A Cross-case Analysis of School-based Prevention and Intervention Measures: findings from the RESL.eu project

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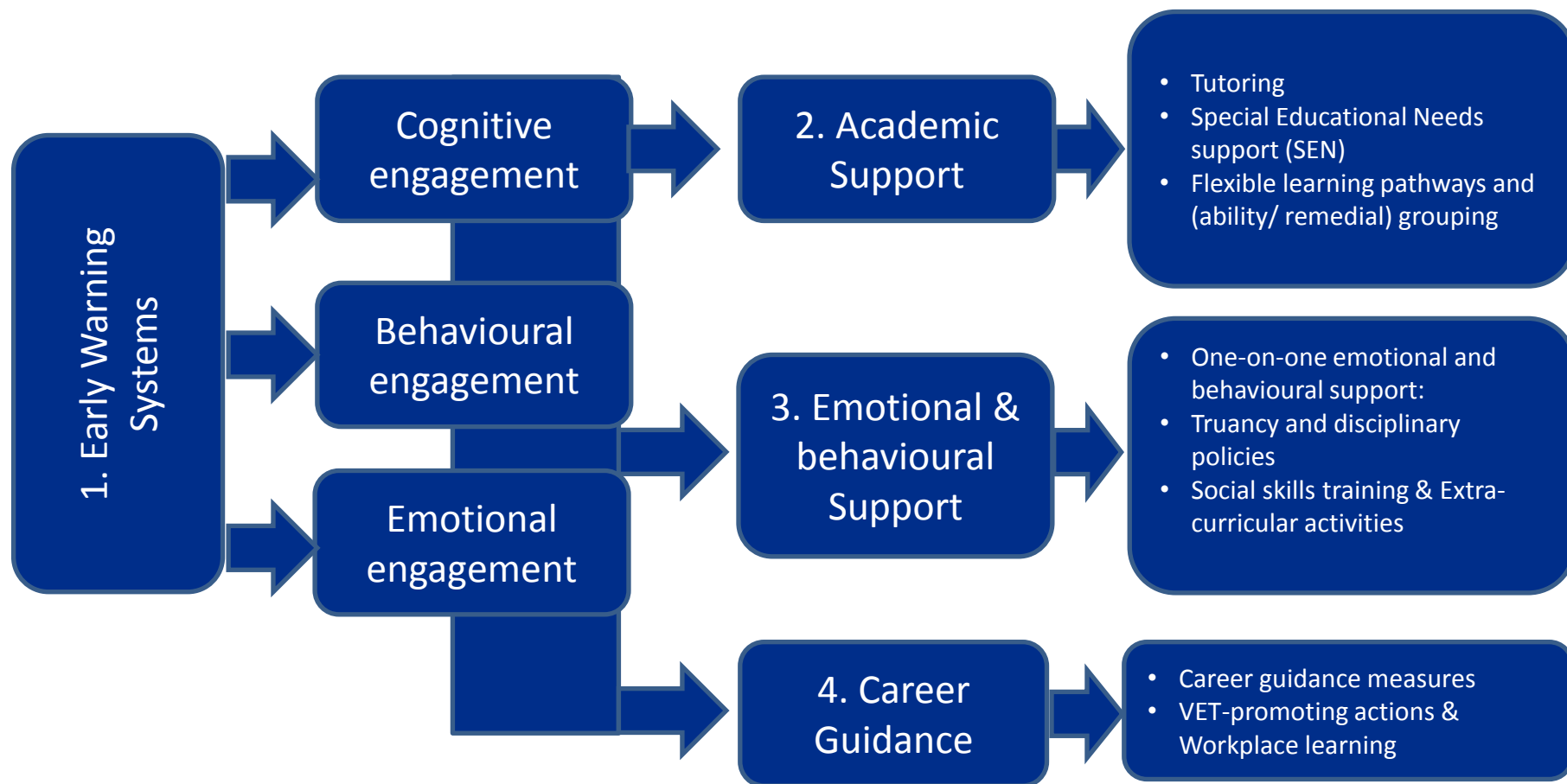University of Antwerp

RESL.eu project

9 & 10 NOVEMBRE 2017

RESL.eu project (@RESL_eu)

- 10 partner countries (WU, EUR, UW, UPorto, UAB, UA, SU, MU, SU, CEU)

