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# Virtual Reality Simulator Against Public Speaking Phobia

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN  
SCIENCES



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# Psychological methods for overcoming phobias

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# Virtual Reality Simulator Against Public Speaking Phobia



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Manual

E-learning

VR

# The project is possible thanks to Erasmus+



Phobia is irrational and persistent fear of stimuli which not represents real risks or damage for the person

Phobias are produced by a very broad  
range of stimuli



One of the strangest phobias I found in Italy  
are...



Phobia of clouds



203/66  
grigio chiaro  
light grey



203/67  
grigio medio  
medium grey



203/68  
grigio scuro  
dark grey



203/69  
blu  
blue



203/70  
marrone  
brown



203/71  
beige  
light brown



203/72  
grigio-verde  
grey-green



203/73  
grigio scuro  
dark grey



203/74  
blu  
blue



203/75  
marrone  
brown

Phobia of buttons



**Phobia of the faucets (sounds)**  
Only if the sound comes from the house of the neighbor



Phobia of pidgeons



Among these phobias, public speaking is probably the most reasonable



Because there is a risk, at least in terms of reputation and social image



The problem is that we **overestimate** that risk



Phobias are very common (5-7% of the general population)

Our project is designed for supporting educators  
in performing effective public speaking

Most of technical professions and supervision roles requires also educational skills

Anyhow, public speaking courses are still uncommon in formal education

Phobias reduce significantly the quality of  
public speaking

# Phobias can limit our life

It depends on the phobic stimuli

# How to overcome phobias

# Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- It is focused on confuting non rational thoughts
- CBT therapy assumes that phobias are based on non logic thoughts
- Through discussing these non rational thoughts, CBT offer strategies to overcome phobias
- Systematic desensitization = progressive approach to the phobic stimuli
- Approach the classroom gradually
- Talk to participants before the speech
- Talk about the topic of your speech very often



# Hypnosis

- It is based on a modified state of consciousness
- Focused attention + deep relaxation
- Offers several techniques including
  - Exploring past traumatic events leading to phobias
  - Hypnotic Regression
  - Part therapy
  - Hypnosis and anchoring = conditioning
  - Systematic Desensitization in hypnosis (major control on the situation, but possible strong reactions)

- Is a therapy based on reprocessing traumatic experiences through eye movement and evaluation of the inner state
- It's suggested when avoiding and arousal about a particular stimuli are related to a clear traumatic event

EMDR

# Virtual Reality therapy

- It's based on simulation of scenarios in a protected, controlled and safe situation
- It can be practiced at home, through dedicated support of chatbots
- It can be totally controlled. Is the software producing a scenario
- Do not require a real life situation (ie a gradual exposition to flight for overcoming flight phobia require to take flights, a public speaking phobia requires audiences and a motivation to perform a speech)

Obrigado!