

# FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT

*TCA-REPORT*

OF THE

*TRANSNATIONAL  
WORKING – MEETING*

**13 - 16 february 2006**

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*"A few years ago, I shouted 'help me!, I have a problem! I already had 10 jobs but they always fire me after a couple of weeks".*

## Table of content

### INTRODUCTION

- I. **Functional assessment for specific target groups**
- II. **Definition of the target group(s) and functional diagnosis**
  - Introduction**
  - 1. The needs of the target group on the shop floor and functional diagnosis by doctor Roelen**
    - 1.1 Scientific statement regarding Dyslexia, NLD and ASD
      - Introduction
      - Dyslexia
      - Non verbal Learning Disability
      - Autism spectrum disorder
    - 1.2 Conclusions
  - 2. The problems that the target groups encounter at work: NLD as a case study**
    - 2.1 "Which consequences does NLD have at work?"
      - a. Spatial –visual problems
      - b. Automation
      - c. Organisational problems
      - d. Abstract reasoning
      - e. Motor skills/coordination
      - f. Visual problems
    - 2.2 "What efforts do you personally make to meet expectations?"
    - 2.3 Limitations in other fields
- III. **Functional assessment as a tool for training and education**
- IV. **The development of a functional assessment for special target groups**
  1. The process of development of a functional assessment for special target groups *by Ad Wiese*
  2. Assessment: methods and conditions in a general sense
  - Conclusions
- V. **A framework for the functional assessment of the specific intended audiences**
  - 1. A framework for the functional assessment of the specific intended audience A.S.D.**
    - 1.1 Introduction by Kristien Reyniers (Ergasia), Tom Claes en Inge Pauwels (De Ploeg)
    1. 2 Discussion about functional assessment for people with ASD moderated by Ad Wiese
  - 2. A framework for the functional assessment of the specific intended audience Dyslexia/NLD**
    - 2.1 Introduction by Hans van de Velde, Equisto and Chairman of [www.woortblind.nl](http://www.woortblind.nl)
    - 2.2 Discussion about functional assessment for people with Dyslexia moderated by Hans van de Velde

## INTRODUCTION

A set of four several project groups formed a partnership by means of Transnational Cooperation agreement (TCA). By means of a transnational cooperation with the project groups from Finland, Poland and the Netherlands the partnership tries to exchange information and know-how regarding to the topics of the TCA. Moreover the different partners wish to develop a common vision. The granted information and insights of the treated topics can be applied in their own project at the national level. The transnational cooperation bond has the intention to form a bilateral cooperation. The Polish and Dutch project groups thereby will exchange information concerning the target group A.S.D. The Finnish project group and Flemish network concentrates on the problems of Dyslexia and NLD.

This document is the substantive report of the exchange week of 13-16 February 2006. It concerns the second exchange of the transnational cooperation within the framework of EQUAL. For the complete report of the meeting we refer to the documentation cord. You find the reports of the different presentations and meetings with the reports of the bilateral visits and information exchanges.

The central theme of the SMART Cooperation: "Social Inclusion and Empowerment throughout education and work of people with ASD or Dyslexia/learning difficulties." A range of topics were determined which form the basis of a theoretical framework. These topics will be discussed on the different exchanges. For further information about this transnational cooperation we refer to the report of the transnational wheel group SMART in the reader on page 34.

This conference is about the topic "functional Assessment". This is a tool to help persons with a learning problem manage on the work floor. The partners share their experience and ideas about the development of a functional assessment tool regarding to education and work; to make a translation from diagnosis into a practical tool that facilitates the educational and labour system in guiding and supporting the client.

At the drawing up of the programme a certain logic was followed. The subject of the meeting was split up in to five steps that form the red wire of the conference. We tried to fill in the different topics in the program as well as possible by means of discussions, presentations and good practice examples. This substantive report respects the same logic and refers to the different elements of the programme that were joined in the documentation cord of the conference.

In the first part we discuss the importance of the functional assessment. We refer for this mainly to the different contributions and the debate of the public mini conference, which took place on Tuesday 14 February 2006 (see reader chapter 4 p. 41). For the exchange of information and insights about functional assessment it's essential that we use a correct demarcation of the target group (SG1). A fast and correct diagnosis is a first step to ensure the recognition of the problems of the target group. A functional diagnosis is important because we want to help the target group as soon as possible (SG1). A diagnose becomes functional when we are also translating the problems due to the impairment in to the context of the work situation. In the second part of this report we therefore discuss the target group demarcation and how the problems translate themselves in the field of work. We refer for this to the scientific statement of doctor Roelen of the therapy centre indigo on Tuesday 14/2. The doctor repeats that exercise in particular for the topic Dyslexia and NLD within the

framework of the bilateral exchange. We refer to his contribution on Thursday in the reader on page 96.

Since the term assessment covers a wide range of several possible interpretations, we try to determine the content of it as strict as possible (SG2). It is exactly for this reason that we introduced the term functional assessment with a very specific interpretation (SG3). In the fourth part we will try to understand it's meaning by situating the functional assessment within the methodical framework of the supported employment. We will search for the different elements needed for the developing of a functional assessment that take the particular target group into account. We refer to the contribution of ad Wiese (SG4). The whole conference was dominated by the development of functional assessment for a particular target group as a pre-eminently tool. In the sixth and seventh component we try to discussion the topic in two workshops. They are meant as a first brainstorming-exercise with the given input in which we try to apply the granted insights for bilateral use. Each workshop had an introduction and a debate on the subject (SG5).

## **I. Functional assessment for specific target groups**

On 14 February we organised a public conference. The aim was to establish the attention on the problems of the employment of persons with a learning disorder. Several participants were invited. They each gave us an input from their own experience. These were different elements for the discussion on the need for instruments and tools for the support of the target group. We refer to the fourth chapter of the reader. By way of introduction of this substantive report we will handout some fragments and general conclusions of the public debate.

Is there enough awareness in other countries for the needs of these target groups?

