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Snoezelen – multisensory environment from the view of Special education

Learning text

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Keywords: Multisensory environment, the concept of Snoezelen, sensory perception, history of Snoezelen, philosophy and principles of Snoezelen, strategies and forms of work in Snoezelen, Snoezelen interventions, structured lessons in Snoezelen.

Annotation: The studying material Snoezelen – a multisensory environment is intended for students of the Snoezelen course which was created for student mobility programs. Its purpose is to present multisensory theories and particularly the concept of Snoezelen to the students. In individual chapters, the student will both navigate themselves in the theoretical background and delve into the methodology and the creation of Snoezelen lessons in the practice and in the context of working with people with disabilities.

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INTRODUCTION

The studying material titled *Snoezelen – Multisensory sxEnvironment* provides students with an introduction to the use of various methods and techniques that are classified as multisensory tools and approaches and are adequate support tools in the field of practice. Certainly, these concepts are now more widely used in the care and education of children, adults and seniors with rather severe disabilities, with disabilities combined with a prevalence of mental and physical disabilities. In particular, this text deals with the concept of Snoezelen, which reached our country in the 1990's from the Netherlands. Even though the situation today is positively favourable to the use of these supportive concepts, which offer the development of perception, memory and analytical-synthetic skills, we increasingly see its role in relaxation, the creation of a positive climate and in emotional and relational support schemes. Our aim was to provide some more detailed information about a tool that can both motivate students to be active and develop the creativity of educators and those who work with our clients.

The main objective of this course is

- to provide the student with expert knowledge of multisensory concepts and their origins, diversity and to characterize the selected concepts in detail;
- to define the basic principles, philosophy and characteristics of the Snoezelen concept, to introduce it in practice at the Faculty of Public Policies of the Silesian University in Opava (the Snoezelen multisensory room is located on the first floor);
- to introduce the forms and strategies of work that are associated with the concept of Snoezelen, and practically, with multi-sensory rooms, including an assessment of their utilization within the competences of the special educator; and
- to support the student in independently conducting Snoezelen sessions by applying not only theoretical knowledge but also demonstrating Snoezelen practices and involving students in activities carried out directly in the Snoezelen room.

The studying material is completely linked to the teaching of the Snoezelen course, it follows its aim and annotation, the content of the material and the coherent structure. In addition to correspondence exercises (8 in total), each chapter contains a test in which the student can test his/her knowledge (including an answer key), study literature, developing topics and other contexts.

The studying material is listed as the basic teaching material for this course and a virtual classroom is set up in the IS system for effective communication with students, which includes contacts, conditions, and options for communication with the teacher.

QUICK VIEW OF THE STUDY SUPPORT

The course, which is related to this learning support, is focused on theoretical and practical familiarization of the student of Bachelor of Special Education with the use of multisensory concepts and specifically Snoezelen. Four separate sub-chapters are closely linked to the following topics:

- Defining the multisensory approach, therapies and concepts, identifying specific types of approaches currently in use.
- Epistemological foundations and history of the Snoezelen concept, including principles, basic characteristics as well as the user triangle.
- Navigation in the strategies and forms of practice of techniques and methods that are used within the Snoezelen concept, taking into account the diversity of the clientele, the environment and the competences of the practitioner.
- Navigation in selected special education methods offered by this concept. The opportunity to try out the practical implementation of structured lessons as a tool suitable for supporting special education activities. The study of this subject provides the following competences:

Expertise:

- The student can define the so-called multisensory approach, define some selected types of multisensory theories, classify the types of multisensory rooms;
- The student is able to connect the theory and knowledge regarding sensory perception, its stages and connections to the educational process and multisensory learning;
- The student is oriented in the historical context of the emergence of the Snoezelen concept abroad and in the Czech Republic;
- The student is able to define the concept of Snoezelen and describe its use in target groups, is able to characterize the principles of Snoezelen and is able to interpret them correctly;
- The student understands the importance of the Snoezelen Triangle in terms of sub-factors and diagnostic criteria;
- The student defines the types and forms of work in the Snoezelen according to the given criteria, realizes how it is possible to work in the Snoezelen with the aim of

1 MULTISENSORY ENVIRONMENT



QUICK CHAPTER PREVIEW

The first chapter of the studying material introduces us to the issue of multisensory environments. The actual aim of this chapter is to define the basic terms which will continue to reappear throughout the entire publication. Fundamental to understanding and context is the definition of sensory perception, integrated and multisensory approaches according to various experts who have contributed to the development of multisensory theory, especially in the course of the last century. Let us recall the teaching methods of J. A. Comenius, which involves all senses and promotes the development of the cognitive side of the child's personality, memory and will.

So in this first chapter, we will start with different types of multisensory environments, types of multisensory rooms, the development of sensory perception and its stages.



OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter is:

- to define the so-called multisensory approach;
- to define some selected types of multisensory theories;
- to classify the types of multisensory rooms;
- to define sensory perception, its stages and its relation to the educational process.



KEYWORDS OF THE CHAPTER

Multisensory environment, sensory integration, multisensory integration, multisensory information exposure, Maria Montessori sensorial education, Fröhlich basal stimulation, Orton-Gillingham method, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, Snoezelen – MSE, virtual reality, sensory perception.



TIME NEEDED TO STUDY

4 hours of self-study + preparation of correspondence tasks

1.1 The definition and diversity of multisensory environment

TO REMEMBER



A multisensory environment is an artificially constructed space,

- in which sensory stimulation is applied, and where we alone manage, control and provide for the stimulation, we can reduce or expand it as desired;
- where stimuli occur in a confined space (isolated from the external environment) or occur in an integrated fashion (incorporated into the regular environment);
- designed for active or passive stimulation and adapted to the interests, motivation, leisure, relaxation, therapeutic or educational needs and goals of specific people;
- which may involve various kinds of physical, psychological or sociological means, techniques and methods.

Various studies define multisensory education as an approach that engages all the senses simultaneously, displaying information through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, olfactory and gustatory forms to help children learn more effectively. Multisensory tuition is therefore a way of teaching that engages more than one sense at a time. Using sight, hearing, movement and touch allows children to connect what they are learning in multiple ways. (Luque, 2022)

To understand the connection between the brain and the acquisition of information through the senses, the following key terms have been defined: **sensory integration and multisensory integration**. Sensory perception is the process of detection, i.e., detecting, searching for and acquiring stimuli from our surroundings and environment. Humans have five sensory systems of perception: the auditory system, the visual system, the olfactory system, the gustatory system, and the somatosensory system. Within the somatosensory system, the neural network is responsible for the perception of temperature, touch, pain, and body position.

Sensory integration is based on the theory of Ayres, who was an occupational therapist and psychologist with a background in neuroscience working in the USA in the late 1960's and early 1970s. Ayres defined sensory integration as: A neurological process that organizes sensations from one's own body and the environment and enables their efficient utilization. As a complex process, sensory integration gives us information about what is going on inside and outside (Ayres, 1979 in Kilroy, 2019).

Whereas **multisensory integration** is the unification of information obtained simultaneously from different single-sensory channels into a unified perception, which is very challenging for many individuals. Deficits in multisensory integration have been found in individuals with autism spectrum disorders, individuals with a brain impairment. (Marks et al., 2018).

Researches on memory show that **multi-sensory exposure to information**, i.e., the presentation of information through multiple senses, promotes the remembered content in a fantastic way compared to single-sensory exposure (Luria, 1987). Moreover, this form of learning helps to maintain information for a longer period of time and increases attention during the learning process itself.

One of the first experts who promoted multisensory learning was **Maria Montessori (1912)**, who recommended the use of **specific sensory materials and aids** that could be heard and seen when handling them, and it was possible to move and change them in different ways. It was in the late 1920's that specialists and researchers began to apply the benefits of multisensory teaching and since then the approach has developed substantially.

In the 1970s, **Fröhlich (1982)** developed the now well-known and frequently used method called **Basal Stimulation**, by which he primarily wished to help people with severe disabilities to achieve a better quality of life. In his method there are three main areas of intervention: somatic, vestibular and vibratory. The fundamental principle of Basal Stimulation as described by Vítková (2001, 2006), is based on the finding that by using the body we can bring the individual into reality (reality) by mediating experience (empirical) and sensation. The human being, its mental and physical aspects, represent an inseparable unit, and the assumption of the impossibility of dividing the mental and the physical forms the primary idea and requirement for the holistic approach (wholeness) of Basal Stimulation. Basal Stimulation therefore allows the stimulation of certain components and structures of the personality, which can thus produce concord and intervene in a holistic way in the life of a child with severe disabilities. Through the concord of movement and perception, bodily experiences are created that play a significant role in the identification development of the individual. The activation of the individual's reduced motor abilities through basal stimuli opens up the child's apparent individual isolation. (cf. Vítková, 2001, 2005 and 2009) The individual areas targeted by Basal Stimulation include the somatic, vibratory, vestibular, olfactory and gustatory components, the auditory and visual areas of perception, communication and the social and emotional components of a personality.

And in the 1970s, Hulsegge and Verheul (1987) also started to develop the **Snoezelen - Multisensory Environment (MSE)** (Fowler, 2008; Lancioni et al, 2002; Janků, 2018), which will be subsequently discussed in more detail later in the text of this study material.

However, the so-called multisensory environment is not just materials, tools and nowadays ubiquitous technology. For such a large intervention it is necessary to create, in

particular, **an intensive interaction that always focuses** on improving social and communication skills and individual interaction between teacher/educator and pupil/child. Then we can think of a multi-sensory practice (Longhorn, 2011).

As mentioned above, multisensory methodologies were developed in response to the increased interest in education for children with special educational needs, severe and multiple disabilities, who have reduced learning abilities. In addition to these severe disabilities, an example of a typical disorder that is also affected by the reception and retention of information through the senses is dyslexia and other learning disabilities. The education of students with specific learning disabilities can also be better addressed through the use of multisensory instruction. (Jucovicova, Žáčková, 2007) Students with dyslexia are helped to improve their reading, writing and spelling skills through the stimulation of visual, auditory and tactile perception using the **Orton-Gillingham method (1997)**. Orton-Gillingham is a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive method applied when teaching reading and writing. This approach is derived firstly from a collection of time-proven knowledge and practice that have been validated over the last 80 years. Secondly, it is based on scientific evidence about how individuals learn to read and write and why a significant number have difficulty doing so, how dyslexia makes literacy skills difficult to acquire. It also takes into account the most appropriate instructional practices for individuals with such disabilities. This approach also works for mainstream learners because it uses multiple senses simultaneously, offering more connections and associations to the brain so they can also provide for their better storage and retrieval (www.ortonacademy.org; Newman, 2019).

