



Erasmus+

TALENT education

Summary Project Talent Education

‘When some parents addressed me about the issue of underachievement in gifted children, my first thoughts were that these children are exactly the ones we did not need to be concerned about. “They will make it” , I used to think. But this is far from the truth. Many of these children get stuck in the course of their secondary school education, studies of careers. And this appears to apply to many other children and youth at different levels. The fact that they get stuck is not just bad for them, but is also a loss to our society. So Talent Education is now a shared task for the municipality and the complete range of education.’ (Henri Lenferink, Mayor of Leiden).

Occasion of the Talent Education program¹

Recent research shows that underachievement is an immense problem in education. Some figures:

- 25% of all students in secondary education are regularly bored from teaching material they find too easy; from the top 20% of the class even 56% are often bored (Intomart Research 2014)
- 15 – 20% of students perform below level in primary education; 1/3 of (mildly) gifted are involved (Report Dutch National Council of Education (Onderwijsraad), 2011).
- Only 5% of the pupils in the Netherlands achieve the highest level in international comparison - the Czech Republic and Slovenia are 4%, in Belgium 10%, England 18% and Singapore 43% (TIMSS 2011)
- Pupils who do well in primary school often don't hold the level in secondary school: 20% of pupils who have a CITO score of 550 do not succeed in graduating within 6 years. Relatively few students succeed, with an average grade higher 7.5 (4% on HAVO and VMBO TL and 9% on VWO (Education Council 2013 report).

Causes for lagging of the talents are

1. Talent is not sufficiently stimulated and rewarded.

Existing teaching methods reflect an effort to bring all students to a minimum level. Additional challenges and offer is mostly limited in size and degree. Students can become bored and they do not develop the skill to direct their education planning.

¹ Mainly derived from the text of Application of the project

Lack of Metacognitive skills is an important issue. It is known that in 50% of the gifted these skills are not well developed.

2. Limited flexibility and room for talent

In the traditional class-system there are large differences within student groups. Students are often classified on age and not on level.

Even experienced education institutes perceive the national legislation in the Netherlands and Slovenia as limiting. They have to comply with a minimum education time. While talented students need less education time for regular classes which enables them more time for broadening and deepening their subjects. The length of the different levels in secondary education are prescribed.

3. Teachers and school leadership are not enough equipped

Especially teachers in primary school have to cope with large differences between children. Recent research shows that less than 30 percent mastered the skills to sufficiently deal with these differences. (Segers& Hoogeveen (2012))

The conclusion is that too less talented students do not excel during education but also not in their business career. Too often they feel that they are not being challenged in school, they become bored and under perform. This gave rise to the consortium to formulate the following **problem definition**:

HOW CAN TALENTED BE ENCOURAGED TO USE THEIR TALENTS DURING THEIR SCHOOL CAREER TO PREVENT UNDERACHIEVEMENT AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE CONTEXT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL SECTORS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, THE SKILLS OF TEACHERS AND TEACHING MATERIALS

OBJECTIVES OF THE TALENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

General objective

The partners want to develop a sustainable and structural approach which supports top talent in the further development of their talent and thus preventing underachievement or dropouts. Personalized learning and continuous learning (Dutch: doorlopende leerlijn) and cooperation with other organizations than educational institutions are important principles.

As a result the project "Talent Education" chooses for the following objectives from the Erasmusplus program:

- 1. Improving range of lessons**
- 2. Strengthening the skills of the teachers.**
- 3. Improving cooperation in and around education.**

Target groups of the project are the talented preschoolers (toddlers), school pupils in primary and secondary education and their teachers. Schools and regional or local authorities are also part of the target group. The project is implemented transnational, because transnational cooperation increases the

effectiveness of integration and understanding of legal contexts in the chain approach (collaboration between different educational institutions and regional embedding).

The strategy of the project is

- 1) to focus on the **role of teachers**. All activities are organized to enhance their role in identifying talent and in challenging talented with adaptive education, and to empower them with knowledge, skills and tools
- 2) to choose some **“strategic elements” in the chain of education** in which a new approach could be effective and could have impact on all education. The consortium chooses for a) identification and adaptive approach at a very early stage (2 – 6 years); b. education in metacognitive skills in primary education (10- 12 years); c. applying Design Thinking in education on three levels of education: primary education (11 – 12 years), secondary education (14-15 and 16-17) years; d. differentiation in the classroom based on a personalized approach in secondary education (all grades). In all “elements” basic expertise is already available and can be transferred, but is not yet adapted to each form of education nor widely spread.
- 3) to develop new **education in practice**: PLC’ s of teachers in all subjects, coaching on the job, pilots in classrooms and organizing feedback and feed forward, exchange of students of all ages to apply the method of Design Thinking and collaborating with their teachers in a living laboratory.
- 4) to gather all methods and developed approaches and tools in a **Toolkit for Teachers** which is available for all teachers and could be applied in practice immediately.

The partnership

The coordinator of the project is the “Samenwerkingsverband Passend Onderwijs VO SWVVO 2801” , founding organization of Leiden Approach (Leidse Aanpak)², a network of almost all schools, higher educational institutes, pre-schools, cultural and support organizations, for talent development in the region Leiden. Besides SWVVO17 partners (organizations of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, universities) in the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Slovenia are partner in the project.