Dr Roelen, Indigo (Learning Gateway): 4 adults contacted me for the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> time We had to try to help them to get some recognition for their problem. A lot of professionals cannot understand that these people have a lot of problems. It was impossible that a man of 25 years old, who finished secondary school could get a recognition and support from the government. Testimonies NLD, there is a big chance that they will not get any recognition. In Belgium, specialised help is given because of some diagnosis. Only when people get the right diagnose, they can get a tailor made solution. Awareness is growing, but it has a long way to go. There's too little attention. People with NLD are freaks for some people. Therefore we have to talk about their strengths. People with NLD avoid pitfalls and they developed a toolkit. (supportive way). Let's focus on what they can.

Willy Aerts, NMS (Learning Gateway): People with Dyslexia developed a toolbox with tricks. Most of their colleagues don't know if they have Dyslexia. Society changes so fast. The tricks of people with dyslexia, NLD doesn't work anymore. They need real and new tools/instruments. Functional assessment is the tool they need!

Is it possible to obtain livelong access to support from the government ?

Michael De Blauwe, Flemish agency for employment (VDAB): Support is limited in time (6 to 8 months). After this period, guidance stops. When they face new problems, they can return to VDAB. We have to find a system that's concentrated on job retention.



Ilse Van De Putte, Flemish government: We have to stress the talents of these persons. Now, diagnosis is focused on *what they cannot*. We try to transfer target groups towards regular jobs and into social economy. In the near future, VDAB becomes responsible for all. It's a challenge for the next years to integrate regular routes of VDAB and specialised routes in a good way. The inclusive idea can be realised when persons with disabilities can find a job in the regular economy. It's important to have well-informed employers. A qualitative mediation means knowing the problem AND knowing the tools. This process is in progress. A workgroup is going on and developed several tools: VIP, CAO 26... There's a negative spiral for people to get the right help. There are so many different target groups. How are we going to take care for all these groups?

Pascal Paquot, Kairo-project (NI): It's also important to raise the awareness in school. School and teachers often are confused with the different target groups in class.

Katrien, person with NLD: ... There is one psychologist who can help me, but there's a waiting list for at least six months. So they couldn't help me. In my opinion, Belgium discriminates people with NLD. Why is there no CAO26, VIP... for people with NLD? The private sector is not open for people like me, social sector should give us more time.

Ilse Van De Putte, Flemish government: We know about the problem and the Minister is concerned about it. Most VDAB-consultants are generalists. They know the barriers of all special groups. It's a challenge to inform everybody about handicap, religion... We have to find a system that they are able to help in a more specific way. For instance, in partnership with ATB, project with many target groups) Minister Vandenbroucke of Work and Labour goes for talents but also the talents of people with disorders must be investigated. A diagnose is not always negative. We have to investigate what people can and what they can't. We will investigate all the existing instruments.

After this public conference Ilse Van De Putte, representative of the cabinet of the Flemish minister of work and education, remembers the following:

1. The particular character of these problems requires a tailor-made approach.
2. The importance of a strong conciliation to the employers
3. Focus on the competences

In the next component of this report we try to focus on the target group and their needs in the field of work as a main point for the development of a functional assessment.

## **II. Definition of the target group(s) and functional diagnosis**

### **Introduction**

A correct diagnosis does not only form an important step in the recognition of the problems and needs of the target group. It forms the basis for the development of a functional assessment regarding education and work. Insight and know-how on the needs of the target group regarding education and work forms the main point. A functional diagnosis forms a first vital link in this process. The reason is that made a functional assessment makes the translation from the restrictions and problems (beside the possibilities and abilities) to the competences needed for a certain job(profile). Competences, for us, mean the whole of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that an employee needs to function good in his job.



They describe how a job has to be practiced and not what the job means. You can develop your competences and so you can also grow into your job.

Before we discuss further on the subject of the target group characteristics and functional diagnosis, we wish to define some other terms which are basically to be distinguished from the term diagnose. With detection for example, we mean a sign that something is going on. We suspect that there is a problem and we like to confirm this suspicion. The way in which the term detection is often used is in analysis. You try to find out whether or not a person has a certain disease. This use is situated at the level of diagnosis. So we prefer not to use the term in this way.

We remember, however, the importance of a fast detection as a first step before the diagnostic research process. The fast detection is important to start up the support as soon as possible. Also screening is to distinguish from the term assessment or functional diagnosis. Screening has several meanings and must be defined to avoid possible misunderstandings. Screening is a short interview or checklist that is used to make a rough selection. Based on the presence or absence of a certain feature you are put in one or another category. Screening is not the term we use when you like to confirm a suspicion. We've called that detection.

## **1. The needs of the target group on the shop floor and functional diagnosis by doctor Roelen**

Dr. Roelen continues with a presentation on the thematic introduction of learning disabilities: dyslexia, NLD and autism spectrum disorder. He is manager of the therapy centre "Indigo". A Centre for diagnoses, counselling and therapy, specialized in special target groups. The presentation gives us more understanding about learning disabilities and offers a clear scientific framework that's very useful for the partnership. He will give us a thematic introduction on Dyslexia – NLD – A.S.D.: definition and diagnose. This scientific framework will not only give a clear definition and tell us more about the correct way of diagnose but will also focus on the special needs of the target groups (SG2 and SG3), a crucial part for the develop of a functional assessment for these specific target groups. For the development of a functional assessment regarding Dyslexia en NLD we also refer to the reader page 96.

### **1.1. Scientific statement regarding Dyslexia, NLD and ASD**

#### **Introduction**

- Dyslexia → learning disability
- Autism → developmental disorder
- Nonverbal learning disability

#### Children

- not only in childhood
- postponed diagnosis

#### Adults

- normal intelligence
- definitions
- diagnostic considerations

Hierarchy in diagnostic thinking: the most pervasive and most important problem prevails.

