourage patterns that support good attendance or discourage/break patterns that are detrimental to attendance.

Some of the things learned so far? A pilot was launched at a primary school in the UK with excellent results, with the school reducing the effort required in attendance management. The school achieved the UK national required average attendance of 96% for the first time in four years, and saw persistent (chronic) absenteeism decrease by over 55% from the previous year. The project is now in the process of developing an easy to use software program which will be made freely available on the internet (with user guides and videos etc.) so that all schools globally can access the tool and use it to improve their attendance and outcomes for their pupils. More information about the project can be found here or by contacting Raymond Moodley.