

**Action oriented assessment**

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**HANDELINGSGERICHTE  
DIAGNOSTIEK**

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 Daffodil

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Assessment in Flemish schools

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- Schools have an association with CLB (center for pupils counselling or school guidance services)
- The team supports the school in its search for the best approach for the pupil, by f.i. assessment
- Also assessment by external organisations:
  - Psychiatry, neurology, mental health, ...
  - Private consultants, bureaus,...
- These external organisations have no or little grip on the context of the school, the classroom, the teacher
- Mostly they are ‘classifying’ or ‘labeling’

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AOA: Assessment team

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→ All involved in the context of the school:  
CLB: schoolpsychologists (SP), social workers, doctors  
and SCHOOL: ‘special needs coordinator’ (SNC), coaches, teachers;  
all work according to the 7 principles of AOA

- a partnership
- same mission and same language
- ongoing cycle of planning and evaluating

This is: **Action Oriented Collaboration** (AOC)

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## A partnership between CLB and school

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- An official contract for minimum 3 years
- Yearly : an agreement on what and how
  - What's the role of the SNC
  - What's the role of the SP
  - How can we be 'finetuning'?
- Within a framework of reference

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## A common framework of reference

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Based on:

- An ecological, contextual developmental theory
- A classification of functioning (ICF)
- Individualised support-system
- Research data on effective schools (meta-analysis Marzano, 2007) & assessment (decision making)
- Positive practices in schools and CLB's: 10 years of field experiments: what works?

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## AOC in schools

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Schoolpsychologists (SP), special needs coordinators (SNC) and teachers: all work according to the 7 principles: same mission & one language

AOC = ongoing assessment and collaboration which aims at:

1. Insight into learning, motivation and behaviour
2. Target setting
3. Plans for entire group, few subgroups and individual pupils
4. Evaluating and adjusting these plans

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## Principles action oriented assessment ...

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1. takes child's needs as the principle theme
2. is transparant, operating in accordance with systematic procedures
3. is goal-directed; aims at solving problems & recommendations on learning and teaching
4. uses a transactional frame of reference
5. gives the teacher a central role
6. promotes partnership with the teacher, parents and child
7. focuses on positive aspects of child, teacher, peers, school and parents

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## 1. Child's educational needs as central theme

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- Interactions are crucial: teacher – student compatibility: effective teachers treat pupils with different needs differently: reflection & experiments: what works for this pupil?
- Not only assessing the child (avoiding labels), but especially assessing the quality of the learning environment and – if neccessary – the parenting situation
- Not only testing the child in a separate room, but also observations in the classroom: classroomactivities, teaching practices, such as: organisation, instruction, feedback, behaviour-rules

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## 1a. Support sentences pupil

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- “Teacher – classroom - language”: this student needs:
- Tasks, materials or activities that are ...
  - Instruction that focusses on ...
  - Feedback that stresses ...
  - Classmates or peers that ...
  - A teacher who ...
  - Parents that ....
  - Extra support for ....  
→ plan for subgroup or Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

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## Exercise 1

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- Describe a child with specific problems
- Try to formulate the educational needs with helpsentences
- How do you explore the exact needs of the child?

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## 1c. What works?

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- **Chances**
  - From a desirable → feasible plan
  - Honest communication with respect for pupil, teacher and parents
  - Frame of reference for 'changing schools?' What does this child need? Can school A offer more than school B?
  - New policy in Belgium and the Netherlands "matching education to needs" (Leerzorg en Passend Onderwijs).
- **Challenges**
  - Shift of focus for all involved: from labels/classifications → goals and needs
  - Celebrate diversity of pupils, but also of teachers, schools and parents!

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## 2. Systematic procedures

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- Assessment and planning = complex processes  
Decisions have a large impact on student  
Therefore: systematic procedures
- Clear stages, step by step
  - Checklists as a reminder, per stage
  - Rules to protect against common mistakes, e.g.:
    - consider only one possible diagnosis and only find evidence to confirm
    - consider only one solution or recommendation
    - make decisions that some one else should make (responsibilities)

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### Excercise 2

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- Describe the planning of an assessment:
  - Stages: what, when, how, why
  - Roles of different collaborators: who
    - Psychologist
    - Teacher
    - Special needs coördinator
    - Parents
    - child

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### 2a. What works?

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#### Chances

- Stages, step by step → clear roles & responsibilities
- Transparant for all involved: what, when, who, how and why? Communication much better

#### Challenges

- Not to much paperwork; no repetitions in formats
- Use research – based data in daily work!
- Reflect on your own strategies: are they supported by research data?
- Use assessment instruments that are objective, valid, reliable and have recent norms

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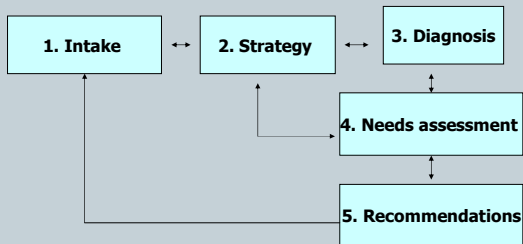
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### 2b. Five stages

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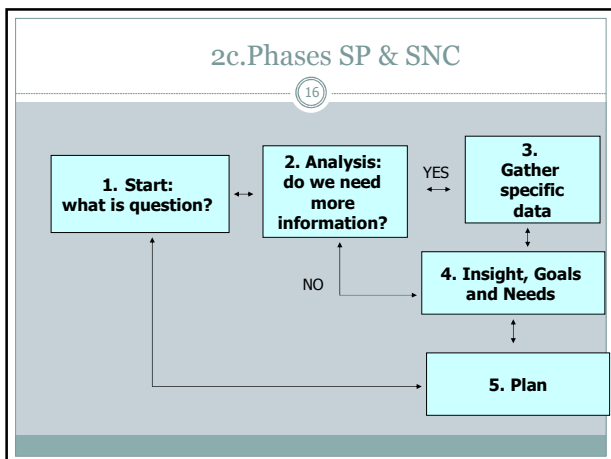
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- 2d.5 stages
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1. Intake: questions, requests and expectations? what do teacher, pupil and parents want to achieve?
  2. Strategy: what decisions have to be made? what do we already know? what more do we need to know?
  3. Diagnosis: participants collect information to answer selected questions
  4. Needs assessment: goal of plan: what do pupil, teacher and parents need to achieve goal?
  5. Recommendations: a desirable educational plan: is this achievable for this pupil, this teacher, these parents?