## **Dyslexia**

- difficulties
- with the learning process of reading and/or spelling
- not in relation to his intelligence
  - o constitutional and persisting
  - o not caused by 'circumstances'
  - o at least partly resistant to treatment
  - o persisting into adulthood
- 3 – 5 % of the population
- mostly hereditary
- arising problems are dependant on the language
  - o English versus Italian
  - o Dutch in-between
- investigation:
  - o recognise the problem
  - o explaining and specification
  - o differential diagnosis and co-morbidity
  - o give advise
- recognise the problem
  - o taking history, collecting information
  - o measuring skills (reading, spelling, intelligence)
- explaining and specification
  - o auditory
  - o visual
  - o memory, spatial abilities
  - o executive functioning
  - o reading comprehension
- other problems?
  - o more than 50 % risk in having at least one other problem
  - o attention deficit disorder
  - o mathematics disabilities
  - o fine motor problems
  - o part of broader problem
    - nonverbal learning disability
    - autism spectrum disorder
    - tourette's syndrome
  - o secondary problems
    - self esteem
    - depression
    - anxiety
    - behavioural problems

## **Nonverbal learning disability**

- bad name
- this is not a learning disability
- learning disability being just a part of the consequences
- this is not non-verbal
- not the opposite of verbal learning disability
- risk of having serious dyslexia
- constitutional and persisting
  - o not caused by 'circumstances'
  - o resistant to treatment

- persisting into adulthood
- problems with
  - spatial abilities, orientation
  - organisation
  - complex visual memory
  - fine motor problems
  - learning (mathematics, spelling, reading, ...)
  - 'automate'
- and a recognisable neuropsychological profile
- toddlers:
  - mostly rather passive, not much exploration
  - not playing with construction toys
  - verbal
  - claiming behaviour
  - 'hyperactive impression': claiming
  - difficulties in learning to swim and bike
- school
  - automation problems: starting to read, write, mathematics
  - persistent learning difficulties
  - returning problems with new concepts
  - reading comprehension
  - handwriting
  - attention deficit
    - other than in AD(H)D!
  - internalising problems
    - fears, withdrawal from interaction, depression
    - others do not recognise problems
- puberty and adolescence:
  - learning problems
  - training periods, end works
- adults:
  - organisation, orientation stay difficult
  - secondary problems
    - fears
    - depression
    - obsessive-compulsive disorder
    - few social skills
      - social abilities and social behaviour are also automation processes
- new situations are difficult to handle
- verbal abilities give rise to overestimation
- nonverbal learning disability ... is not a behavioural diagnosis
- high risk for (secondary) behavioural problems but core problem is automation, spatial abilities, organisation, ...
- and neuropsychological profile
  - in intelligence tests
  - in tests for spatial abilities
- can be part of broader diagnosis:
  - autism
  - gilles de la tourette syndrome
- history

- neuropsychological profile
- intelligence
- attention
- spatial abilities
- learning skills
- investigate for other problems

### **Autism spectrum disorder**

- pervasive developmental disorder
- difficulties in social interaction
- difficulties in communication
- having unusual patterns of interests
- constitutional and persisting
  - not caused by 'circumstances'
  - resistant to treatment
  - persisting into adulthood
- caused by:
  - problems with theory of mind
  - problems with central coherence
- theory of mind
  - ability to understand what others know, feel, intent to do, ...
  - being able to take the point of view of others into account
  - necessary for social functioning
  - necessary for normal interaction with other people
- central coherence
  - ability to think in concepts
  - ability to see causes and consequences
  - ability to see, feel, consider the relationship between different objects, words, situations, ..
  - people with autism spectrum disorder think in details, think very concrete
  - making them inflexible and not loving changes in daily patterns
- 1 in 400 people ?
- at least 5000 adults with normal intelligence in Flanders
- mostly hereditary
- investigation:
  - taking history
  - (neuropsychological) tests:
    - trying to recognise problems in theory of mind
    - trying to recognise problems in central coherence
    - co-morbidity and secondary problems
      - attention deficit
      - fears
      - depression
      - learning difficulties and disabilities
- mostly no employment at their cognitive level
- acceptable evolution in professional functioning only in 1 of 4 intelligent people with autism spectrum disorder

## 1.2 Conclusions

All three leading to possible problems in professional functioning.  
Underlying problems are frequently not recognised by employers and colleagues.  
Even not recognised by professionals.

The TCA-partnership concluded to take the following elements of the framework presented by Doctor Roelen in to account:

- developmental NLD/ASD
  - versus
  - learning disability dyslexia
- different characteristics
  - versus
  - similarities p.a.:
    - organizational skills
    - problem solving
    - spatial orientation
    - intelligence versus practical skills

## 2. The problems that the target groups encounter at work: NLD as a case study

The problems that the target group encounter at work are illustrated in many ways during the conference. We refer to the testimonies of the employees in the reader on page 48. As an example of the translation of the problems we discuss the case of someone with NLD. It concerns an extract of the interview within the framework of the working group "detection" of the Equal project.

We refer to the best practice example in the reader on p 52, the outcome of the working group detection as explained in the bilateral exchange moment of Thursday (cfr. page 102). We preferred to use a case study of someone with NLD on the public conference since it is the most unknown target group. By this example we wish to illustrate the problems and how the translation towards the competences can be made. We want to underline the importance of the secondary characteristics (important for assessment!!). We need to know what the problems are to assess employees.

### 2.1. "Which consequences does NLD have at work?"

#### a. Spatial –visual problems

"I regularly pick the wrong alley, that is: I do not take the shortest way to a given section. I have problems estimating distances and volume, which is bothersome when moving books or entire sections. It takes me distinctly longer to get used to a new lay out/ floor plan."

#### b. Automation

"If I want to keep up with my colleagues, the handling of books and materials (scanning, processing, sorting and shelving) still requires tremendous concentration and a lot of energy. Poor keyboard skills (computer)."



**c. Organisational problems**

Keeping time. Being on time. Planning ahead (workload/time) Assigning time and energy to a task. Meeting deadlines. Multi tasking. Switching rapidly from simple jobs (sorting/scanning books) to more demanding ones (providing library instruction, information desk)

**d. Abstract reasoning**

A lot of concepts in my field of work are rather abstract: the rules and aspects of classification, the physical way of the book, parameters of library software: It all needs a very long time to sink in. I fail to grasp certain concepts fully: I have to look up or enquire about matters my colleagues manage to remember without aid or extra instruction.

**e. Motor skills/coordination**

Library work involves a lot of walking, lifting, handling of materials. To many colleagues my poor motor skills are my sole handicap. I blame my legs and back and I try to walk faster to make up for lost time. I regularly drop things and bump into people.

**f. Visual problems**

I have problems with Excel software and tables in general. Interpreting our daily work schedule/time table is quite a challenge. Occasional "oversights" and blind spots make me miss out on significant details.

