

# Co-teaching Orthopedagogical Synthesis



## How does this course work?

Orthopedagogical Synthesis can be considered as the theoretically concluding course of the Master of Science in Educational Sciences with main subjects Special Education, Disability Studies and Behavioral Disorders / Clinical Special Needs Education and Disability Studies. The course focuses on complex questions (for which no "easy" answers are possible/desired) in the field of Clinical Orthopedagogics and Disability Studies, such as waiting lists in health care, continuous care, euthanasia, interdisciplinary work, sterilisation of women with intellectual disabilities, support of parents with drug problems and their children, perform surgery for people with disabilities, humanitarianism in emergency situations, strengths based approaches in forensic contexts... The students are expected to critically reflect on how they think about and deal with these questions.

## Data

- Year: 2nd Master
- Number of EBEs: 2
- Number of students: 144
- Number of staff:
  - Lead instructors: 2
  - Other involved staff members: + 20
- Study time: 180 hours
- Credits: 6.0 credits

The content of the course changes on a regular basis. During the 2023-2024 academic year the focus was on the book 'Beyond madness - Insider perspectives on psychosis and recovery' by Peter Tomlinson. Peter guides the students through his book and personal experiences. The common thread of this course, however, is the great diversity of assignments in close collaboration with experts by experience (EBEs).

## HOW DOES THIS COURSE INVOLVE EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE?

## Lessons learned

- Experiential knowledge requires an introduction. The context of the experiential knowledge must be outlined so that students can absorb this knowledge effectively.
- Experiential knowledge requires support – before, during, and after the sharing of the experiences. Support does not equate to taking over.
- Experiential knowledge requires debriefing. How did the expert by experience perceive the session? What questions do students still have? Is there space for students to contribute their own experiential knowledge?
- Experiential knowledge requires flexibility. Experts by experience should be able to share their story in their own way.
- Experiential knowledge requires involvement and proximity. This promotes mutual alignment, trust, the quality of the course...
- Experiential knowledge challenges academic knowledge and complements it at the same time. Incorporating experiential knowledge allows students to reflect from various perspectives.
- Experiential knowledge provides students with new insights and perspectives. What does this mean for experts by experience themselves?



## Challenges

- Not all experiential knowledge is easily integrated. Ethical considerations must always be taken into account. Efforts should be made to find alternative ways to incorporate these difficult to integrate perspectives.
- Experiential knowledge does not always receive the recognition it deserves. There is no established status for experts by experience within higher education.
- The sharing of experiential knowledge within the secure confines of higher education is under pressure due to the digitalization of higher education.