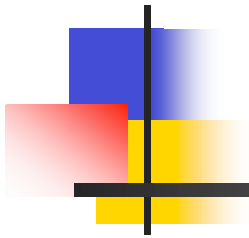# The Netherlands

Needs Based Assessment:
Chances & Challenges

Noëlle Pameijer, Cyprus,

oktober 2008

Principles NBA

1. Goal-directed
2. Specific needs of pupil and teacher
3. Transactional frame of reference
4. Partnerships
5. Positive aspects
6. Systematic and Transparant

Based on:

- Research data on effective schools (meta-analysis Marzano, 2007) & assessment (decision making)
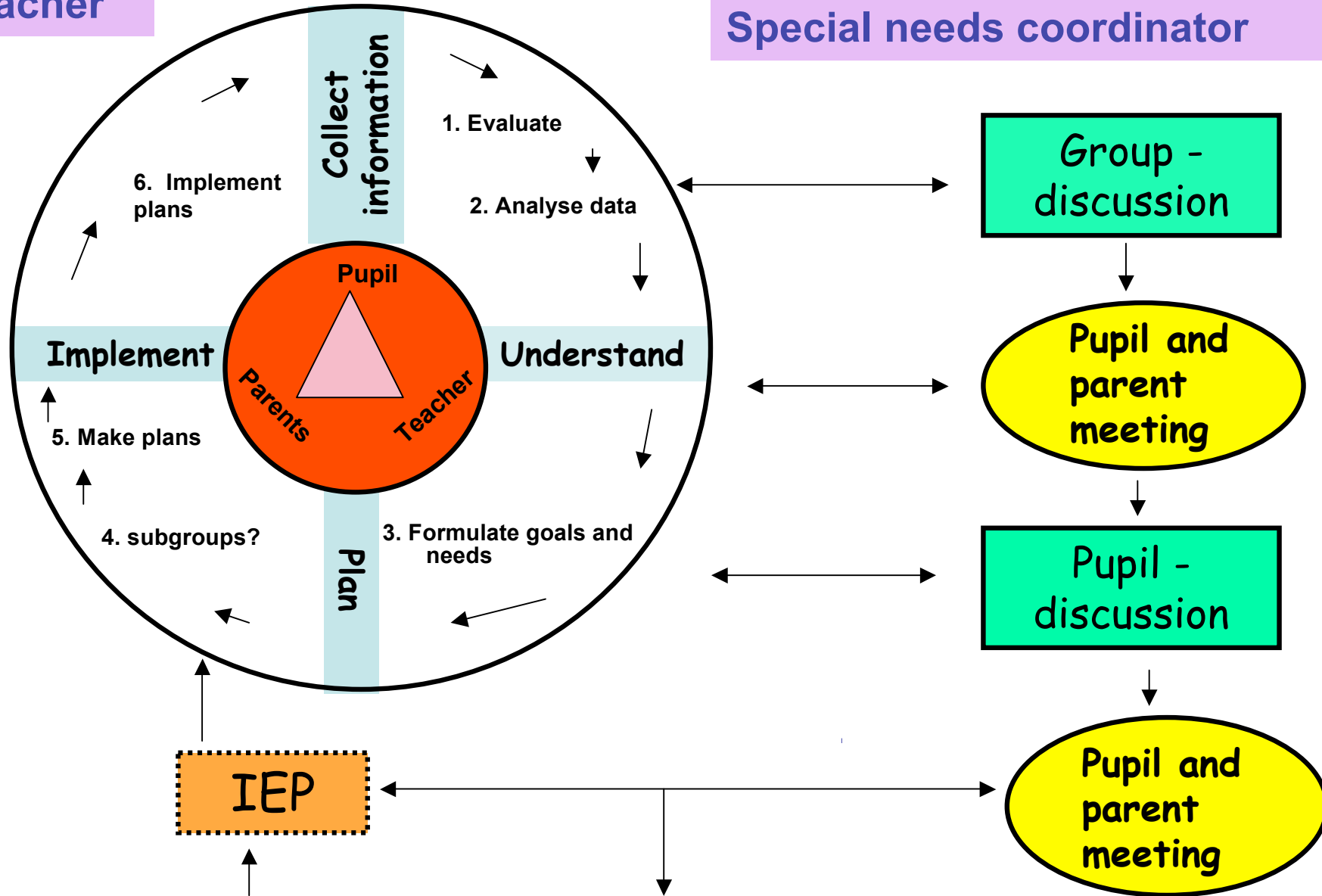- 10 years of field experiments: what works?