**2.2. "What efforts do you personally make to meet expectations?"**

Basically, you use all you have going for yourself, exploit your strong points to the maximum, use every trick, every coping strategy you have. I draw heavily on my strong work ethics, sense of duty and lots of dedication. I work twice as hard to get the same result as an average colleague, that's my choice. I try to mix challenging aspects or projects with less challenging activities like sorting books. If I work hard, focus and plan well, I am able to function on a graduate level for a limited amount of time. So I do take on short running projects that provide this challenge and give me a strong sense of achievement.

Yes NLD plays a role: Promoting would mean taking up a position as a junior manager, becoming a team leader. As I pointed out above, NLD makes that impossible. For one, I certainly do not have the time or energy to take evening classes to attain a certificate to further my career. I have avoided jobs with a strong managerial component because I know I would underachieve (the peter-principle). Why take up /pursue one now?

To what extent do you worry about NLD in the work place?

What all the symptoms of NLD eventually add up to, to which extent NLD determine one's entire life... that is almost impossible to explain let alone understand. I cannot expect my colleagues to appreciate the full-blown impact of NLD on my life. Also, I do not want to be viewed as a patient or someone with a deplorable handicap. I will go great lengths to avoid that trap; I do not want (self) pity, because it gets you down. A lot of people face tougher challenges than NLD.

I have not informed my other superiors or the management team for fear of not being considered for more demanding projects. I would rather deal with extra stress and possible exhaustion than having to face dwindling job satisfaction and self-esteem. Basically, I need to find more and better coping strategies and lots of energy.



Do you have sufficient information on NLD to stand up for yourself in the work place?

According to others, I have a pretty good idea of what NLD is about. Yet, it is not always easy to get my point across, some aspects are very hard for me to explain and hard to grasp for outsiders. That's frustrating and challenging at the same time.

There is a lot of information on NLD in young children, but significantly less on NLD in teens and adults. The sources on which I draw are very limited.

Is NLD a limitation in your professional life?

It took me a long time to realise what my potential was and to accept my limitations. This NLD is my personal glass ceiling. I had to accept that my professional challenge would be to do this job well and not aspire to anything higher.

### **2.3 Limitations in other fields**

NLD interferes with every aspect of my life. It takes a lot of humour, energy and determination to deal with that and not get depressed or lose courage. I have accepted NLD as a professional glass ceiling. It is however extremely hard to come to terms with any restrictions it may pose on my free time, my relationship, and my role as a mother...

(Maybe we should rename NLD, because it affects more than "learning" it affects all aspects of life, one's entire personality. My sister calls it "een leef- en leerstoornis" and she's right.)

Imagine (if you can) running a household, raising a child while having NLD?

Normal things like getting a driver's license (forget about actually driving a car...), taking dance classes, reading sheet music (I sing in a choir)...require tremendous amounts of perseverance and energy. An unexpected situation, surprises..., anything that is not carefully planned is a challenge beyond compare.

These are aspects normal people never stop to think about.

They can't imagine what it's like: A part of me functions normally, a part of me doesn't.

Sometimes I feel like Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Most of my energy goes into my job and into my family; as a result, my social life is rather limited. I have a number of good friends but I have to struggle to keep in touch. I hardly have the time and energy to pursue my hobbies seriously or keep up with my reading. Let alone to take evening classes to further my career or pursue any interests I may have.

In all these aspects, my NLD also strongly affects the quality of life of my partner and of my son and of the wider circle of family and friends.

For me, that is the first and foremost reason to call for more and more diversified information on learning disorders for the general public. We do not need another freak show on TV, but publications and discussions on all aspects of living with learning disorders.

What should be done to improve the professional situation of persons with NLD?

In all its aspects, my NLD also strongly affects the quality of life of my partner and of my son and of the wider circle of family and friends. For me, that is the first and foremost reason to call for more and more diversified information on learning disorders for the general public.

We do not need another freak show on TV, but information, publications and discussions on all aspects of living with learning disorders.



As to NLD/learning disorders on the work floor: Corporate, professional environments in general are not very considerate towards “challenged” employees, be it parents, disabled people, persons with learning disorders or anyone with a life after work hours. A genuinely employee-focussed policy would make a huge difference to all of us; and greatly improve our quality of life.

Please learn to appreciate that challenges are only a matter of character as to how you deal with them. I did not choose to be challenged the way I am. My learning disorder is not a flaw of character.

If employers, teachers, in fact society as a whole, would understand this, they could appreciate us for who we really are: committed, talented people who make great efforts to meet expectations and to function well.

On a more pragmatic level:

- Please think about how you present information, express expectations or set goals.
- Have you used various tools and means (visual, verbal...)?
- Consider appointing a steward for all challenged employees (learning disorders, other disabilities, different cultural backgrounds, non native speakers....) or on a personal level, assign a buddy to each single one of them.
- Avoid multi-tasking. Break up projects or larger tasks into smaller consecutive tasks and set a clear deadline for each sub-task. Give regular feedback and check on progress.
- Avoid stress.
- Clearly communicate changes/ moves etc. well in advance
- Allow for participation; ask challenged employees to make suggestions as to how to improve their situation/facilitate their job.
- Develop a strong sense of humour
- Be willing to question everything you take for granted.

### III. Functional assessment as a tool for training and education

**Supported employment** is a frame for the employer and the employee by which it becomes possible for persons with a handicap to gain and to obtain a paid job. The goal is to realise an employment as normal as possible that is tuned to the possibilities and desires of the employee and that upholds the demands of the employer. This is a process in five different steps. First we make an assessment of the person (future employee). You can also call this a client profile. Then we find a job. After this we make an analysis of the job and we set up a job profile. In the fourth step we match the client profile with the job profile. It is not necessary to make a perfect match. It is however the intention that from this match you know what the employee needs the work on if he wants to grow in his job. The final step is the job coaching. A plan is set up to train in those competences that need to improve. This process can be run trough at several moments in someone's career and thus it stimulates lifelong learning.