- Cross-case analysis of 48 school-based prevention and intervention measures in 28 focus schools across 7 EU countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Sweden

- 7th Framework Programme, European Commission

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Methods

- Pre-assessment and post-evaluation of the interventions not feasible

- Adapted theory-driven stakeholder evaluation method (Hansen & Vedung, 2010)

- Studying the discursive congruence between designers, implementers and target group on:
  - Awareness about scope and aims, problem orientation and concreteness of measures
  - Participation: (Reasons for) participation and sense of ownership
  - Outcome experience: Effectiveness, feasibility and support

- Qualitative data collection: 166 semi-structured interviews & Focused Group Discussions (FGD's)

A typology of measures

1. Early Warning Systems

→ **Cognitive engagement** → **2. Academic Support** →
- Tutoring
- Special Educational Needs support (SEN)
- Flexible learning pathways and (ability/ remedial) grouping

→ **Behavioural engagement**

→ **Emotional engagement** → **3. Emotional & behavioural Support** →
- One-on-one emotional and behavioural support:
- Truancy and disciplinary policies
- Social skills training & Extra-curricular activities

→ **4. Career Guidance** →
- Career guidance measures
- VET-promoting actions & Workplace learning

Early Warning Systems

- School-wide Detection and Monitoring systems
- Reducing ESL is often a secondary effect but not the primary focus
- A multidimensional school engagement approach

- Focus on 'problematic' educational trajectories
- Often organized by governmental agencies & mandatory
- Frequent use of digital platform

- Few focus on emotional well-being
- More need for support and professionalization of school staff
- Danger of stigmatizing group at risk of ESL

Academic support

- Start: individual cognitive needs students
- Part of general school programme, core task education, not directly linked to ESL
- Expected participation school staff, voluntary participation of students

- 3 types:
  - Support students with learning difficulties
  - Student differentiation and flexible pathways
  - Support understanding of curricula

- Visible short term effects
- Danger of stigmatisation when labelling students as at risk of ESL
- Problems often related to problematic home situation
- Individual & voluntary approach: vulnerable students?
- Increasing work load school staff (~financial cuts)

Emotional and behavioral support

- Proactive (prevention) vs reactive (intervention)
- Stepwise vs structural care approach
  - Further guides role of teachers in care approach
- Specialised 'caring' school personnel

- Different levels of professionalisation of school teams
- Importance of empathic potential and social skills of teachers
- Objectives of care personnel not always clear for students; mistrust by students
- Need for care vs focus on the curricula
- Focus on observable symptoms (e.g. truancy, behavior)
- No voluntary participation

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Career guidance support

- Realistic educational choices -> motivation
- Related to labour market opportunities
- Information provision and support when making individual choices (also VET, etc.)
- 'Compensation' for lack of support at home
- Variation with regard to intensity, importance of the parents' role, specialised personnel and mainly teachers

- More need for individualised guidance
- Limited to provision of information, no focus on aspirations, expectations, feasability, etc.

Contextual preconditions

- Addressing basic needs of students

- Promoting parental involvement

- Promoting professional development and support of staff

- Promoting supportive student-teacher relationships

- Taking on a holistic multi-professional approach

- Promoting student voice and ownership

> Compensation measures (1/2)

- Societal level:
    - « Option B »: less esteemed options/qualifications
    - Variation in the governmental organisation of these measures
    - Lack of unification across countries
    - Lack of clear ideas of what qualifications stand for on the labour market

Compensation measures (2/2)

- **Institutional level:**

PROS

- Use of a holistic approach
- Expertise with students with problematic school careers and diffiult home situations
- Diversified staff corps

CONS

- Only enrollment after 'failure' in mainstream education
- Do not change problematic school careers in mainstream education

Discussion

- What works and what does not?

- Prevention and intervention vs compensation

- Nature of processes leading to ESL

- Structural reforms educational systems?

- Education of/for the future?

Final international conference

- Findings of the RESL.eu project and other international contributions

- Keynote speakers: Prof. Dr. Paul Downes & Prof. Dr. Russell W. Rumberger

- Antwerp, University of Antwerp, 22-24th of January 2017

- https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/resl-eu/about-resl-eu/events/

RESL.eu project

- More information: https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/resl-eu/about-resl-eu/

- PP6: Cross-case Analysis of School-based Prevention and Intervention Measures: https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/resl-eu/deliverables/resl-eu-project-pape/

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