Activities

To achieve the above objectives, various activities have been carried out.

1. Development of new education for Metacognitive Skills, Design Thinking, Differentiation in secondary education based on “Teaching with Perspectives” (ICLON- Leiden University), new methods and tools for educators and teachers in pre-school and first grades of primary schools.
2. Improvement of skills of Teachers for teaching talented children by training, organizing PLC’ s and development of manuals and lesson examples available for all teachers.
3. Exchange programs for students testing Design Thinking as a challenging methodology.
4. Research on Metacognition in 15 schools to measure the effect of a new methodology on metacognition

² www.deleidseaanpak.nl

5. Transfer between educational sectors and cooperation with other sectors, adapted to each city involved in the program. The Leiden Approach for Talent Development (Leidse Aanpak) served as a prototype.
6. Self-evaluation of impact, an evaluation methodology, developed by PLATO (Research Institute of Leiden University) to enhance impact on all innovation.
7. Dissemination activities in all countries, focused on the sharing of the Talent Education Toolkit for Teachers (TETT) developed in and by the project. Organisation of conferences in all countries and an international congress “Focus on Talent” (June 2018)

Results.

In all four educational lines of the program (Practical Differentiation, Design Thinking, Metacognitive Skills and Challenging Young Children) manuals, tools for identification of talent and lesson-plans have been developed and good practices described.

All these tools are available in the **Talent Education Toolkit or Teachers (TETT)**, consisting in four website (www.talenteducation.eu/toolkitforteachers). The Toolkit is available in English and Dutch language and (partly) in Czech. A publication in Slovenian language is scheduled.

For every Toolkit a brochure is available in English or Dutch. The leaflet contains a summary of or introduction to the Toolkit.

Reports are made for *Research on the Implementation of Metacognitive skills* in Czech, Slovenian en Dutch schools (lead by Dr. Marcel Veenman (Instituut voor Metacognitie Onderzoek) and Dr. Šárka Portešová (Masaryk University, Brno) ³ and on the *Impact and Self-evaluation methodology of the Talent Education project* (lead by Dr. Jaap van Lakerveld and Drs. Ingrid Gussen) ⁴.

A scientific article about the chain approach (system approach) of talent education in Leiden (Leiden Approach is written to be published on websites or in magazines) ⁵. The Erasmusplus program Talent Education functioned as a “flywheel” in the evolution of the Leiden Approach to a wider and more inclusive approach (Leidse Aanpak 2.0).

At the International Conference “Focus on Talent” (Leiden, 6st of June 2018) the results of the project were presented by several teachers involved in and shared in workshops with many teachers from Leiden and abroad ⁶

Impact

Impact can be measured in the number of teachers and students who are directly or indirectly involved in and influenced by the program or the results of the program (horizontal impact), the way institutions or

³ M.V.J Veerman, Final Report Talent Education project – Metacognition, Leiden 2018.

⁴ J.A van Lakerveld, A.K. Lambrechtse, P. Rhebergen, Work in progress: building a systemic Talent Education Approach. Evaluation of the Erasmusplus Project 2015-1-NL01-KA 201-008977, Leiden 2018.

⁵ <http://www.talenteducation.eu/leidenapproachpassepioneeringstage/>

⁶ <http://www.magazine-on-the-spot.nl/focusoptalent/>

networks are infected (vertical), the way educational practices are changed (transversal Impact) or the sustainability of the outcomes of the project (longitudinal).

Factors to be mentioned.:

- a large involvement of teachers (141), students (292), schoolmasters and scientists (31)
- teachers who are motivated to go along with their new skills and knowledge, applying i.e. on stipendiums (lerarenbeurs) or expanding their skills in PLC' s
- a rich "toolkit" for all subjects consisting in step-action plans, methods, lesson plans, project descriptions and so further; this toolkit has not only a (tested and proven) impact on the participants but can provoke a sustainable impact on Talent Education in general
- students indicate to be challenged and motivated to deeper learning by using the new methods and are delighted to have more space for learning
- the evolution of the Leiden Approach for Talent Development to a more inclusive approach of talent based on the mission statement *"Everybody has got talent, but unless it is noticed and used, it will not flourish"* . The paradigm consequently shifts from the question *"Who are the talents?"* to *"What talents does that particular child has?"* . The Leiden Approach adopted therefore a new definition of talent development: *talent flourishes = talent + behavior + context + meaning.*
- a better transfer for knowledge and approach for identification and approaches of talent between sectors (especially for younger children in Pre-schools and Primary Schools)
- the expansion of new methods Metacognitive skills, Practical Differentiation and Design Thinking to other teachers and schools outside the TE project
- activities in all partner cities or regions for developing building stones for a chain oriented approach of Talent Development
- Some concrete results in achievements of students, e.g. winning of prizes in regional and national contests (Czech Republic) or CITO Eindtoets (Leiden) after training Metacognitive skills. This is in accordance with the positive outcome of the scientific study in the project

More information?

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