With **assessment** we mean the making of a systematic overview of all the skills, possibilities, interests, developing possibilities and disabilities of a person. We put the competences in a context. Out of the behaviour pattern of a person we assess certain actions. There are three points we focus on. First we focus on what the employee wants and what his possibilities are. Then we try to find out what his skills are and who he is as a



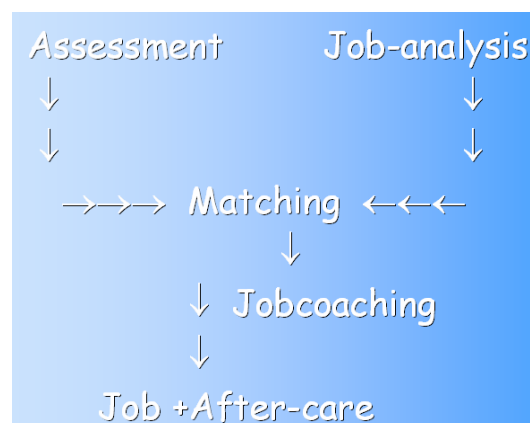
person. You need to get a view on what a person can do but also on his social skills and his attitude towards work. Last we focus on the learning possibilities of the person. You need to know if a person can learn and is trainable. All this information together gives a view of who the person is, what he can do and what his possibilities are. You can also call this the client profile and it is the actual goal of an assessment.

**Functional assessment** takes assessment a step further.

You analyse and observe the competences of a person in function of the job.

The goal is to see if the competences needed for the job are present or trainable.

The only way that you can really make sure that a person has a certain competence is by observing him in a 'working context'. That way you can make a client profile that focuses on the job is functional and has practical use.



#### IV. The development of a functional assessment for special target groups

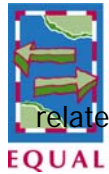
##### 1. The process of development of a functional assessment for special target groups *by Ad Wiese*

In the traditional vocational training the order is Assess-Train-Place. This approach is more deficiency oriented. Since the early nineties a new method is developed: Supported Employment. In Supported Employment the order is Place-Train-Maintain. This method is more work oriented, rather than deficiency oriented. The World Association for Supported Employment describes Supported Employment as paid work in integrated work settings with ongoing support for individuals with disabilities in the open labor market. Paid work for individuals means the same payment for the same work as for persons without disabilities.

Supported employment is a method, which has proven to be a very successful one, concerning to obtain a job in the open labor market. S.E. knows several phases:

#### Assessment

For a successful job placement, a clear understanding of the client's ability to perform particular tasks is necessary. This is determined through formal and informal measures.



relate to spec

Special consideration must be given to the interests of the client and how they An understanding of the prospective employee's skills, surroundings, interests and possibilities for employment success are acquired. In addition, a great deal of information is furnished by the individuals themselves. If the potential employee is unable to provide the necessary information, data can be acquired from his or her family/guardians and significant others. Involving significant persons in a client's life during the various phases of the Supported Employment methodology is always a good practice.

## **Job Finding**

One phase of the Supported Employment methodology is researching the open labor market to identify suitable job placements for clients with disabilities. The central criteria for suitability are that the job is consistent with client interests and that the client receives regular wages.

When searching for suitable employment possibilities, the focus is always on a specific client. Otherwise, there is the danger of fitting a client to existing jobs- a clear violation of the underlying philosophy of the Supported Employment methodology.

A good understanding of the employer and the company as a whole is necessary. Thus, an analysis of job possibilities in a given region is undertaken before a particular employer is approached. The intent is to acquire a clear understanding of job prospects in a specific area. Who the client would be directly working for, the various occupational groups within the company, the exact functions of employees within the company and the company's mandate and philosophy are just a few of the areas a support person must inquire into. An inventory of community resources (Transportation, training opportunities, funding sources, employment agencies, etc.) within the given region is also recommended.

The suitability of a job is assessed with respect to task requirements, working conditions, working relationships and terms of employment (pay, benefits, hours of work, etc.). Not only should existing jobs be evaluated, but the possibility of creating new positions should also be assessed.

## **Job Analysis**

The following phase is an important aspect of integrating persons with disabilities into the open labor market. The reason being that it is the point at which the details of a job possibility are attended to. In other words, the various elements of a job are thoroughly examined with the purpose of identifying those able to be completed by the client with a disability. What is sought is a precise understanding of each aspect of the position and the work environment so that a comprehensive job description can be formulated.

The potential job is examined and broken down into smaller components so as to determine which skills and knowledge, on the part of the employee, are necessary for him or her to achieve employment success. It must be emphasized that the intent of the task analysis is not to formulate a list of job qualifications- that would limit opportunities. Rather, it is the basis for designing a training program.

## **Job Matching**

During the following phase, information acquired from the job analysis and assessment is called upon so as to achieve the best possible job placement. In other words, there is the



determination of the degree to which job demands match the abilities of the prospective employee. It is during this phase of the Supported employment method that the individual with a disability is linked to a particular job. A perfect match between an employees' skills and the demands of the position is impossible. The intent, however, is to find the best possible match between the interests of the client and the demands of the position. It must be emphasized that the employee must be aware of all developments in the matching process.