Another theory concerning the positive features of multisensory approaches is **Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1997)**. This states that all children have specific strengths and learn in a number of different ways. Thus, implementing an approach that most enhances a child's ability to perceive information from the environment provides more opportunities to learn. This theory suggests that traditional psychometric views of intelligence are too limited. Gardner first outlined his theory in his 1983 book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, where he proposed that all people have different kinds of "intelligence." He suggested that there are eight intelligences, and it is possible to add a ninth "existentialist intelligence". While someone may be particularly strong in a certain area, such as musical intelligence, they most likely also have a range of various abilities. For example, an individual may be strong verbally and musically. (www.verwellmind.com/gardners-theory-of-multiple-intelligences-2795161, 2022)

In recent decades, further evolution of multisensory theories and environments has occurred,

with technological developments such as **virtual reality and virtual games** facilitating the use of multiple sensory channels simultaneously and allowing people to respond with their own bodies. But that type of multisensory technology also enables education for students with severe sensory impairments.

Multisensory methodologies, however, have most often been developed as educational responses for children with special educational needs, with the aim of stimulating different senses simultaneously, focusing on each child's learning strengths and capabilities.



FOR THOSE INTERESTED

Multisensory environments are the focus of many research studies. Let me present an interesting proposal for multisensory activities from the Catalan region here, published by the University of Barcelona. It was published by student Judit Valencia Luque (2022): the aim of the proposal is to test whether the application of multisensory activities and strategies, based on empirical evidence, is effective in the context of mainstream (non-special) school education, improving all pupils' knowledge and behaviour and increasing teachers' confidence and willingness to apply more inclusive and multisensory methodologies in their classrooms. The research sample was designed from 27 classrooms located in different primary schools in Barcelona and divided into three experimental groups, which were provided with the proposed material (experimental group 1), further training and monitoring (experimental group 2), and finally compared with a control group, in which the same curriculum content will be taught but without multisensory resources, aids and methodology. Before and after the implementation of the incorporation of the multisensory part, the students' knowledge of the following educational content and its implementation were assessed by means of a pre- and post-test. Also, behavior was monitored using two observation records to determine the frequency and typology of differences. The research was initiated just this year and is still in progress. It brings evidence that multisensory environments are a target of interest for many professionals and educators working specifically with children, be it with or without special needs. The study referred to below may be a research area for those interested in this type of work in our setting as well. LUQUE, J. (2022)

1.2 Types of multisensory environments

Multisensory environments can of course have different goals. Pagliano (2001) states that the environment can be used as a source of information, as compensation, for the adaptation process on different occasions, as an environment that is individually adapted to the client (e.g. wheelchair accessible) or as a modification of the environment that can evoke different types of activities or activities that cannot be performed anywhere else.

So far known types of multisensory environments:

- White room
- Grey room
- Dark room
- Sound room
- Interactive room
- Water environment
- Game room
- Virtual environment
- Portable environment
- Pro-social room
- Hybrid of multi-sensory rooms and environments

The mentioned rooms appeared as prototypes of spaces for the first time in a comprehensive publication by the promoter of multisensory environments, Paul Pagliani from the University of Melbourne, Australia. Their focus often corresponds to the individual needs of clients and their specific personal development goals.

In practice, the **white room** is still the most frequently chosen. The furnishing of the room is mainly aimed at the development of sight, touch, smell and hearing. It is used for quiet dominant activities such as aromatherapy, massage or relaxation. Usually the walls in the room are painted white and all possible equipment is also white. In this way, the walls, floors and ceiling become a vast three-dimensional canvas for the projection of colour effects. The focus is mainly on activities with equipment and tools. (Lotan et al., 2009, 2006; Novakovic et al., 2019)

The white room is also recommended for participants who may be easily overwhelmed by sensory stimuli (those with autism, dementia and psychiatric diagnoses). People can be very active in the white room, but they can also relax. In this room we have the possibility to arrange the stimuli in such a way that in different sessions it will look like a different space. White is a wonderful background that we can easily change to blue, yellow, orange, green, etc. with spotlights. You will never achieve these effects in a coloured room as you can do in a white room.

Fig. 1: The white room in the Centre de Hartenberg, Ede with the founder of the concept A. Verheul



The grey room is aimed at reducing stimuli, it should have the opposite effect. Curtains, walls, carpets and the overall atmosphere is designed to minimize distractions and active stimuli.

A completely **dark room**, with black walls, ceiling and floor is specifically utilized to achieve maximum visual stimulation. Illumination with bright lights, LEDs and ultraviolet lamps activates the visual stimulator. The dark room was designed primarily for working with children with visual impairments. The aim is stimulation of visual abilities, differentiation of light impulses, awareness of light experiences and colour recognition. The walls, floors and ceilings are dark, therefore they act as a neutral base for highlighting different light effects. Light panels, phosphorescent objects exposed to ultraviolet radiation, located in the room serve to improve the intensity of visual perception. There is a regulated light in the room that changes according to the needs of the client or the type of activity. "Quiet contemplation" may be appropriate for this room. (Ponechalová and Lištiaková, 2010; Jirásek, 2004)

Music rooms aimed at the development of hearing - soundproofed, free from unwanted noises, with ceiling, walls and floor usually lined with wood. The rooms provide maximum opportunities for the development of auditory perception, are suitable for listening and working with sounds, developing auditory differentiation, etc.

The most common **aquatic environment** is presented by a swimming pool or bathtub with built-in visual and auditory means of stimulation. The aim is to develop the proprioceptive area, to facilitate movement, awareness of one's own body, psychomotor development, emotional development, kinesthetics, rehabilitation, etc.

Fig. 2: Water environment and Snoezelen (www.mississauga.com, 2022)



Maximum activation of children should be evoked by an **interactive room** full of interactive switches with different outputs (voice, sound, light, touch and smell). Here, the senses are linked to targeted movements, gross and fine motor skills, and sensorimotor skills. The aim is to enhance imagination, but also cognitive skills of analysis and synthesis (action-reaction). Manipulation of switches involves various combinations of abilities and skills, such as tactile differentiation, muscle control and motor skills, among others.

The interactive environment is associated with IT technology and various related equipment, highly functional in nature. Innovative Living Surface, i.e. projection on the floor or on the wall that responds to the client's movement. Interactive environments can also be associated with interactive glasses and 3D virtual worlds, in which imagination and experience play a major role. Virtual environments are achieved through computer, virtual glasses, virtual and IT technology, nowadays it is possible to include not only 3D, but even 4D and 5D space and effects.

Fig. 3: Virtual environment versus virtual 3D glasses (www.euro.cz, 2022)



The playroom is adapted especially to the development of the musculoskeletal system, gross and fine motor skills, vestibular and proprioceptive systems. Its equipment includes, for example, swings, trampolines, soft mattresses, carpets made of soft and coarse material (Ponechalová and Lištiaková, 2010). It can also be called an 'adventure room' (Jirasek, 2004). It provides a safe place to play. It motivates and stimulates the client (most often a child) to be active. The room contains soft equipment that allows mobile clients to run, bounce, climb or jump. (Ponechalova and Lisztiakova, 2010; Harsimran et al., 2017)

The portable environment is a small, foldable, portable set of square area less than 2 m² that is suitable for children and clients of all ages who are immobile. The environment can be folded and moved. Similar to infants, it is used for multisensory stimulation with aids that we choose and hang above the child. The portable environment is also suitable for recumbent clients. (Filatova, 2014) This portable setup allows to bring multisensory environment to the client making it easily accessible in various settings and accommodating their needs where we face spatial limitations. It functions like a canopy over the child or as a larger or smaller tent.

We use the **socially oriented environment** for special opportunities, cooperation and establishing social relationships, their development and correction.

Inclusive environment – a standard environment such as a garden or playground that can be transformed using carefully selected tools. The result is a space where individuals with and without disabilities can be together. This environment is barrier-free, with carefully chosen colours also for individuals with visual impairments, there are sound or tactile accents for the hearing impaired, safe for all. (Filatova, 2014; Wagenfeld et al. 2019)

The outdoor Snoezelen has also become a very attractive feature in recent years, especially in residential facilities and schools. Its mission is the same as that of the indoor Snoezelen. The topic of Snoezelen gardens, parks, walkways, and overall outdoor spaces is currently being addressed by, among others, the founder of the Snoezelen concept, Ad Verheul.

1.3 Sensory perception and its development

Sensory perception or sensory cognition is related to the fundamental process of life and that is the cognitive understanding of the world, the surrounding and internal environment interacting with an individual. The human sensory system consists of 5 basic senses through which we perceive our surroundings. This system allows the body to respond to certain stimuli: the eyes allow us to interpret visual information, hearing mediates sound and maintains balance, the nose and tongue respond to smells and tastes, sensory nerves in the skin allow us to feel physical contact, changes in temperature and pain.

Information can reach the brain practically in two ways only. The basic information necessary for the functioning of the human body enters the brain at its inception through genes. All other information, our experiences and knowledge, enter the brain solely through the senses. The individual senses are in constant interaction and subject to feedback from higher brain centres. Any information coming from the external environment is either a form of energy or matter. The individual senses convert these stimuli into a series of electrochemical impulses that are transmitted to the brain via the nervous system. (Janků, 2010)

As stated by Kohoutek (2000) and other psychologists and experts, sensory perception is one of the most important human abilities and skills. Sensory perception is of great importance in everything a person does, it has an impact on work efficiency, satisfaction as well as success and self-actualization. Our senses help us to navigate through life and the world.

TO REMEMBER



Sensory perception is the process of reflecting objects and phenomena that at a certain moment act on sensory organs (eyes, ears, tactile bodies in the skin, taste buds, olfactory cells etc.), which are called receptors or also receivers of stimuli. Their characteristic is a certain sensitivity to different phenomena – wavelength of light, chemicals, pressure, heat, cold, movement etc.

