

# Palssen news update



*Welcome to the third electronic newsletter of the Erasmus+ Project Palssen*



## Groningen, November 2022



On November 9, 10 and 11, 2022, the third Transnational Meeting of the Erasmus+ project Palssen took place in Groningen, the Netherlands. Host of the meeting was REA College Pluryn, a Dutch organisation providing Vocational Education and Training for students with special educational needs. Main topic was the persons centred approach. More specific; differentiated instructions, individual planning and assessment. The Palssen-project is funded by the Erasmus+. The project aims to move away from the "One-size-fits-all" approach for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The project will introduce and explore opportunities for a more Personalised Approach of Learning for students with SEN in VET.

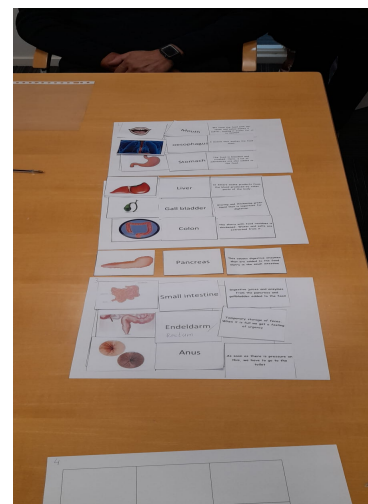
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## Differentiated instruction

The first day of the meeting, all partners practiced the method of differentiated instruction that was developed by the expert partner. Differentiated Instruction is an effective instruction that is responsive to students' readiness, interests and learning preferences.

Differentiated Instruction is not individualised instruction. Instead, it involves considering and selecting from a variety of instructional approaches and making frequent use of flexible, short-term groups to address a variety of learner needs and preferences.

The topics of the instructions were very different: recognizing competences, English language, environmental issues and the human body. In the end partners concluded that differentiated instruction is the first step (a technique to use) on the way to give the students more power to choose not only how they learn something, but also to choose what they would like to learn. In the next transnational meeting (in Portugal) partners will practice this.



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## TalentExpetition: a program for assessment

It is particularly important to get a picture of a student's skills, needs and wishes. For this it is needed to have an assessment program in place.

At REA College almost all students start with an eight-week assessment program, called TalentExpetition. It is called expedition because REA College supports the students to discover themselves what they like and which skills they already have. They also find out what they still must do or learn to be able to make the right education- and career choice.

- This starts with questions about oneself
  - Who am I?
  - What can I do?
  - What am I interested in?
- Then they will look for a realistic career choice
  - What are my points of attention?
  - What do I want?
  - How is the labour market?
  - Which goals are realistic for me?
- Finally, student look for the right education to achieve their goals
  - What do I choose?
  - What can I reach?
  - Which steps do I have to take?



Part of the program is done in a group; the other part consists of individual assignments. Visits to companies to see how they work and short internships fixed parts of the program. After the TalentExpetition students have a concrete advice/plan from us for the follow-up process. This can be a tailor-made vocational training at REA College, or support to start working or a course at mainstream VET are possible.

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## Interviews with students and staff

On Thursday November 10, 2022, the project partners had meetings with staff and students of REA College. In these meetings, the project partners wanted to learn how REA College works on persons centred planning and personalised approach on learning. At REA College all students have an individual plan. This is made after their assessment program, based on their needs and wishes and career choice.

All students in the interviews emphasized that the job is the main goal. They have a clear view what they want to achieve in REA College for their future work and life. They have more influence on their own program and they have more possibilities to work in their own tempo. The question is how to implement this way of working in mainstream education.

Teachers feel proud of their work. They help students to find their way. They hear students, make plans, and evaluate those together with the students and they support them. Empowerment is shown in the program.

Students say that they rather be at REA College, instead of being in mainstream education. Small groups and tailored attention are preferred by the students.

There is a dilemma between:

- inclusion/having the right to be in mainstream education within your peers
- the freedom of choice where someone can also want to be in special education.

Special education is highly appreciated by those who are there. The challenge is to change the system in a way that persons with special needs feel welcome and heard in mainstream education. Then the choice for special education or mainstream is not a negative choice (because the other possibility is not attractive).



## Portugal, May 2023

The next Transnational meeting will take place in Caldas da Rainha (Portugal).

At this meeting, project partners will explore and exchange: methods of assessing needs, interests and opportunities of individual students with SEN, designing Individual Learning Plans and methods which encourage Self-Governance in a more Personal Approach of Learning.