### **Job Coaching**

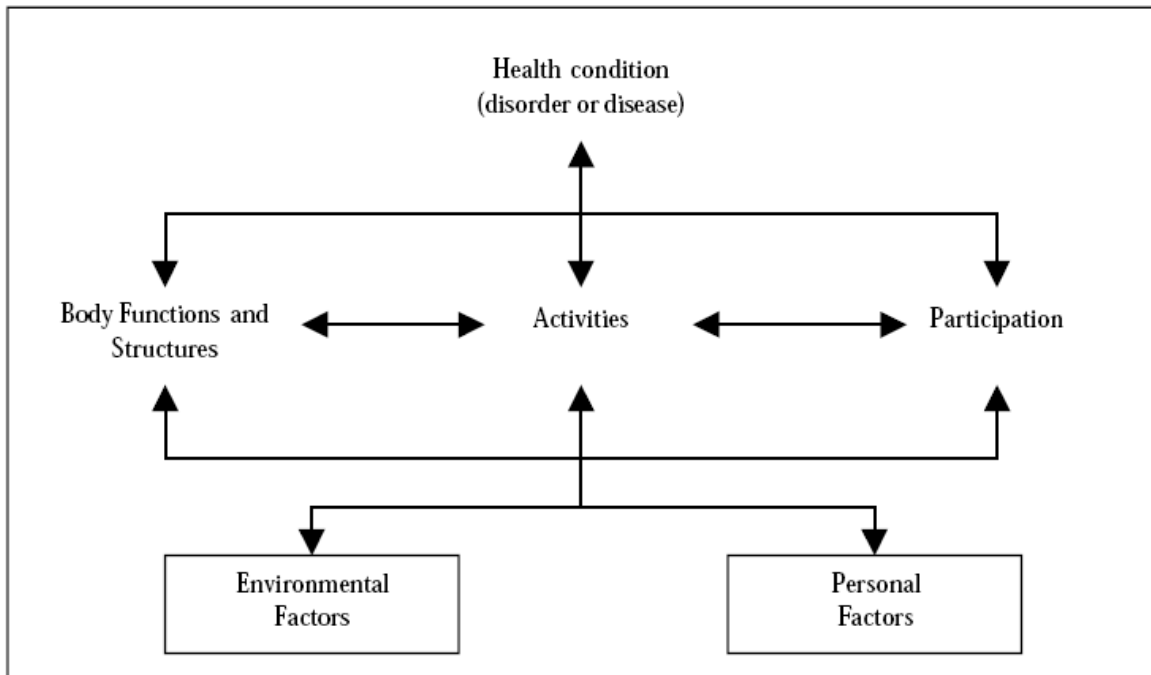
To assist the employee in achieving job success, he or she is assigned a trainer responsible for providing on-site training and support. The job coach initiates and facilitates systematic learning, on the part of the employee, of the social and practical skills necessary for the position. The job coach is also intended to be a resource for employers and co-workers. For example, if the computers in a work site are being upgraded, the employer might consult the job coach to determine which equipment would be most compatible with the needs and abilities of the employee with a disability. As previously stated, the job coach should strive to promote, during training, the active involvement of clients and their co-workers. Before the individual with a disability can begin work, the job coach must be familiar with all aspects of the job placement. Furthermore, he or she must familiarize co-workers of the person with a disability with Supported Employment methods and with their role in the process. It is at this time that the job coach sets up the training program for the disabled employee. When the disabled employee begins work, a large portion of job tasks will be completed by the job coach. As the employee adjusts to the job, the job coach gradually fades off.

### **On going support**

The phase of job coaching will gradually change into a distant guiding. Clients can call when necessary and the coach can also visit the client, the co-worker and employer.

### **Functional Assessment**

Assessment can be done in many ways. One way is to make a classification as a start. Most systems are very limited, as they focus on diagnosis rather than perspective in employment. An exception is the International Classification of Functions, a classification system of the World Health Organization. This system looks at the following items:



The foundations of the ICF are:

- ◆ Human Functioning - not merely disability
- ◆ Universal Model - not a minority model
- ◆ Integrative Model - not merely medical or social
- ◆ Interactive Model - not linear progressive
- ◆ Parity - not etiological causality
- ◆ Context - inclusive - not person alone
- ◆ Cultural applicability - not western concepts
- ◆ Operational - not theory driven alone
- ◆ Life span coverage - not adult driven

More information can be found on [www.who.int/classifications/icf](http://www.who.int/classifications/icf).

As we focus on supported employment, we focus on the functional assessment. There are several approaches in functional assessment. Some see this process as one that seeks to identify the problem; a child or adolescent may have to determine the cause of the problem and to develop interventions to solve it or to have alternatives. They want to identify the problem that needs to change, collect data on the problem, develop a "hypothesis" about the reason of the problem, develop an intervention to help to solve the problem, evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and most of all .....have patience.

A more effective approach, when it comes to SE, is to see the end of the line: the job coaching. A job coach coaches a client in

- ◆ Knowing work duties and performance standards
- ◆ Being able to adjust to the site-related expectations
- ◆ Performing site-appropriate work-related behaviors
- ◆ Having the sense of belonging to the workforce
- ◆ Understanding and using the benefits of employment



- ◆ Having a community support system

When we translate these goals in the phase of job coaching to what we need to know in the assessment phase, we get the following items:

- ◆ Do you know what your client wants to do
- ◆ Can he perform the work duties and performance standards
- ◆ Is he able to adjust to the site-related expectations
- ◆ Can he perform site-appropriate work-related behaviors
- ◆ Does he have the sense of belonging to the workforce
- ◆ Does he understand and can he use the benefits of employment
- ◆ Does he have a community support system

With each item you can find out whether your client has the competences for this and if this relates to the diagnosis and if so, how. Crucial is if you as a job coach can coach him till he knows what he wants to do.

Functional assessment should be considered as a description of the connection between the client's wishes to have a paid work in integrated work settings and a prediction of the client's abilities and competences to fulfill and maintain this job.

And all of this with our support.

Assessment is a prediction of success factors in the future regarding your job. But there are some reasons against this prediction. A lot of different people fit in one job and one person fits in a lot of jobs. Besides this fitting in a job is a matter of development and every person can make a job fitting to himself. And what about education? No training makes you really fit to a job.

Items you can relate to when you do a functional assessment is

- ◆ wishes
- ◆ motives
- ◆ expectations
- ◆ education
- ◆ employment experiences
- ◆ gained skills and hobbies
- ◆ person related factors
- ◆ ability to handle stress
- ◆ learning abilities
- ◆ perspective
- ◆ network support

When we set the materials to build our functional assess tool, we should first make some assumptions: Do we use the method of Supported Employment and do we accept functional assessment as a tool to describe the connection between the client's wishes to have a paid work in integrated work settings and the client's abilities and competences to fulfill and maintain this job. And with the mentioned ingredients we can start to build our functional assess tool.

*Materials to build an assessment*

<i>Item</i>	<i>Possibilities</i>	<i>Limitations</i>
<i>wishes</i>		
<i>duties</i>		
<i>expectations</i>		
<i>behavior</i>		
<i>belonging</i>		
<i>benefits</i>		
<i>support</i>		

<i>Item</i>	<i>Possibilities</i>	<i>Limitations</i>

**2. Assessment: method and conditions in a general sense**

In this part of the report we wish to illustrate the methods for assessment in general sense (WAKKER-Method, etc). The contribution of Sofie Offeciers presents the assessment of WEB as a best practice example.

- COMPASS: competence assessment (unemployed)
- Assessment on the work floor (employees)

Competence assessment used as screening instrument of competences for unemployed (Compass)

vs.