Currently, the following senses are mentioned: visual, auditory, olfactory, touch, heat, cold, pain, static and positional sense, kinesthetic (muscle, joint, tendon) sense and vibratory sense.

Of course, many of our sensory perceptions are created with the participation of multiple senses, i.e. multisensory, as we have already mentioned above in the text. These structures of sensation are more complex but at the same time more holistic. Moreover, sometimes one sensation gives rise to the sensation of another sense, this is called synaesthesia. As an example, the colour hearing of musicians is given.

A healthy person acquires most information about the surrounding world through sight.

The result of sensory cognition are perceptions, i.e. information. Our perception is selective, related to experience, attitudes, motivation, values, emotional state, mental level and other factors.

The aim of this text is not to delve into the basics of psychology regarding the definition of sensory perception but rather to reflect on how we support and develop sensory perception in the educational and supportive process of our clients. For these purposes, we present the stages of sensory perception development:

Stages of sensory perception development (hereafter referred to as SP)

1. SP "I can perceive some stimuli and get some information from the environment" (preacquisition)
2. acquisition of information from the "learning to perceive" environment (acquisition)
3. sequencing and developing SP "I can perceive more and more accurately" (fluency)
4. consolidation of SP over time "I am able to perceive and discriminate certain stimuli for a certain period of time" (endurance)
5. development of the ability to SP despite non-optimal conditions "even though I am distracted by something, I perceive what I want to" (momentum)
6. generalisation SP "I perceive completely automatically and without necessary instructions and anywhere" (generalisation)
7. SP adaptation "I adapt the SP process to my thinking and the current situation" (adaptation)
8. retention of knowledge and skills in memory (retention)
9. self-leadership "I have achieved independence in the SP skills" (maintenance).

TO REMEMBER



The sub-tasks that we commonly implement in our educational process mostly regard processes of **differentiation and discrimination, comparison, generalization, linking sensory perception with memory traces, concretization and abstraction in terms of sequential processes and multisensory perception.**

In addition to these general phases of sensory perception development mentioned above, each sense has its own phases, which are already defined in terms of various specific phenomena. For example, in the development of auditory perception, we focus on the following in the context of gradual learning: listening, figure and background discrimination, auditory sound differentiation, auditory memory, rhythm perception etc. Similarly, visual perception also matures with age. Deficits in the differentiation of visual perception are seen, for example, in preschool children who are unable to distinguish the different shapes and sizes of letters and numbers.

Aids and technology for the development of sensory perception in multisensory rooms (cf. Janků, 2018):

Visual perception and stimulation of visual perception

For the development of visual perception, in multisensory rooms we most often use luminous tubes filled with water or other substances - e.g. wax, rotating or otherwise moving spotlights that cause light effects on the walls and in the rooms, different types of lighting in the rooms according to the effects of colours, luminous and phosphorescent fibers of different lengths, maxi bubble blowers, data projectors etc.

The lighting of the room itself and the possibilities of its correction (spot lights with their own control, mirror balls, dimmed colour reflections of projectors) can already serve very well for the purposes of diagnosis of visual perception of light and dark differentiation, intensity of light stimuli and differentiation of objects. Very convenient is the connection with vibration effects, lamps and natural lighting (candles and fragrance lamps). Light technology can be used on ceilings, walls, floor of the room, built next to and above mirrors, but also on the stage, etc.

New technical electronic aids that tend to develop cognitive abilities - tablets, i-pads, interactive whiteboards and tables, visually oriented boxes on the wall, on the floor, etc.

Auditory perception, stimulation of auditory perception

Multisensory environment

In the first part of the text, we mentioned specific auditory rooms that focus only on auditory perception and hearing development, and which largely contain sound aids, such as various types of musical and accompanying instruments, sound toys, but also so-called rain summoners, wind and moving chimes, built-in audio and stereo devices in the walls of the room that fill the space with relaxing or activating music etc.

Special-pedagogical diagnostics of the auditory sphere focuses on the differentiation, analysis and synthesis of auditory stimuli, the possibilities of the intensity of sound stimuli, the development of speech and communication with the help of many didactic aids that the child talks about. Special floors and wall boards are used, as well as cabinets in which sound and sight or sound and vibration or sound and haptic aids are built in, which the individual identifies and thus recognises.

Haptics and tactile stimulation

Most multi-sensory rooms are carpeted – i.e. partly floors and partly walls, depending on the purpose of the facility, there can be mattresses and waterbeds used. Newly added to the rooms are so-called haptic corridors, where tactile aids are collected, both hanging (or the child has to weave through everything possible) and static aids, as well as, for example, floors which, depending on the touch and contact with the child's body, combine haptics with visual or auditory sensation. Very useful are the aids for combating the child's aggression – dummies, skittles, banging bags, but also aids that create comfort in the room – floor mats, waterbeds, bean bags, cushions, sofa beds etc.

Fig. 4 and 5: Equipment of the multisensory room with aids (FVP SU in Opava, 2022)





CORRESPONDENCE TASK NO. 1



Study the stages of sensory perception development in more detail. Try to make them more specific and describe the development of a specific sensory activity in the above mentioned stages. (Scope at least 2xA4+formal introductory page.)

CORRESPONDENCE TASK NO. 2



Try to find information regarding international research that focuses on the use or efficiency of multisensory environments in school settings. Translate this research into an abbreviated version and describe it in a research report. (Length at least 2xA4+a formal introductory page.).



REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 1

1. Sensory integration:
 - a. It's the same as multisensory integration
 - b. It's based on Ayeres' theory
 - c. It means the combined perception of all the senses
 - d. Means the union of multiple senses
2. Multisensory integration:
 - a. It is simple and natural to all individuals
 - b. It is one of the common neurological processes
 - c. It is the perception of information from different senses at the same time
 - d. It is associated with Fröhlich
3. More – sensory exposure to information:
 - a. It means the development of perception with all the senses comprehensively
 - b. Means multisensory integration
 - c. It is a very effective method related to the support of memory traces and subsequent equipping
 - d. It is most associated with the development of emotion and motivation
4. Basal stimulation:
 - a. It was primarily developed for the development of people with PAS
 - b. It was developed by Fröhlich in the 1970s
 - c. It is associated with Ade Verheul from the Netherlands
 - d. It is associated with M.Vitkova
5. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences:
 - a. It originated in the late 20th century and says that everyone learns in different ways

- b. It was written in the 1970s and says that we all perceive in many ways
- c. He says we all have different kinds of IQs
- d. He says we don't all have the same high IQ

CHAPTER SUMMARY



Chapter One of the studying material introduced us to the issue of multisensory environment and the concepts related to it. Multisensory concepts have emerged in the last century through variously oriented professionals. Most of them were involved in the education, teaching of individuals who had various types of sensory deficits, including severe multiple disabilities. Currently, there are various research probes concerning multisensory environments that are proving the fact that multisensory learning is a more efficient and fun version that can bring a great many cognitive and memory improvements.

ANSWERS TO CHAPTER 1 REVIEW QUESTIONS



1. b; 2. c; 3. c; 4. b; 5. a.
-

OTHER RESOURCES



- Kilroy, E., Aziz-Zadeh, L., & Cermak, S. (2019). *Ayres Theories of Autism and Sensory Integration Revisited: What Contemporary Neuroscience Has to Say*. *Brain Sciences*, 9(3), 68. DOI:10.3390/brainsci9030068.
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Multisensory environment

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2 THE CONCEPT OF SNOEZELLEN AND ITS EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

QUICK CHAPTER PREVIEW



Chapter Two begins with the definition of the concept of Snoezelen. We will look at the period in which it was created, what prompted its authors to create the first multisensory room, what the situation was like in the world and how Snoezelen entered into the Czech environment. The second part of this chapter defines the essence of Snoezelen, the principles and philosophy of its direction according to its founder Ada Verheul, and the contemporary theories.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER



The aim of this chapter is to:

- navigate in the historical context of the emergence of the Snoezelen concept abroad and in the Czech Republic;
- define the concept of Snoezelen and describe its use with target groups;
- characterize the principles of Snoezelen and be able to interpret them correctly;
- explain the importance of the Snoezelen Triangle in terms of the sub-actors involved in a Snoezelen intervention.

TIME NEEDED TO STUDY



8 hours of self-study + preparation of correspondence task no. 3

KEYWORDS OF THE CHAPTER



Snoezelen - MSE, ISNA, normalisation, Ad Verheul, Jan Hulssege, Centrum de Hartenberg Heeren's Loo, Snoezelen triangle, principles of the Snoezelen concept.

2.1 The Snoezelen concept origin and the historical context

The concept of Snoezelen originated in the Netherlands back in the 1970s. The unofficially dated beginning of Snoezelen work is related to the work of American psychologists Cleland and Clark who, in 1966, published the results of their research on the development and promotion of communication and social skills, as well as abilities of clients with severe intellectual disabilities, and on changes in their behaviour due to selected sensory stimuli. In this research, adults with developmental mental disabilities were provided with visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, and other stimuli in an adequately designed room that were intended to influence personality development. The environment in which sensory stimuli were offered started to be called the "Sensory Cafeteria" (cf. Cleland, Clark, 1966). It was this research that the Dutch Ad Verheul and Jan Hulsege based their work on when, in their own institutional care setting, they began to evolve the offer of sensory stimuli as a spontaneous leisure activity for adults with more severe intellectual and multiple disabilities at the Centre de Hartenberg's Heeren Loo near the city of Ede, in the central part of the Netherlands (hereafter referred to as Hartenberg). In 1978, they built the first mobile Snoezelen in a tent, whose environment and themes were modified every year, and thanks to the positive support of the institute's management, the first multisensory Snoezelen room was built in 1983.

At that time, the lives of people with severe and combined mental, physical and other disabilities were anchored in institutional settings, whose environments were more or less sterile, did not differ much from one another and there was little discussion of their innovation.

A fundamental humane principle that has spread from Scandinavia, and subsequently from the USA to the rest of the world, and which also applies to institutional care, is the **principle of normalisation**, which of course also affected the Netherlands.