NBA in schools

Schoolpsychologists (SP), special needs coordinators (SNC) and teachers: all work according to the 6 principles: same mission & one language

NBA = ongoing assessment 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

Teacher

Special needs coordinator

Collect information

1. Evaluate

6. Implement plans

2. Analyse data

Implement

Understand

Pupil

Parents

Teacher

5. Make plans

4. subgroups?

3. Formulate goals and needs

Plan

Group - discussion

Pupil and parent meeting

Pupil - discussion

Pupil and parent meeting

IEP

Schoolpsychologists & other experts (5 phases NBA)

4

What works?

- For teachers, SNC and SP
- Based on pilots in schools & support services

  - **Chances?**
  - **Challenges?**

- Questions and discussion

1. Goal directed: teacher & SNC

- From assessment → high - realistic - goals
- Developmental perspective for pupils with SEN
- "Small & fast goals"
- Goals teacher and SNC?; Goals pupil and parents?

Chances: shared goals

→ real partnership

→ effective feedback and feed - forward loops

Challenge: SMARTI - goals

2. Goal-directed: SP

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?

2. Specific needs

- All pupils have educational needs (entire group)
- Some have specific needs (subgroup)
- A few pupils have more specific needs (IEP)
- What is our shared goal?
- What does this child need <u>extra</u> to achieve this goal?
- Effective teachers treat pupils with different needs differently: reflection & experiments: what works for this pupil?

2a. Support sentences pupil

"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 IEP

2b. Support sentences teacher

- 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 ….

What works?

- **Chances**
  - From a desirable → feaseble 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 the Netherlands "matching education to needs" (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!

3. Transactional frame of reference

- Ecological assessment (social-constructive model)
- From 'this pupil' → "this pupil in this school, with these classmates, this teacher and these parents"

- "Goodness of fit" between pupils needs <--> the learning environment
  - Risk factors (problems)?
  - Protective factors (strengths)?

What works?

- 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 …

4. Partnerships

- Goal of assessment is to answer questions of teacher, pupil, parents and to make decisions in the benefit of the child
- Teacher & SNC = educational experts
- Pupil = expert on own learning & behaviour
- Parents = hands on experts
- SP = expert transactional frame of reference
- Assessors benefit from each others knowledge
  - Partners function as co - assessors
  - Partners can have good suggestions for plans

What works?

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

All parents are welcome in our school

Children have great solutions themselves

This is how we work (steps) and what we expect and value: what is your idea? Do we agree?

Communication

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

Student's own plans: also very succesfull!
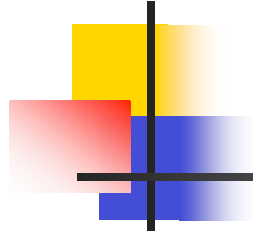
I can already ... In ... weeks I want to be able to ...	I will	My teacher can help me by	My parents can help me by ...	Peers can help me by ...

5. Positive & strenghts

- Child: capacities, interests, intelligence, social skills, creativity, sports, music, nature, drawing
- Instructional environment: effective 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

Chances?

- Improve communication teacher - pupils - parents
- Enhance feelings of competence & motivation, give hope to all involved
- Shed light on diagnosis (what proves against a certain label?) → avoid tunnelvision
- What works well? This can be elaborated in the support sentences → IEP
- Enhance the chance of succesfull mainstreaming

6. Systematic proces: according to all 6 principles

Assessment and planning = complex processes that have a large impact on pupils

Therefore, we need rules to protect us against common mistakes, such as:

- We consider only one possible diagnosis and then find evidence to confirm it ('confirmation bias')
- We consider only one solution or recommendation
  → Always consider alternatives

Use checklists to plan our work and to reflect on it!

What works?