Competence assessment used for development competences for employees

Assessment on the work floor

Self - assessment

**COMPASS**

- a) Intention
  - Orientation of unemployed
  - Picture of their skills
  - Picture strengths-weaknesses
  - Not how much they know but what they do with their knowledge
- b) Exercises
  - Working with their hands
  - Working with numbers and logical thinking

- Working with language
- Working with others
- c) Ways of working
  - under guidance
  - with a little bit of help
  - on their own
- d) Exercises on their level of knowledge
  - Test
  - Exercise must be challenging
- e) Feedback
  - Report
  - Self Assessment
  - Advice

### Competences

- Independence
- Flexibility
- Persistency
- Assertiveness
- Listening skills
- Initiative
- Motivation
- Work speed
- Teamwork
- Carefulness
- Accuracy
- Tidiness
- Punctuality
- Personality
- Oral communication skills

### Assessment on the shop floor

- a) Perception: see, feel, hear, smell, taste

#### Observation

- Focused
- Systematically
- Unbiased

#### Interpretation

- b) Using the WAKKER-method

- |              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| - Observe    | (Waarnemen)           |
| - Take Notes | (Aantekeningen maken) |
| - Classify   | (Klassificeren)       |
| - Quantify   | (Kwantificeren)       |
| - Evaluate   | (Evalueren)           |
| - Report     | (Rapporteren)         |

BASIS = competence profile

- a) Observe :
  - Observing behaviour on the work floor, accurate, leaving out any interpretations
  - Positive and negative behaviour
  - X helps customer with packing his goods / X makes his workplace tidy every day / X is too late at work
  - Only relevant behaviour. Basis = competence profile
- b) Make Notes :
  - Write down as you see it.
  - Only concrete observations. No interpretations.
  - Information of colleagues or customers could be useful as extra info.
  - BUT be ware of subjective info. Always check with your own observations over a long period of time.
- c) Classify :
  - Translation of observations to competences
  - Is the behaviour observed an indicator of the competence yes or no (+ or -)
  - !! Know which competences you are observing and their definitions
- d) Quantify
  - Take into account all observations (negative and positive) and come to a score: level of competence
- e) Evaluate
  - Check your findings with colleagues.
  - If needed clarify certain observations with the employee.
  - Create a total picture of the competences of the employee.
- f) Report
  - Make a report of the competence profile with its strengths and weaknesses
  - Illustrate your findings with concrete observations

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

- Employee fills in his own competence profile
  - Both profiles are put together during a Personal Development Talk
- AIM:
- look for strong competences and competences that need further development
  - agree on engagements for the future
  - write engagements down in a Personal Development Plan

## Conclusions

In the previous we hope to have illustrated the different elements needed to develop a functional assessment (tool). Essential is the functional diagnosis and the translation of the problems of the impairment in the context of work by use of a competence profile (functional assessment). The supported employment forms the suitable frame of reference and the assessment is given a concrete shape by means of tasks in which we observe in an objective manner. The methodology was illustrated by means of general assessment methods such as the method "WAKKER" and "Compass" as illustrated by the best practice example of WEB.

## V. A framework for the functional assessment of the specific intended audiences

### 1. A framework for the functional assessment of the specific intended audience A.S.D.

#### 1.1 Introduction by Kristien Reyniers (Ergasia), Tom Claes en Inge Pauwels (De Ploeg)

As an introduction of the workshop the partnership Auticura, Ergasia and De Ploeg explained about their assessment for people with ASD. The lecture about assessment was not meant to be complete or to be the only possible way. It's an introduction for the further debate in which the method and conditions can be determined for an assessment for people with ASD. It is a best practice example of functional assessment specific for the target group for people with ASD.

Assessment is seen as a whole of actions that starts when the client formulates a question for work towards us and it continues through the whole process and can go on after the employment. Assessment is necessary to adjust the support to the needs of the client at that time. Therefore we have to gather continuously his questions, his characteristics (strengths and weaknesses), skills and attitude. So we know which kind of support the client needs and who has to give the support.<sup>1</sup>

#### **To observe**

Here the assessment starts. We observe the competences of a client in a simulation of working context. This client comes to work every morning in De Ploeg in a small group with other clients with autism. We organise tasks that gives us the opportunity to observe the clients characteristics, skills and attitude.

For example:

- to verify his sense for precise work we can give a task with a lot of numbers
- to verify his level of task comprehension we use specific written instructions.
- to verify his flexibility, interrupt the client on purpose and see how he responds
- to verify his ability to cooperate we cook together
- to verify his rate (how fast he is), we work at a mailing for a magazine.

#### **Self-Evaluation**

During this period of observation, we have individual conversations in which the client evaluates himself with the same competences by means of a scale. This method of self-evaluation gives the client the opportunity to think and talk about his own functioning related to work, to learn about his autism and the consequences of that autism on his functioning. This for each person on his own level. For the job coach it gives the opportunity to see how far the client is in dealing with autism, which reflections he can make and how realistic these are related to work. It is the most important instrument for us because it gives an insight into the way of thinking and the needs of the client. This will control the course of our following actions. After the self-evaluation there comes a team evaluation.

#### **Team evaluation.**

Each self – evaluation is followed by a team – evaluation. The evaluation completed with the observations we made during the internal training period is a base for this evaluation. The

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of support are: psychological support, support in training attitude, support in procedures to apply for a job...

evaluation team start from the definitions the clients have formulated and are compared with the reality of a paid job. Their qualities and special skills are highlighted.<sup>2</sup>

Problems get concretized and when it's possible trained to change. The skills can be trained and practiced during the internal training period. 'Defaults' which can not be changed by training (and which are mostly directly related to their autism) get concretized, but immediately converted to conditions a work place should have. This way we make a list with conditions a work place should have. For example: - not able to work together, so look for a work place with individual work. The self – evaluation and the team – evaluation together point out the direction of the course. Clients learn to know their self. The job coach gets indications for a course plan and meanwhile makes a translation or a link to possible jobs.

### **Job finding**

Like we already mentioned, during the evaluation the client and job coach make a list of conditions a job should have. With this list we try to find suitable jobs. We phone them, or make visits with the company. The function of making visits is to check in front how adaptable a job is and if the employer is willing to make this adapt (job assessment, assessment of the employer draw up a job profile). There is a job profile drawn up which describes the skills and attitudes and a concrete description of the task. The job has to suit as much as possible to the attention points of the client (profile of job and profile of client have to correspond with each other).