FOR THOSE INTERESTED

More information about the beginning of normalisation in the world: The principle of normalization was a driver of legal phenomena and humane transformation, particularly of institutional care. The principle of normalisation was originally formulated by Bengt Nirj of the Swedish Association for Retarded Children. Nirjem identified with the system of human rights established in America, formulated as a result of his life's work by W. Wolfensberger, and concretized it into a proposed system of social services in the United States. Thus, the product of the concept of normalization is the social service system of the early 1970's and its ongoing evaluation. Wolf Wolfensberger is thus considered to be the creator of the first normalization textbook, at whose instigation normalization was introduced into American law. Standardization schemes spread further to Europe thanks to the Swede Ericsson (1985), who presented in Hamburg the *Principles of Standardization* and the Swedish experience. It was he who stimulated the discussion towards a socio-politically interested

concept that would enrich and improve the lives of people with disabilities, especially severe and combined ones, in institutional care, i.e. in institutional large-scale facilities everywhere in the world, as we know them from our Czech history. Let me draw your attention to the fact that thanks to the political system, all changes concerning the quality of institutional care only began to take place in this country until after 1989, in the 1990's.

We consider the development of social services for people with disabilities that are as close as possible to the patterns and conditions of normal life in society to be a new era of institutional care, and one of the strongest theories promoted around the world to this day. Although probably the principles of normalization are related to the natural evolution of pro-human behavior of people, we can declare the direction of origin from Scandinavia and mention the names of Bank Mikkelson, who was instrumental in moving normalization into Danish law, or Grunewald and Nirje, mentioned above, who later became involved in improving community and social services also in Toronto, Canada.

<https://canon-sociaalwerk.eu>); Normalization History of Inclusion of People with Disabilities – the 1970s in the World. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normalization_\(people_with_disabilities\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normalization_(people_with_disabilities))

It was the care and work in institutional settings, which was stereotyped, that inspired the founders of the Snoezelen concept to build the first multisensory room, which was globally different from the usual environment in which people with intellectual disabilities permanently moved and lived. The main idea behind this change of perspective remained. It was to find a communication channel that would allow better cooperation between a group of people with certain disabilities and the general population, as well as their development and quality leisure, self-fulfilment and the offer of leisure activities.

The original term "Snoezelen", coined by Verheul and Hulssege for the multisensory room, is a Dutch neologism, created from a combination of two Dutch words: *snuffelen* and *doezelen*, which can be translated into Czech as: *to feel* (in the sense of olfactory sensations) and *to slumber*, or also to sleep, stay and relax (cf. Kiers, 1984, in Hulssege, J, Verheul, A. 1989, p. 6). In the Czech language we do not have a special term for this expression, and therefore we use the designation "*Snoezelen*" (read [*snu:zelen*]).

In Hartenberg, the multisensory activity of the educators Verheul and Hulsegge received support and the first sensory tent began to develop into a whole room, then into rooms and after multiple reconstructions, the "Snoezelen Centre" was created in the centre under the leadership of Ad Verheul, which today has an area of about 350 m². In 2017-2018, the centre underwent its latest structural and technical renovation, which again reacts in a new

way to the explosion of various virtual gadgets, instruments and the development of electrical engineering. Accordingly, the Hartenberg Centre continues to point the way for newcomers to Snoezelen.

During the period in which the first Snoezelen in the Netherlands is established, the first references to the necessity and importance of the development of people with severe intellectual and multiple disabilities appear worldwide. This historical era is generally conceived in the history of special education as the embryonic period of many other methods that have already been discussed in the first chapter. For example, the Basal Stimulation Method, to which breakthrough Prof. Fröhlich is credited, promotes holistic personality development, multisensory stimulation and its own sub-theories within its concept. However, the concept of Snoezelen was, as we have already mentioned, fully synergized in its beginnings with the contribution of science and technology of the then world, with the discovery of new materials and resources, artificial fibres, the popularization of the compensatory and didactic aids production.

The patronage of the Snoezelen concept is currently still mostly held by the first specialist from the Netherlands – Ad Verheul, who together with other supporters founded the International Snoezelen Concept Association (ISNA – MSE). Its current President is Danish psychologist Maurits Eigendaal. The President of ISNA in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is Renáta Filatová. ISNA is involved in Snoezelen-related activities both globally and within specific countries and is currently the only governing and organizational body related to the concept. Each year its members have the opportunity to meet on the occasion of the conference to discuss and share experiences on the practical use of Snoezelen.

Fig. 6, 7: Community Centre de Hartenberg in the present (photo by the author, 2017)





2.1.1 SNOEZELLEN WITH US

The beginning of the use of the Snoezelen concept in the Czech Republic dates back to the 1990's and is mainly associated with special education issues, i.e. the integration of Snoezelen into schools and counselling centres. It was at this time that the first major projects concerning changes in the education of pupils with special educational needs began to appear. Information in this respect came to us in the Czech Republic mainly from the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries. One of the projects was called "School for All", which obviously promoted the concept of quality education for all children together, i.e. integration. The first Snoezelen rooms were created in this context in special schools, namely in the Special Primary School in Blansko and the Gemini Secondary School for the Physically Handicapped in Brno. The implementation of Snoezelen activities and integrative education was supported by the supervision of special educators from abroad.

The first publication on the subject of Snoezelen, or rather a 26-page booklet by Lucie Varvařovská, was published by the Centre for Further Education of Teaching Staff at Masaryk University in Brno in the early 1990's. The author visited the De Hartenberg Heeren's Loo Centre for adult clients with rather severe intellectual and multiple disabilities in the central part of the Netherlands, near the city of Ede, and was intrigued by the rooms created under the supervision of Jan Hulsegge and Ad Verheul, which were designed to promote the development of all senses and served as spontaneous leisure activities for the clients.

In 1997, the Snoezelen concept was introduced into the teaching of special educators at university, specifically at the Department of Special Education at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University in Brno. Ongoing excursions of students in Snoezelen were held at the Primary School of Special Education in Blansko. There also began cooperation with Professor Krista Mertens, who worked mainly on the pedagogy of individuals with physical disabilities at the Humboldt University Institute for Rehabilitation Sciences in Berlin. Her

research projects focused on supporting the development of perception in primary and special school pupils, and on activation programmes for the elderly in the Snoezelen environment.

Since the 1990's, we have also seen an increase in the number of multi-sensory Snoezelen rooms. According to the research carried out by Vitásková in 2007, there were a total of 57 institutions under the responsibility of social services and educational institutions in our home area that had such a room. Today, only in the records of the Moravian-Silesian sub-region, a total of 58 Snoezelen rooms are recorded (Kozelská, 2018). Nationwide, it can be assumed, given the information available that there are approximately around 400 Snoezelen rooms in the entire Czech Republic.

Snoezelen has had a professional and scientific background in our country since the 1990's. As early as in 1997, Snoezelen was partly taught at the Department of Special Education of the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University in Brno.

Fig. 8: Snoezelen room at Pdf MU in Brno (photo by the author)



The emergence of multisensory rooms in the Czech Republic is credited to psychologist Stachová from Ostrava, who organized the first conference in 2003 based on her own findings. It bore the name Why to have Snoezelen or everything you want to know about this method. Her then-colleague Vitásková (later Janků), defended her dissertation in 2007 as

the first dissertation in the Czech Republic on this issue, entitled *The Use of the Multisensory Snoezelen Method for People with Mental Disabilities*. An important promoter of the method in the Czech Republic is Renáta Filatova, who was first involved in the production of compensatory aids, and helped to equip the first Snoezelen room in Ostrava in the then social care institute.

In 2019, the multi-sensory room Snoezelen was opened at the Faculty of Public Policy of the Silesian University in Opava. This is the second Snoezelen room on campus in the Czech Republic. The Snoezelen multisensory room contains aids for the development of individual sensations and thus opens up a therapeutic, supportive and leisure space for the therapist and client. Here one can find various light aids, projections, shapes, smells, mirrors, a swing, a water bed and other aids that help learning and the development of the client's mental richness.

Nowadays, various facilities, whether school, social services or health care, routinely use the multi-sensory Snoezelen concept environment, which is beneficial, individually variable and stimulating.

As far as education is concerned, during a few lessons in the Snoezelen room, pupils in special primary schools can exhibit greater motivation, encouragement, positive mood and attitude towards education (pupil activation), which is confirmed by numerous research surveys at home and abroad. The application of the Snoezelen concept in the key curriculum areas of special primary schools is possible in almost every curriculum domain. While approaching various topics in Snoezelen rooms, primary special school pupils are given a chance of real experience, concretization, support and innovative adventures, which are based on the perception through all senses, supporting the development of emotional and cognitive areas of the pupil's personality. In addition to supporting education, Snoezelen also serves as a form of self-fulfilment and leisure time, which, together with educational achievements, increase the pupils' self-esteem. The potential of pupils who change their learning environments is greatly increased, at the very least their interest in learning and a multi-sensory approach to education is increased.

2.2 Philosophy and principles of Snoezelen

In the Czech Republic, the concept of Snoezelen is defined in a descriptive form, it is **linked to the application of specific methods or techniques in a specially adapted scheme and physical space**. The condition for its functionality is the creation of such a multi-sensory environment in which people feel comfortable, connected, relaxed, and in which it is possible to achieve effects that cannot be achieved in an ordinary unadapted environment, a school classroom or hospital room, or any other place that is furnished and used in a stereotypic way.



TO REMEMBER

The Snoezelen concept is a comprehensive strategy that supports human development at all of its holistic levels – biological, psychological, social and spiritual ones. Its aim is to influence the birth and development of all key competences important for human life and its quality.

The International Snoezelen Association (ISNA – MSE) uses the following formulation (2012) to define a Snoezelen: *"A Snoezelen is a dynamic place full of spiritual richness... it is based on a mutual emotional relationship between the participant, the guide and a controlled environment that offers a great deal of sensory possibilities and stimulations. Snoezelen was created in the mid 1970s and is practiced worldwide. Snoezelen is guided by ethical principles and enriches the quality of life of all its participants. It is used for leisure, therapeutic and educational purposes."*

Fig. 9: ISNA symbol – MSE organization (www.isna-mse.org)



Nowadays, the whole concept is called "Snoezelen – MSE" worldwide. The standalone name Snoezelen is mostly used in Europe, Israel and Japan. The abbreviation MSE is basically an expression and synonym of the term Snoezelen and stands for multisensory environment. This acronym is used more in America and Australia than in Europe.

