

Palssen news update

Welcome to the fourth electronic newsletter of the Erasmus+ Project Palssen



Caldas da Rainha, Portugal May/June 2023

On 31 May 31 and 1 & 2 June 2023, the 4th Transnational Meeting of the Erasmus+ project Palssen took place in Caldas da Rainha, Portugal. Host of the meeting was AGRUPAMENTO ESCOLAS RAFAEL BORDALO PINHEIRO, a Portuguese organisation providing training and professional development for staff in education, including Vocational Education and Training (VET).

Main topics were Problem-Based-Learning and Individual Planning

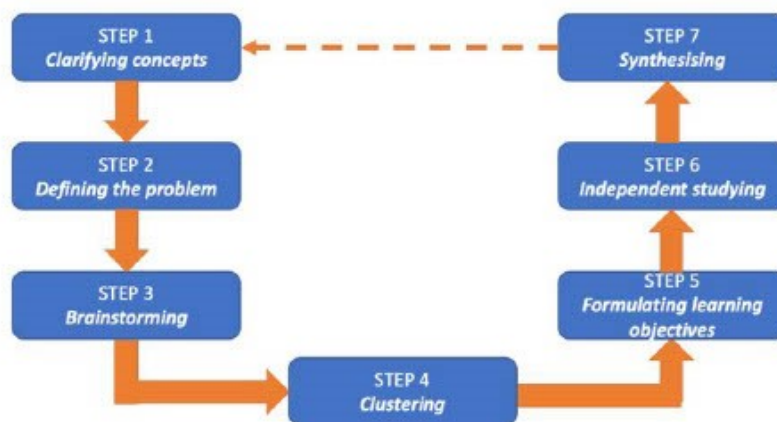
The Palssen-project is funded by the Erasmus+. The project aims to move away from the "One-size-fits-all" approach for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The project will introduce and explore opportunities for a more Personalised Approach of Learning for students with SEN in VET.

Problem Based Learning

The first day of the meeting, all partners prepared a lesson according to the Seven Step Method for implementing Problem Based Learning. Topics practiced were: "Organising a trip", "Human Rights", and "Social & emotional development of toddlers".

Problem-Based-Learning (PBL) is a Student-Centered Approach of Learning in which students learn about a subject by working in groups to solve a so called "open-ended-problem". In PBL, students form small groups to discuss a real-life problem or cases by activating their prior knowledge on the topic, relating the new information to their prior knowledge, structuring new ideas and critically evaluating their findings. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) methods provide hands-on, interactive learning experiences.

The method is not to solve a problem but to learn how to learn to solve problems. It is important to do this by scaffolding (= to provide a structure and support and then, when student have learned this, to take away the scaffolding so students can apply the method without support.



Interviews with students and teachers

On 1 June 2023, project partners interviewed students, and staff of ESCOLA SEDE Agrupamento de Escolas Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro to hear about the way they practice Individual Planning.

In special education in Portugal, all students have an Individual Plan, based an assessment and it is presented and signed by parents/students.

The hosting school has a strict process for evaluation and adaptations of the Individual Plan. Teachers get support from specialist when needed. There is a student support center that supports teachers with knowledge and by making an Individual Plan for students with SEN.

Individual Planning

By the survey we carried out previous in the Palsen-project on to Individual Planning, we noticed that it is not realistic to expect that project partners will change their current way of working, their format or processes dramatically since all partners have a process and format in place for the Individual Plan at their school. Therefore, the expert partner (All About Quality Consultancy) developed an assessment tool for improving the current individual plans of the partners. The instrument evaluates the current performance of a VET school on the Individual Student Development plan, how this should be facilitated and embedded in organisational systems and structure and defines topics for improvement actions. The tool, experiences and results will be the core of Project Result 4: Manual for Learner Centered Planning.



Next Phase of the project

In the upcoming months, the VET-partners in the project will start working with two Self-Evaluation instruments:

- Self-assessment on readiness of implementing the Personalised Approach on Learning (based on the 7-S model of Mc Kinzie)
- Self-assessment on Student Centred Planning

Both assessments will be carried out by staff. Based on the outcomes, partners will select topics to improve the Personalised Approach of Learning in their organisation. Also, they will implement all actions in their individual plans to meet the requirements of Person-Centred Planning (PCP). Monitoring and support are provided in these processes. After this testing phase and evaluation, the expert partner will finalize the tools and they will be available for all interested parties.



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