For example: - lack of flexibility: fixed packet of tasks, no contact with customers (urgent phones, tasks,...)

### **External training period**

After the internal training period comes an external training period in which skills and attitudes in a real work place have to be used.

During an external training evaluation we see if the client satisfies the expectations of the company and if the job suits the needs of the client.

On the job there will never be a match of 100%. In that case we can train the client or we can adapt the job. For example: - working tempo: can be raised by training the client or by simplifying the job.

If the gap between client and job is too big an external training period will stop.

If it's necessary to adapt the job in such a specific way that it results in a job that doesn't exist in a regular company, we have to look together with the client if we shouldn't adapt the goal we started with. In this case we can try to send the client to Ergasia where he can find a suitable job.

### **After – care**

After - care contains the installation of a person of trust who identifies problems. If there is a problem we go back to the company to have a look and to try to solve the problem. It would be ideal to have a regular contact between job coach, client and employer.

## **1. 2 Discussion about functional assessment for people with ASD moderated by Ad Wiese**

After the introduction the Polish and Dutch project groups accompanied by the Flemish partnership (Ergasia, Auticura and De Ploeg) and expert Ad Wiese reflect on the conditions

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<sup>2</sup> For Example: to be a perfectionist in tasks and to work accurately.

of the functional assessment for people with ASD. These key factors for Assessment where the result of the discussion:

1. Look with your heart. Be really interested in a person. (listen, be patient...)
2. Search for specific inner motivation
3. Assessment done in the working place. (generalisation/imagination)
4. Focus broader than work. P.a. leisure time, private life...
5. Let them experience their strengths and be aware of it; Put extra attention to it
6. They need to know what they need (support, conditions...) from the employer/workplace
7. Detecting Communication Skills
8. Integration is important: Can be in different ways. Ex. Some people better start in a sheltered place. Invite the environment in the sheltered place.
9. Use neuropsychological tests: focus on the work related issues (education)
10. Task is to empower client: help to recognize their own capacities/strengths. Give feedback about things they are good in (observation, behaviour...)
11. Be always alert in all activities, not only during the assessment moments
12. Don't use too much tests. Find a good balance. Most of the time, the answer is quite simple and clear. Keep the goal of assessment in mind.

## 2. A framework for the functional assessment of the specific intended audience DYSLEXIA/NLD

### 2.1 Introduction by Hans van de Velde, Equisto and Chairman of [www.woortblind.nl](http://www.woortblind.nl)

Equisto is specialised in coaching. They use a scale of expertise and life experience for the support of employees. We examine the person and his environment. For more information we refer to the reader on page 93. Good assessment is to alter tasks and to give structure. Coaching is 'to bring people in place'. A person with dyslexia is not only dyslectic. He's a man, he has a job, maybe he has some other handicaps, other capacities or other trauma's (co-morbidity). Mostly it is possible to find solutions for people with dyslexia. Ex. Policeman with dyslexia and dyscalculia. It's very hard for him to write the 'number plates' of cars. Solution: Give him a digital camera, or software to speak into text. Colleagues do have benefits by the problems of the person with dyslexia. ***Assessment is to match people together as Ying Yang and to search for complementary abilities.***

### 2.2 Discussion about functional assessment for people with Dyslexia moderated by Hans van de Velde

The group had a discussion about the problems specific for Dyslexia and the possible adjustments that could be made by each person and role in the company. The central questions was: ***"What can the different functions/roles do about an employee with dyslexia?"***

The result of this brainstorming and debate was written down in a scheme (an overview of measures and answers to the question: how can we support a person with dyslexia in a working place?) After the debate, the attendants conclude that everybody has its lacks and strengths and that it's important to inform all, not only the colleagues. It is important to stress the qualities of the person.

or	Employee	Function	Physical Environment	Social Environment
<b>Employee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Know himself as a worker</li> <li>- Time-management</li> <li>- Self knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tools + help if needed</li> <li>- observe job colleagues in action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tools</li> <li>- Software &amp; hardware</li> <li>- Time-management</li> <li>- Self-knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open conversation with everybody</li> </ul>
<b>HRM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working duo's</li> <li>- know this worker + create an attitude for diversity + understanding</li> <li>- talent search</li> <li>- Do they have to pay for adjustments</li> <li>- "Can they fire me"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time</li> <li>- understanding</li> <li>- look out for matching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- quiet room or headphones</li> <li>- Right to work at home</li> <li>- knowledge about rights</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness</li> <li>- information</li> </ul>
<b>1<sup>e</sup> line manager</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage, support rights</li> <li>- Structural method</li> <li>- observe, evaluate and adjust the gaps</li> <li>- Make development plan</li> <li>- see the strengths</li> <li>- five more time</li> <li>- provide tools + finances</li> <li>- job analysis clear task</li> <li>- help dyslectic people, use it as an inspiration for optimising the organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making duo's</li> <li>- Provide structure</li> <li>- Time</li> <li>- Adaptation weaknesses strengths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tools- adopted software</li> <li>- encourage , support, time</li> <li>- observe &amp; detect the gaps =&gt; good manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support colleagues</li> </ul>
<b>Manager</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to dictate to secretaries</li> <li>- split up takes + sequences</li> <li>- give instructions in smaller pieces</li> <li>- stimulate promote strengths job placement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Optimize work results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ICT pictograms not a lot distraction</li> <li>- has the money for special software...</li> <li>- Quite bureau</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- confidence ...</li> </ul>
<b>Social Worker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coach in private situation</li> <li>- Inform about learning difficulties + support in difficulties</li> <li>- Guide to information</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- create some understanding</li> <li>- Make it possible to talk about the disorders</li> <li>- support colleagues</li> </ul>
<b>Colleagues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Avoid overload</li> <li>- Exchange, animates the meeting</li> <li>- five more time</li> <li>- support, concrete things like checking texts</li> <li>- support self knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take over same tasks</li> <li>Exchange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Avoid overwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have to understand</li> </ul>
<b>Partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start a day</li> <li>- Love + understanding</li> <li>- support avoid problems</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- contact colleagues</li> </ul>
<b>Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A good agenda</li> <li>- Unions: Inform about their rights</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- organisers = time management</li> </ul>	27