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- 2e. Transparent procedures
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- It is clear how the special needs coordinator and schoolpsychologist work and why:
    - Stages are clear (no mystification)
    - Teacher, student and parents actively participate in each stage
    - They can follow the process with checklists

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## 3. Goal-directed → recommendations

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Goals = *insight* into learning, motivation and behaviour, *inform* teacher, pupil and parents, shared targets, *develop and evaluate plans*

**Challenge:** irrelevant data are collected (e.g. IQ and labels).

Therefore:

- What exactly is the question?
- Why do we need to know this?
- If we know that ..., then we can decide on ....
- Can we decide on that already? Active & Impulsive or ADHD? → same plan?

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## What is changeable? Where do we look at?

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- Child: what does the child already know? Motivation? Feeling of competence?
- The learning environment: classroom/school: didactics, classroom management, atmosphere, differentiation,...
- At home: acceptance, cooperation,...

If not: accepting the limits, dealing with the problem, good information, compensation, dispensation,...

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## Excercise 3

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- What kind of recommendations are most common in psychological reports meant for teachers?

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## 4. Transactional frame of reference

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- Ecological assessment
- Not only 'this student', but: "this student in this school, this classroom, with this teacher and these parents"
- Goodness of fit between student's needs – the learning environment:
  - Risk factors (problems)?
  - Protective factors (strengths)?

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## 4a. What works?

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### Chances

- Interactions: teacher – student compatibility
- Not only assess the child (avoiding labels), but also the quality of the learning environment
- Observations in classroom: classroom-activities, teaching practices, such as organisation, instruction, feedback, behaviour-rules

**Challenge:** requires certain attitude from teachers: reflection and experimenting with teaching strategies: If I do ..., I expect my pupil to ...

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## 5. The teacher makes the difference!

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- "Because of your approach, this child will have better results in class"
- An effective teacher (Marzano)
  - Results of a child with an effective teacher in an ineffective school
  - Results of a child with an ineffective teacher in an effective school
- The needs of the teacher

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### 5a. Support sentences teacher

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- What does this teacher need to make this plan work for this pupil?
  - Materials such as ...
  - More information on ..
  - Extra support from/during ...
  - Coaching on how to ....
  - A colleague or SNC who ....
  - Teaching strategies that ....

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### 6. Partnership with teacher, student and parents: together

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- Goal of assessment is to answer the questions of teacher, student, parents and to make decisions in the benefit of the child
- Teacher = educational expert
- CLB = expert transactional frame of reference
- Student = owner of learning process
- Parents = hands on experts
- Assessor benefits from their knowledge (f.i. good suggestions for plans, what works?,...)
- They can function as co-assessors

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### 6a. What works?

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**Chances:** Training for SNC and teachers: communication with parents & pupils → very successful!

1. All parents are welcome in our school
2. Children have great solutions themselves
3. This is how we work (steps) and what we expect and value: what is your idea? Do we agree?

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### 6b. Communication

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4. The goal of our meeting is .... We hope to achieve ... we share the same goal: the benefit of your child; our pupil
5. Children often behave differently at home and in school
6. There are difficulties and also strenghts
7. Agreements are written down, copied and taken home
8. Evaluation also together

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### Student's own plans: also very succesfull!

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I can already ... In ... weeks I want to be able to ...	I will ....	My teacher can help me by ....	My parents can help me by ...	Peers can help me by ...
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### 7. Positive aspects: strenghts

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- Child: capacities, interests, intelligence, social skills, creativity, sports, drawing
- Instructional environment: good teaching skills, e.g. differentiated instruction, extra help well organised, extra time for practice, effective motivation techniques
- Classroom & peers: acceptance, social climate
- School: good teaching methods, good communication with parents
- Parents: stimulate and support their child

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## Exercise 4

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- Make a list of what you think is positive in
  - A child with special needs
  - A teacher
  - A parent

How can you use this knowledge?

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## 7a. Function of positive aspects

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- They improve communication school – student – parents
- Enhance feelings of competence and motivation, give hope
- Shed light on diagnosis
- What does work well? This can be elaborated in educational plans

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## A continuum model

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- Level 1: vision, policy, prevention
  - For everyone (teachers, parents, students, CLB)
  - Signals
- Level 2: AOC at school
  - For all students, especially SEN
  - Teaming with teachers, observation, communication parent and child
- Level 3: AOA by CLB
  - For SEN
  - Meeting, assessment, specialized diagnosis
- Level 4: transfer to a new school
  - For SEN
  - 'Warm' contact with the new school + checklists

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## Implementation of AOC

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- Training and coaching of CLB-teams
- We want the schools to cooperate in AOC: they work with our recommendations
- Cooperation with trainers and coaches of special teachers and classroom-teachers
- Concept of in-service training, with CLB and schools
  
- Stuurgroep (board of advisors) takes the lead

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