The promotion of Snoezelen is mainly based on its principles of individualisation and customisation. The concept is the exact opposite to consumerist productivity and stereotypically utilitarian conformity. As an educational strategy in schools, its entity highlights creativity, relationship building, individual problem solving, innovative educational methods and, of course, adaptation to individual learning needs and requirements. As the Nestor of Snoezelen states "*...in a wonderful and joyful world full of lights, magic, delights, surprises and unreal possibilities*" (Verheul, 1994)

In connection with Snoezelen, we talk about **a multisensory approach, with the help of which experts of different professions** (social workers, educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, therapists etc.) **try to activate their clients** (people with disabilities, children with special needs and various disorders, seniors with dementia, i.e. those who need specific help and support from others at a certain stage of their lives).

In general terms, the target group of the Snoezelen concept includes people whose quality of life is simultaneously affected by multiple professionals, both because of the need to provide life needs and effectively integrated interventions that positively develop their potential and competences, and because of the need to improve their quality of life and experience of real situations, integration into social systems and anchoring of social ties.

The social environment of the Snoezelen concept is created and influenced by professionals who lead and implement specific activities. Most often people from the helping professions work in the Snoezelen environment. In our country, in the Czech Republic, social service workers, activation workers, special educators, assistants and educators are particularly involved. These most often use it in their professional activities with children and adults with mental and multiple disabilities, dementia and severe multiple disabilities. This is similarly the case around the world (Lee et al, 2022; Sánchez et al, 2012; Bauer et al, 2015).

Psychologists and special educators are included in the direct process with this concept in the setting of the educational plan of individuals, or in the Comprehensive Intervention Process, both diagnostic and strategic development options for children and adults aimed at personal, pedagogical and social inclusion, through cognitive and communicative activation. Neurologically, at Snoezelen, we are pursuing the possibilities of the human brain plasticity which would change the perspective of dealing with situations related to functional and degenerative changes associated not only with old age, but also with pathologies of neuronal processes. Psychiatric efforts have largely focused on the marginalization of psychopharmaceuticals in the routine care of persons with mental and neurotic disorders, as well as children and adolescents with partial functional disorders such as ADHD, as well as autism spectrum disorders and their comorbidities.

The building of multi-sensory Snoezelen rooms, corners and gardens worldwide, as well as in the dimensions of the Czech Republic, is growing and becoming more common. We

see an increase in the availability and utilization potential of Snoezelen, most often in the area of work with children and the elderly. In 2007, there were 57 social service facilities, schools and educational institutions with multi-sensory rooms across our country. In 2018, the same number of Snoezelen was registered in the Moravian-Silesian Region, one of the 13 regions of the Czech Republic. According to the statistical data available this year 2022, there are more than 400 multisensory rooms in our country.

2.2.1 THE THREE-DIMENSIONALITY OF PROCESS SUCCESS

The success and effectiveness of the concept is underlined by sub-parameters that are closely related to the implementation of Snoezelen in practice and form its dominant components. These parameters are based on the original theory presented by Verheul and Mertens in their 1984 publication. In different interpretations, they are most often associated with the so-called "**Snoezelen triangle**", which clearly expresses the three-dimensionality of Snoezelen's attributes and underlines its processes.

Snoezelen is characterized by:

- an environment that is organized according to certain requirements, conditions, standards,
- the personality of the individual, whose development is the goal of the whole activity,
- and the guide, which is the one who participates in the action.

In the first case of the environment, it is a pleasant atmosphere and environment, originally and individually created, which corresponds in its arrangement to the needs of the situation in which we respond to the requirements of practice and specific people, for which Snoezelen is equipped with a number of adequate tools, techniques and resources.

In the second point, it is a concept that has an individual intention, which is eruditely based on the diagnostic schema of the individual and predicts the readiness to respond to what arises from the situational context of the specific work with the person and their educational intention.

The third is a progressive, positive and open approach of the actor (guide) who, according to his/her competences and therefore professionally focused goals, understands and accepts the possibilities of the person he/she is working with, reflects his/her heterogeneity and is actively empathetic to all his/her signals, both physical and emotional ones.

2.2.2 PRINCIPLES OF SNOEZELLEN

According to Verheul (1992), processes in a multi-sensory Snoezelen environment should be conducted in such a way as to support human development while maintaining certain principles of efficient work.

DEFINITION OF



Principles of the Snoezelen concept:

- 1. The right atmosphere**
- 2. Option to choose**
- 3. Possibility to set the space**
- 4. The right time**
- 5. Repetition**
- 6. Selective offer of incentives**
- 7. The correct basic attitude of the participants and especially the lesson guide**
- 8. Correctness and adequacy of supervision (cf. original Verheul, 1992).**

The principles of Snoezelen, in the context of the effectiveness of the entire system of its practices, necessitate recognizing these simply elaborated approaches:

TO REMEMBER



- Individual approach – is more than necessary, it is necessary to know the current diagnosis of the pupil, his special needs and abilities, competences, possibilities. The environment we create at Snoezelen is unique because of the individuality of the personality we work with. The individual approach can only be maintained with a certain degree of empathy.
- Non-directive approach – non-imposing approach, the ideas and feelings of the therapist or teacher are irrelevant, on the contrary, the choice of the child/pupil is also related to enough time space and the whole absorption of the situation.
- Choice – here we emphasize the relationship between the pupil and the therapist, an environment of trust and safety, nothing has to happen, everything is allowed.
- Time adequacy – related not only to the limits of the pupil, but also to the number of pupils in the group, typical principles of work in the school environment etc.
- Differentiated stimulus delivery – too many stimuli can lead to various negative nuances in the student's feelings and behaviour (apathy, inhibition, aggression, fatigue etc.)
- Retroactive and positive effect.

- Expert, professional and appropriate choice of methods, techniques, approaches – the choice of activities is firmly in the hands of the educator/therapist, which is related to his/her own competences, personal choice and the context of the individual approach to a particular pupil.
 - The need for professional supervision and feedback for the guide/educator.
-

The priority for setting up work in a multisensory room is interpersonal communication, relationships, interaction in various activities – activities and activities in a multisensory environment must be clear, meaningful, have an order and a goal. Sharing lessons together in a different environment is necessarily related to a certain relationship between the participants of the educational process and the interaction principles of work.



CORRESPONDENCE TASK NO. 3

Focus on the variety and individuality of the Snoezelen created. Find photos of different Snoezelen rooms on the internet and describe differences. Thus, create a comparative study of at least 5 differently built Snoezelen rooms. If possible, get as much information as you can about where the room is located, what clientele it is for and what it is used for.

Range: minimum 3 A4 pages. Submit the completed assignment/work in the Course Assignment Repository in a pdf format as instructed by your tutor.



REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 2

6. How many of the original principles of the Snoezelen concept are there?
 - a. 6
 - b. 7
 - c. 8
 - d. 9
7. The Snoezelen triangle forms a reciprocal relationship among:
 - a. Guide, environment and educator
 - b. Environment, guide and client

- c. The Client, the Multisensory Environment and the Principles of Snoezelen
 - d. Guide, teacher and client
8. The principle "Nothing is required and everything is allowed" is related to:
- a. The exclusive right to use the time and environment for whatever
 - b. The freedom of the Snoezelen concept
 - c. Possibility to use individually selected activities
 - d. Possibility of using all possible aids and techniques
9. The first mobile tent was set up in Hartenberg, near Ede, in:
- a. 1978
 - b. 1960
 - c. 1970
 - d. 1985
10. The founder of the Snoezelen concept is:
- a. Ad Verheul and Maurits Eijgendaal
 - b. Ad Verheul and Jan Hulssege
 - c. Jan Hulssege
 - d. Ad Verheul

CHAPTER SUMMARY



In the second chapter we introduced the concept of Snoezelen – MSE in a basic definitional and philosophical summary. The beginning of this chapter belonged to the context of the emergence of the concept with emphasis on the normalization tendencies of the time (1970s). Also, this chapter briefly touches upon the history of Snoezelen in the Czech Republic and highlights the important personalities who played a role in its establishment in this country. The Snoezelen triangle shows the three dimensions of a proper Snoezelen intervention, in which it is necessary to pay attention to each of the factors – the client, the therapist and also the specific features of the multisensory environment that must be created

purposefully. The principles of Snoezelen, which we present in the last part of the text, are also undeniably important and should be followed by anyone who wants to work effectively with this method.



ANSWERS TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

6. c; 7. b; 8. c; 9. a; 10. b;



OTHER RESOURCES

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3 STRATEGIES AND FORMS OF WORK IN SNOEZELLEN



QUICK CHAPTER PREVIEW

Chapter III of the studying material focuses on defining the possibilities of working in a multisensory room according to the original concept of the Snoezelen and also according to what kind of room it is, who works in it, who the clients are and what objective we have set. Most rooms are individually tailored to the client, and those who work in it know how they will use it according to the intention of its creation already. However, for those who do not have enough information about its establishment and about the clients who will spend their time there, the following summary of the forms of possible work in Snoezelen has been prepared.



OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The objective of this chapter is to:

- define the possibilities of types and forms of work according to a certain division
- realize how it is possible to work in Snoezelen with the aim of intervention
- realize how it is possible to work with a different environment in Snoezelen
- realize how a professional with different competences, skills and abilities works in Snoezelen
- recognize how very crucial the clients themselves, their needs and desires are for this intervention.



TIME NEEDED TO STUDY

8 hours of self-study + preparation of correspondence tasks no. 4 and 5



KEYWORDS OF THE CHAPTER

Classification of strategies and methods of work, intervention in respect to the client, intervention in respect to the goal, intervention in respect to the environment, intervention in respect to the professional background.

The concept of the first Snoezelen, as promoted by its founders, was purely based on the assumption that primary perception and actual experience are a very powerful means of making contacts and communicating with people with severe disabilities. Snoezelen, however, in this first historical stage, mostly had only recreational and relaxation value. The emphasis of its utilization was placed on pleasant and unpleasant feelings, motivation and the desire to actively participate in the events happening in the Snoezelen room. Learning, personal development and education were of secondary significance. The authors themselves admitted that their concept needed a theoretical framework and a unity of principles and rules that gradually took shape. Today we know that it is not possible to rely solely on our own intuition alone during the Snoezelen intervention, we must adopt a critical and professional approach towards activities and stimulation through the Snoezelen MS environment.

