



International Learning Exchange



ILEX: Differences between EU and US Paradigm on Social Education

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www.plantijn.be

Plantijn Hogeschool and the USA

- National Representative for International Learning Exchange (ILEX)
- TRANSPRAC: curriculum development project between higher education institutions in Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Maine, Miami and Providence
- EU-US faculty exchanges, study and field visits

A Thought To Start With...

“Whether social education or direct care practice should be an independent profession is dependent upon the cultural context in which the profession develops or emerges. In some countries (e.g. the US), teachers and social workers have been the professional responses to the needs of people/clients. However, the roles of teacher and social worker have been perceived differently and their preparedness to incorporate “life space” work in their repertoire has varied. Thus, there is a significant void to be filled if we are to ensure the care and development of a large number of people in need of services - services that can not be rendered within the classroom or the therapy room”

Jones, H.D. (1985). The profession at work in contemporary society. In M. Courtioux et al (Eds.). The social pedagogue in Europe – living with others as a profession.

Direct Care or Custodial Care in the US (1)

- No post-secondary educational, state or national standardized college-level requirements for direct care workers
 - > *"A high school diploma, a clean child abuse record and a driver's license are the current requirements in New York State"* Jacobs, H. (1995). *A new development in the education of direct care practitioners. Journal of Child and Youth Care, 10, 37-53.*
- Inexperienced direct care staff

Direct Care or Custodial Care in the US (2)

- Varied agency-based training (mostly 1-3 weeks training of restraining techniques)
- High turnover rates and long vacancy periods
- Poor salaries (median 10 USD/hour)
- Low appreciation by society for direct care work

EU Social Education vs US Custodial Care (1)



- Holistic model,
use of different sciences
- Focus on individual growth,
competencies, inclusion
- Use of daily life realities

- Establish a caring
& equal relationship



- Medical, clinical model
- Focus on treatment
of disabilities, pathologies
- Use of reconstructed situations,
no intentional use
of daily life realities
- Establish a caring
& sometimes equal relationship

EU Social Education vs US Custodial Care (2)



- Group = process & product
- Co-professionals
- Much training in cultural & activity subjects
- Influence on management & administration decisions, policies, etc.



- Less intentional use of group
- Hierarchy of professions
- Limited training in cultural & activity subjects
- Some influence on management & administration decisions, policies, etc.

US Agencies for Custodial Care (1)

- Top bottom hierarchy
- Strong on assessment of care, program evaluation
- Budget cuts & economy measures
- Sharp distinction between disciplines



US Agencies for Custodial Care (2)

- Large entities
- Waiting lists for clients
- Private and public organizations
- Funding from local, state or federal government



International Learning Exchange ILEX

- International education exchange program
- Partnership with Council of International Programs, USA (www.cipusa.org)
- Network of not-for-profit US social service organizations committed to international professional development and cultural learning

ILEX Mission

Provide supported, on-the-job training experiences for international professionals seeking to

- broaden their professional skills
- exchange values and ideas with US colleagues
- develop global competencies
- participate in cross-cultural exchange



ILEX in Numbers

- Founded: 1983
- Program participants over life of program: 1000
- Participants currently active in the program: 50
- US social service organizations involved: 15
- EU countries in the ILEX-network: 11 (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland)

ILEX Requirements (1)

- 21 years of age
- International driver's license
- Motivated to learn new professional skills, and work practices in the US
- Diploma/degree from a University, College, Hogeschool, Seminariet, etc. in a Social Science or Social Services Field



ILEX Requirements (2)

- Understand own training and professional identity to communicate professional concepts with US colleagues
- Experience in the desired field of training (practicum training or employment)
- Proficiency in speaking, reading and writing English
- Open to learning and gaining understanding of the US culture

Contact ILEX

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THANK YOU!



Lid van de Associatie Universiteit
& Hogescholen Antwerpen



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