Chances

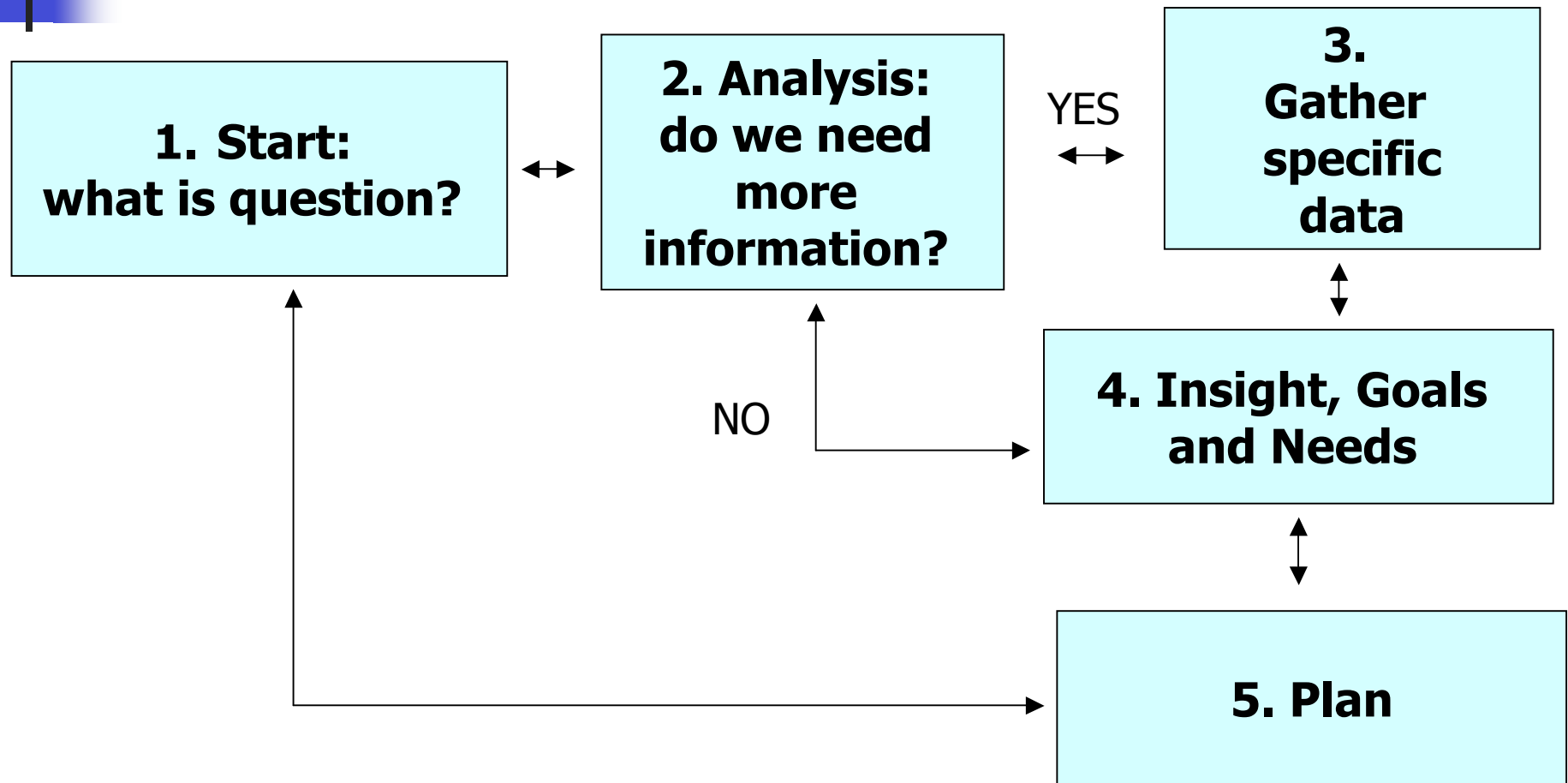- Stages, step by step → clear roles & responsibilities
- Transparant for all involved: what, when, who, how and why? Communication much better

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

Phases SP & SNC

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┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐   YES   ┌─────────────────┐
│  1. Start:      │◄──────►│  2. Analysis:   │◄──────►│      3.         │
│  what is        │        │  do we need     │         │    Gather       │
│  question?      │        │  more           │         │    specific     │
│                 │        │  information?   │         │     data        │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘         └─────────────────┘
                                    ▲                           ▲
                                    │                           │
                              NO    │                           ▼
                                    └──────────►┌─────────────────────────┐
                                                │  4. Insight, Goals      │
                                                │     and Needs           │
                                                └─────────────────────────┘
                                                           ▲
                                                           │
                                                           ▼
                                                ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                                │       5. Plan           │
                                                └─────────────────────────┘
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NBA: formative and/or summative?

- Formative (assessment for learning): insight, target-setting → feedback & forward, also focusses on strengths and next step, promotes pupil- and parent involvement, observations of teacher- and pupils- activities, monitoring individual pupils, ???

- Summative (assessment of learning): in teacher – cycle: what has been learned at a certain moment, inform target-setting, identify strenghts and weaknesses to quide future planning, comparision with certain standards, keep parents informed and involved, ???

- Conclusion: it all depends on the question → aim of assessment

References

- Country report Assessment Project, N. Pameijer & S.J. Pijl (2006)

- Pameijer, N. (2006). Towards needs – based assessment: bridging the gap between assessment and practice. *Educational & Clinical Psychology,* vol. 23 (Intervention-based psychological assessment: new approaches and perspectives), 2, pp. 12-25

- Dutch books and articles on NBA for SP's, SNC's and teachers (Handelingsgerichte diagnostiek en Handelingsgericht werken, Pameijer & Van Beukering)