We know from many different reports, and also from research results, that unstructured and thoughtless work based solely on the multisensory equipment in the room, and its improper use and unprofessional handling, tend to lead to passivity and apathy, chaos, stimulus disorientation, overwhelming of the senses, or even aggression and internalization of unwanted and negative patterns of behavior or attitudes. The work in the multi-sensory rooms of Snoezelen must be clear, focused and meaningful, and must have a certain order. It is not possible to leave clients there to the mercy of themselves and the flowing stimuli from the environment, which is, moreover, multisensory.

To ensure effective sensory stimulation in the Snoezelen room, we must pay attention to the following factors, which are also the **sorting starting criteria for** the different forms and types of intervention in the Snoezelen.

TO REMEMBER

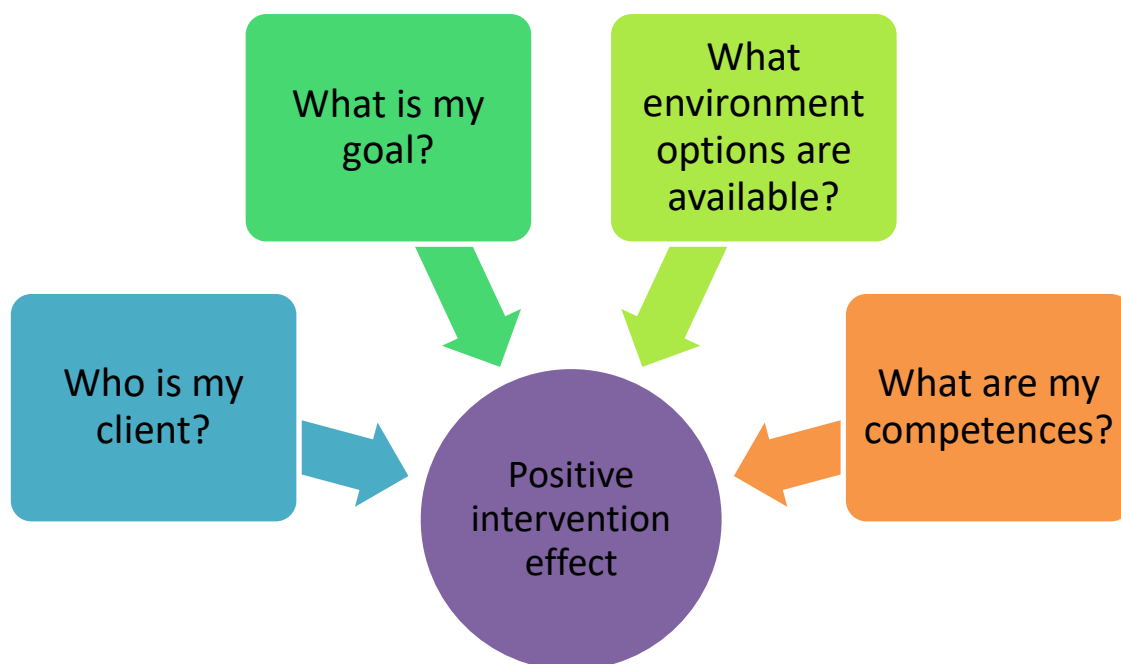


Strategies and types of work, i.e. interventions in Snoezelen are influenced by:

- I. Who the client of the intervention is
- II. What the aim of the intervention is
- III. What options the environment provides
- IV. What competences the guide/therapist has

The positive effect of Snoezelen is related to the different forms of activities and types of working processes in terms of different **types and forms of intervention**, but also in terms of different types of rooms, therapist competences and of course the target group of clients.

Fig. 10: Diagram of the positive effect in Snoezelen



3.1 Sorting criterion – the client

Fulfilling the philosophy of the Snoezelen concept and its specific sub-activities is based on a **pre-prepared and structurally planned concept of working with a particular client**. The individual plan for each client is determined on the basis of his/her health, age, specific needs and possibilities. Within this plan, both individual and group approaches can be applied.

The individual approach is based on intimate communication between the worker and the client. Individual needs, interests based on personality, motivation, as well as the client's psychological and physical condition, abilities and limitations play an essential role. The individual approach is based on flexible response and communication, on situational factors and on the time possibilities of both parties involved.

On the other hand, the **group approach** dynamizes and activates energy, creativity, courage to change. Working with a group is not a simple goal; it can be a means of working in the direction of expected changes in individuals. Encouraging each other to openly express the feelings of those present helps to enhance empathy, and also provides the opportunity to address their individual problems with the help of the whole group, with insight that can be mediated by other group members.

Age does not play any role in the Snoezelen intervention, in the sense of the possible application of this philosophy to **all age categories**. However, what can be pointed out is the typical context of human development in each chronological period. It is the very task of every special educator, assistant or otherwise educated guide to be able to work with clients at a certain age, which represents its own peculiarities. Moreover, it is also completely influenced by the preference to work with people of a certain age, which is also related to the equipment and focus of individual rooms.

A coherent factor for each intervention in Snoezelen is the **client's diagnosis**. If we look at the historical but also prevalently frequent application of the Snoezelen intervention for specific individuals, they include, in addition to children, adults and seniors with severe disabilities, i.e., particularly severe and profound mental and physical disabilities, include mainly people with autism spectrum disorders, Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia, regressive disorders such as Parkinson's disease, behavioural and emotional disorders, i.e. both children and adults, people with mental diseases and other disorders.

3.2 Sorting criterion – the objective and essence of the intervention

Since its origin, the method based on the multisensory environment Snoezelen has undergone many changes. Currently, it is considered by its representatives around the world both as an **original leisure activity with an emphasis on a non-directive approach, and as a sophisticated supportive educational concept with an emphasis on structure, learning and human development**. The task of finding an objective definition which would clarify what the multisensory Snoezelen method really is was addressed by Slevin and McClelland (1999) over 20 years ago. They pointed to the statement of Hulsegge and Verheul (1989) in the following wording: *„...there are numerous explanatory definitions that describe what the Snoezelen method precisely is; however, it cannot be fully conveyed through words and partially transferred imaginations or ideas alone what exactly is meant by the term. Ultimately, only personal experience and firsthand encounters can provide us with a true understanding of this method...”* (Hulsegge, Verheul, 1989, p. 158)

In view of the principles set out in the previous part of the text we dare to ask whether intervention in Snoezelen should be **guided or spontaneous?** And whether a pleasantly adapted room should be **primarily for resting, relaxation and the promotion of positive**

emotions, without much influence from a guide or teacher, or, on the contrary, whether the sessions should be structured and guided towards certain goals? There is no clear answer to this question, because it would not only limit the final set of possible methods and organisational forms of work, but also the basic idea that in Snoezelen we have to work on an individual basis and with individual goals would not be fulfilled.

First, let us have a closer look at the intervention and the approach, which we describe as free, non-directive, rather passive on the part of the guide, and a directive, structured and rather proactive approach on the part of the guide:

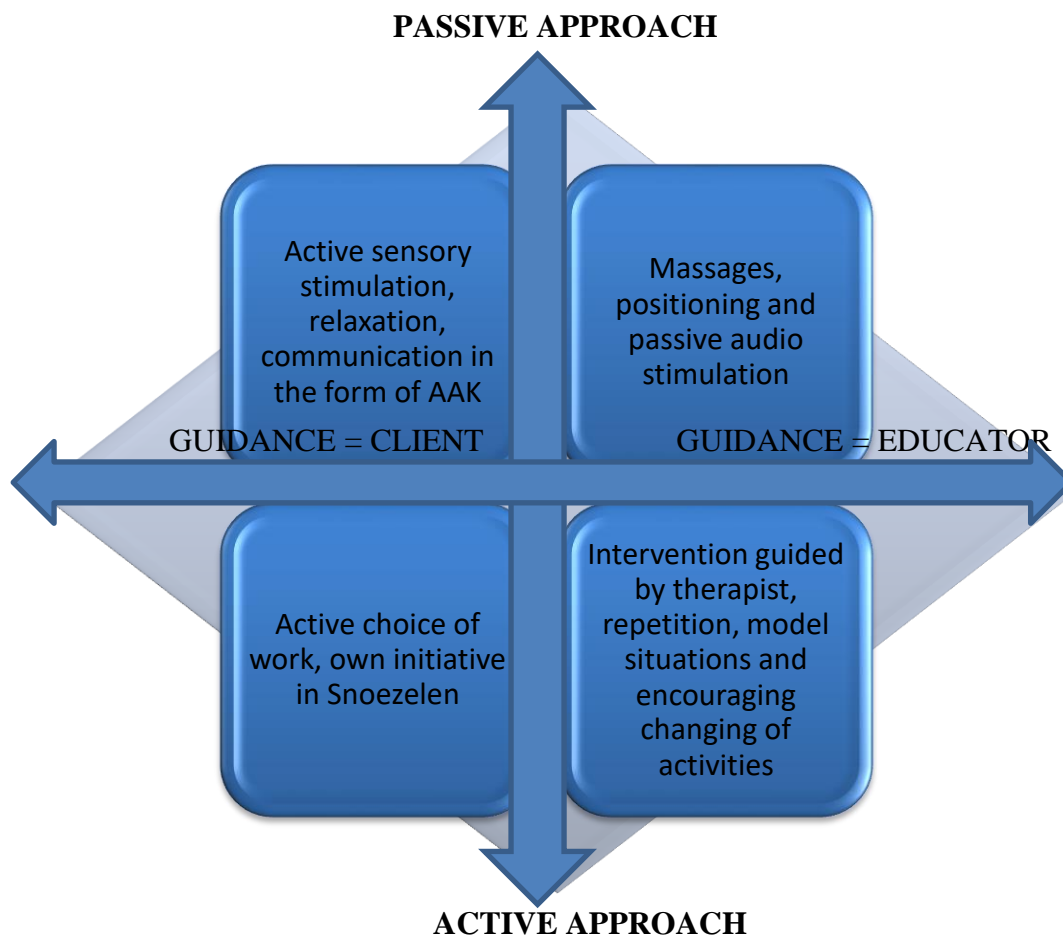
Free/non-directive/passive x Structured/directive/active

As far as the methods of work within the Snoezelen intervention are concerned, we can distinguish between **passive and active methodologies**, depending on the needs and profile of the given person. Let us look at each of them in more detail:

In the passive methodology, or while applying the non-directive approach, the role of the guide/expert is observational and rather just accompanies and ensures the presence of the client in the multi-sensory room. The client is the protagonist of his/her activity and experience. He/she is the independent initiator of his/her development and learning at different levels. Clients receive the effects of sensory stimuli spontaneously; the sensory experience and perception experiencing are not guided. The role of the guide/expert is to remain passive in conducting the lessons.

In the active methodology or directive approach, the guide/expert is the facilitator of the learning process that guides the search for intention. The client is guided and encouraged to be active, to be aware of sensory stimuli, to purposefully perceive and develop different kinds of perceptual experiences and to combine them in a certain efficiency and effect. At the same time, the guide controls the whole situation and directs it in a purposeful way so that it meets the goals which were set by him/her and the client, and mutually agreed upon. In general, when it comes to methodology, it is often impossible to maintain only a passive or active approach, they are frequently combined in a way. In addition, some possibilities are offered by **alternating and combining environments that allow both passive and active roles and intervention to be experienced.**

Fig. 11: Diagram of strategies and approaches in Snoezelen



The first officially named and also used intervention that will be described here is the so-called **24/7 Snoezelen**, which is **leisure oriented** due to its content and dimension. This intervention is described in the original Dutch concept and is directed towards the environment of homes for people with disabilities, for elderly people and for elderly people with dementia. The aim of this form of work in Snoezelen is to provide a sustained and long-term opportunity for multisensory stimulation to those whose cognitive and psychosocial abilities need support at every moment of their lives. 24/7 Snoezelen is mostly used by clients who are permanently placed in institutional care or in homes with permanent social services or assisted or nursing support.

Within this type of Snoezelen intervention we aim to adapt the physical environment to the individual's everyday life. The stimulating environment includes the entire house, apartment or at least a specific room. and all common areas. Everything is transformed to make the rooms and communal areas pleasant and stimulating space. They are equipped with aids and technology that correspond to the development of the senses and encourage sensory activity in people. The underlying principle that supports this Snoezelen practice is a comprehensive holistic biopsychosocial approach to understanding the health and behaviour of individuals. The purpose of such a Snoezelen strategy is to ensure that everyday life

with all its mundane and repetitive aspects such as hygiene, eating, routine activities like getting up, getting dressed, etc., are modified and enriched by incorporating a multi-sensory experience that brings moments of joy, well-being and new vigor to the daily stereotype. Additionally, we adapt the living space to the individual needs of each client who may prefer a different stimulating and relaxing environment. This global approach to everyday life is part of the concept of the original Snoezelen philosophy (Van Weert et al, 2005).

In our Czech environment, this kind of Snoezelen intervention is commonly regarded as a recreational (**leisure time**) **Snoezelen**, which ranks among **institutional Snoezelens**, just as it is in the original Dutch setting. These multisensory concepts, which offer the use of leisure time precisely with the aim of active stimulation, activation and support of sensory perception not only for the elderly people, but also for children and adults with severe multiple disabilities predominantly involving mental, physical and sensory impairments. They are also the **most frequently established primarily due to their necessity and usability in all-day care**.

But we can also think of Snoezelen as a **structured therapy**. **Within it**, we look at the psychotherapeutic goals, i.e. at whether it has a prospective positive therapeutic effect and changes the client's experience and behaviour in a positive way.

If we decide to use **Snoezelen as a therapy**, then we have to realize that there should be **changes in the person's experiencing and behaviour** during the therapy. Let us recall one summary definition that relates to psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic processes: ...whereas the effectiveness of the work is shown in the creation of positive expectation, the acquisition of hope and courage, the therapeutic relationship or cohesion and group dynamics are fostered, self-exploration, self-expression, relaxation and unwinding, confrontation with problems is possible, and the acquisition of perspective, understanding of contexts and unconscious information, feedback is gained, corrective emotional experience, new patterns and models of behaviour are tried and practiced, new information is acquired and missing social habits and skills are learnt, etc. (cf. Kratochvíl, 2006)

The therapy must be led by a competent guide, there must be a **planned and targeted procedure based on a comprehensive diagnostics of the client**, and of course feedback, evaluation and efficiency derived of this activity. The application of the Snoezelen method as a therapy is very individual with respect to the particularities of each client.

During an **active intervention**, as claimed by Cid et al (2022), a multisensory stimulation room or multisensory space can be a **means of enabling a person's active sensory awakening through active sensory experimentation** using mediated activities or by guiding the client purposefully through different situations. In such a way, apart from other benefits, we purposefully contribute to the global development of the person.

An interesting current concept of intervention in Snoezelen, especially for special educators, is the **supportive educational** approach. This type of intervention is concerned with creating a cognitive and educational environment that is necessarily **directive and**

actively thought through. Its goal may be to support the education of children or the development of the personalities of people with dementia, Alzheimer's disease, or other general mental or regressive diseases.

When it comes to the **active development of the cognitive component of the personality, education and learning**, the focus of the Snoezelen intervention is on innovative learning, discovery and acquisition of information, its consolidation, processes related to equipping, participative and deliberate observation, thinking skills, analysis and synthesis, logical inference and other phenomena. Often, however, the activities are minimally directive and are primarily concerned with motivation, initiation of these processes and their consolidation. Snoezelen can be used very positively and effectively as a motivational environment to initiate learning. Thus, we target attention and concentration, memory, language and communication skills, integration of concepts and other tools and processes that we consider to be prerequisites for successful learning. **This kind of intervention must be structured and targeted.**

In this case, we consider the Snoezelen room to be a supportive educational space, most often set up directly in the school, and an interesting complement to the activities and activities that relate to the specific curriculum of the school. The aids and technology that nowadays make it possible to create virtual environments, various effects, motivating interactive spaces, etc., are becoming a necessary motivational technology in the hands of teachers and educators. Promoting educational opportunities and specific educational topics motivates not only students but also teachers and puts new tools in their hands. In addition to these activity-oriented activities and interactive projects, Snoezelen gives the opportunity to relax, to individually relax, to use the room for their own purpose and needs. However, all the above conceals one major pitfall and that is the need for teachers' above-average preparation, their creativity and their increased interest in innovative approaches. At this point it is important to realize that Snoezelen is not another classroom and the activities in it are subject to the principles of Snoezelen.

EXAMPLE



An example of how Snoezelen can be implemented in a school environment is working with children and pupils with mental, physical, sensory and multiple disabilities.

Specifically, targeting a child with cerebral palsy involves activities improving gross and fine motor skills, laterality, eye-hand coordination, postural control, reducing spastic tension and improving muscle strength. Thus, in the multisensory room, the focus lies on vestibular and proprioceptive elements such as various cylinders, medicine balls, trampoline, swing, various surfaces and balancing elements etc.

With a different focus, for example, when aiming at the development of social and emotional abilities, for children and pupils with problematic behaviour, risk behaviour, behavioural and emotional disorders, the intervention in Snoezelen can cover, in addition to the aforementioned motivation, the improvement of self-esteem and self-respect, the learning of adequate behavioural models and patterns, the development of social skills, the acquisition of experience through role-playing, the development of communication, assertiveness, but also empathy and pro-social behaviour. In this case it is spontaneity, creativity and, again, support for the individual's needs, not only educational but also personal, emotional and social, that play a crucial role here.

In school field practice, the application of Snoezelen is generally very wide. In educational support, it is necessary to focus on:

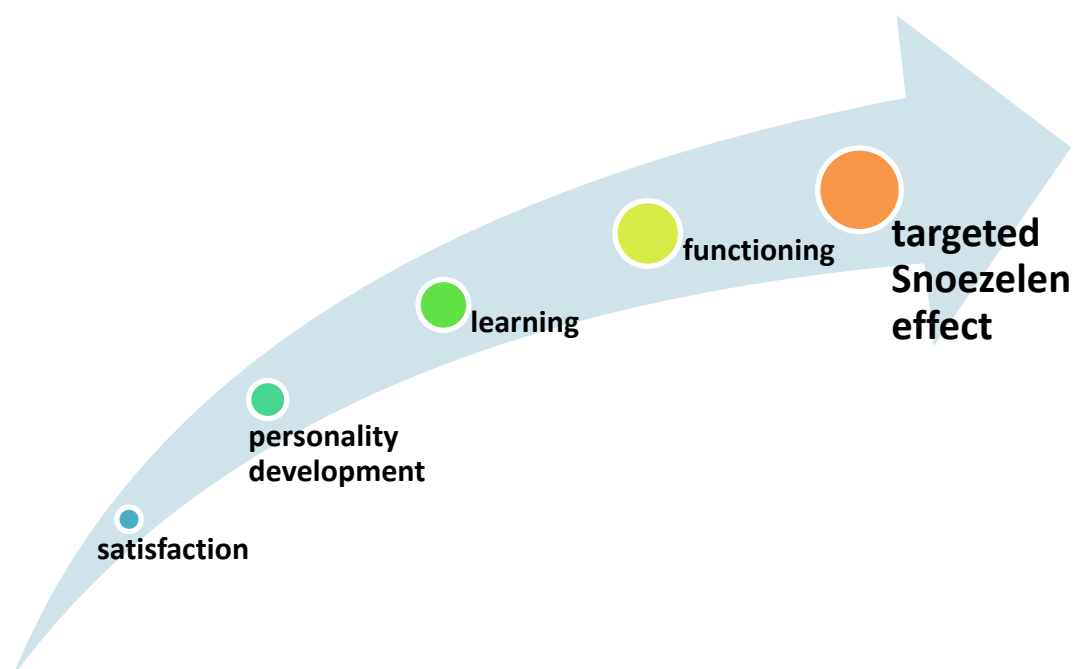
1. Individual characteristics, patterns, options and strategies that are related to the child/student themselves;
2. Meeting efficiently set educational goals, diagnostic and evaluation priorities (analysis, testing, child development opportunities etc.);
3. Counselling and cooperation (with parents of pupils, mutual sharing of problematic educational situations, support for positive change processes etc.);
4. Specific and high-quality modification of the Snoezelen environment corners and rooms in schools and educational institutions in the sense of targeted selection of aids, devices and technology in the spirit of the principles and guidelines of Snoezelen.

A fundamental aspect of the common education of children and pupils with special educational needs is exactly their **individual needs**, which must be taken into account and strive for the maximum possible development of each of them. In order to ensure that individual needs are met, the pupil must be known, researched and informed on an ongoing basis, and there must be cooperation. As stated by Vítková (in Bartoňová, Vítková, 2016), the most important feature is providing support measures and timeliness, which is related to the early diagnosis of the child. With pupils with more severe disabilities, especially those with mental, physical and/or sensory ones, these needs are identified and must be provided for at an early age and in preschool years. Snoezelen and its intervention can be of great help in detection and in activities related to the development and learning, thus supporting the maximum development of each child.

The approach of using Snoezelen in educational terms is based on four pillars intended to be **satisfaction, development, learning and functionality**. Highlighting only one of these pillars does not lead to adequate support for all the special needs of the individual. As an example, if we wish to build Snoezelen solely on the learning pillar alone, we would necessarily have to build it under the assumption of progress and development, which we exclude if the individual has regressive rather than progressive developmental tendencies.

Development itself is also an inadequate pillar on its own because if the individual is not content and does not feel good, which is an essential prerequisite for Snoezelen for us, it is impossible to learn through sensory stimuli. By the so-called functionality pillar, the fourth one, we mean the provision of a sequence of development or conditions that prevent the individual from taking the next steps in their development and receiving stimuli, for example, the negative adaptation of the individual to a multisensory environment. Their inability to participate in this environment represents an obstacle in achieving effectiveness of the activities. (Pagliano, 2012).

Fig. 12: Diagram of the targeted Snoezelen effect



3.3 Sorting criterion – therapist's competence and guidance

The professional work of a practitioner who teaches classes in the Snoezelen or uses it as a multi-sensory environment for various purposes in their activities is always based on their original profession and the education and certifications they have attained.

If we would like to show the span of professions that work more closely with the Snoezelen – MSE concept in the Czech Republic, then we would specifically focus on the following professions:

- Special educator, teacher, day care educator, teaching assistant
- Psychologist, psychotherapist
- Rehabilitation worker, physiotherapist
- Occupational therapist, music therapist, leisure therapist and activation worker
- Social worker, social services worker, caregiver and personal assistant

The competences associated with these professions are expressed in job descriptions, job duties and activities that relate to specific professions. As is obvious at first sight, the professions fall under different ministerial departments and their job descriptions are different. Within the scope of our studying material, we obviously focus on the special educator.

Special educators are fully qualified educational workers and their role is to provide direct pedagogical, teaching, educational or special educational intervention. His/her target group is not only the pupil with special educational needs, but also the child/pupil at risk, in danger, with behavioural problems and also children/pupils intact of current special needs.

School special educators work (according to the Education Act 561/2004 of Coll., as amended) mainly in schools, both mainstream schools at all grades and special schools. Its position has also been anchored in the new millennium in the area of school counselling (by Decree 72/2005, on counselling), which includes a team of counselling, prevention and intervention focused professionals in all primary schools in the Czech Republic. Certainly, special educational support for specific pupils at an individual level is strengthening and enriching for the children themselves, as well as contributing to the positive atmosphere within the entire school. It also fosters effective collaboration with the pupils' parents and other professionals involved.

In addition to the direct learning process itself, the school special educator is responsible for special education diagnosis and the special education guidance process. Although the special education diagnosis still has to be confirmed by the school counselling team (Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling Centre or Special Education Centre), it is the special educator who leads and prepares the entire intervention process, including early and continuous diagnosis and long-term evaluation.

The requirements for the professional qualification of a special educator are set out in Section 18 of Act No. 563/2004 of Coll., as amended by Act No. 198/2012 of Coll. and Act No. 333/2012 of Coll. on educational workers, as follows:

- A special educator acquires professional qualifications through higher education obtained by studying in an accredited master's degree program in the field of educational sciences
- focused on special education,
 - focused on preschool age education or on the preparation of primary school teachers or on the preparation of teachers of general education subjects in secondary school

or on the preparation of educators and additional studies to extend professional qualifications carried out by a university or

- of the pedagogy study program and complementary studies to extend the professional qualification carried out by a university.

The professional competences of a special educator are directed primarily to special education and counselling work in school. In a gradual process, they are responsible first for the diagnosis of pupils with special educational needs, they prepare, evaluate and process the results of this activity. Secondly, they diagnose the special educational needs of pupils on the basis of their examinations, questionnaires, medical histories and observations. They prepare, collect and analyze the examinations results. Finally, they also determine the main problems of the pupils and create individual support plans in and out of school. It carries out group and individual interventions, i.e. educational, re-educational, compensatory and stimulating activities. Previously, i.e. before 2004 (before the first amended school law), the special educator was more involved in the diagnostic activities of school counselling centres than in school intervention. Mertin and Kucharská (2007) point to this very significant shift in the Czech education system, because intervention is a crucial element related not only to education but also to further personal development and life outside school and school facilities.

Not limited to the above only, special educators are also competent to communicate and pass on information to the parents of the children, to lead and implement preventive actions even in families with problematic relationships, problematic behaviour and social conditions.

They also participate in the school's cooperation with teachers, in the preparation and adaptation of barrier-free conditions, in career counselling, and in proposing various approaches, procedures and methods that are adequately suited to individual pupils and their situation. They can introduce new concepts and coordinate them and guide other teachers methodically.

Special educators also work closely with teaching assistants, coordinating and methodically guiding them.

Although the diagnostic process is not the only task of the special educator, it is one of the most important processes, especially for the reason of quick initiation of a specific intervention. Timeliness, initial probing and consideration of primary intervention are of utmost importance for the child.

In the Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2030+, two basic strategic goals can be found: to focus education more on the acquisition of competences needed for active civic, professional and personal life and to reduce inequalities in access to quality

education and to enable maximum development of the potential of children, pupils and students.

The diagnostic process and its correct dynamics and start are the **first step in supporting children and pupils in schools and the shift from a static to a dynamic diagnostic model, which would move from identifying the specific diagnosis of the child to identifying the level of support, is the main diagnostic task of the special educator.**

The educational activity and impact of the teacher must be based on deliberate observation, history taking, interviews and other adequate diagnostic procedures and methods as a means of identifying individual needs and recognizing the current stage of development on which we can build our intervention.

The multisensory room offer possibilities specifically designed for various special education purposes. Then, for example, by initiating a spontaneous observational activity in the Snoezelen, based on a properly developing relationship and positively tuned situations, we can make the whole beginning of the intervention process, especially the diagnostics, with the child as easy and pleasant as possible.

In addition to the professional tasks and competences, however, we place particular emphasis on the **personality traits and the competences of the Snoezelen guide**, who should be, above all, characterised by:

- affection and emotional warmth,
- empathy
- boundless patience,
- creativity,
- ability to motivate,
- internalized social competences and skills,
- responsibility,
- personal approach to the client
- respect for the client and his individuality.

A guide in Snoezelen should be **highly socially responsive**. This term, in other words, social perception, primarily involves getting to know people, being attentive to their differences and having constructive attitudes towards them. A socially perceptive person should have, among other features, knowledge of social and emotional intelligence, and should have acquired the skills needed to get to know people and deal with risky situations in which they are involved. Social perception is influenced both by information apparent at first glance (physical appearance, expressive and other motor displays, verbalization and verbal behavior) and by other variables of the perceiver (internal feelings and knowledge of perceived stimuli, self-concept and the value system) and other impressions.

Particularly important parameters of a guide in Snoezelen are **empathy, active listening, the ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally, concentration, getting rid**

of prejudices and stereotypes, joy and respect for the client, love without reservations and patience.

CORRESPONDENCE TASK NO. 4



Special education diagnostics has its own tasks and goals. Focus on the diagnosis of sensory perception and, according to the following article, create an example of the diagnosis of each sense using the resources, techniques and aids that may be available in Snoezelen. In this way, try to set up a Snoezelen diagnostic room. What would this room contain in terms of equipment?

JOSÉ CID RODRIGUEZ, María, Ramona RIBES CASTELLS and Kateřina JANKŮ. *Sensory Profile In The Snoezelen Intervention*. Social Pathology and Prevention. Opava: Faculty of Public Policies, Silesian University of Opava, 2022, vol. 21, 7(1), pp. 35-49. ISSN 2464-5877. doi:10.25142/spp.2021.007.

https://spp.slu.cz/artkey/spp-202101-0004_sensory-profile-in-the-snoezelen-intervention.php

Prepare in writing as a seminar paper and submit it to the Course Assignment Repository according to the instructions of your tutor.

CORRESPONDENCE TASK NO. 5



Following the approaches described in this chapter, choose one client with a specific diagnosis or in a specific situation, focus on a possible and adequate goal with an active or passive methodology and describe it in a case study. The example does not have to be based on real experienced practice, but your own experience is an advantage. Present the example for discussion in a group of students and explore the benefits and challenges associated with it.

Prepare the case study in writing and then present as a discussion topic to a group of students. Follow your tutor's instructions.



REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 3

11. The opposite of an individual approach is:
 - a. A generalised approach
 - b. Group work
 - c. Individualisation
 - d. Approaches by more teachers

12. Which terms are related within one approach:
 - a. Free – directive – cooperative
 - b. Free – non-directive – passive
 - c. Active – directive – passive
 - d. Structured – non-directive – active

13. Pagliano (2012) builds child development on the following pillars
 - a. satisfaction – development – learning – functionality
 - b. individual approach – tolerance – respect
 - c. learning – development – sensoriality
 - d. individual approach – satisfaction – playfulness

14. In Czech conditions, the so-called 24/7 Snoezelen is called:
 - a. Intervention Snoezelen
 - b. Educational Snoezelen
 - c. Supportive educational Snoezelen
 - d. Institutional Snoezelen

15. Social receptivity is the same as:
 - a. Social empathy
 - b. Socialization

- c. Social approach
- d. Social perception

CHAPTER SUMMARY



Chapter Three focuses on a step-by-step understanding of the possibilities of working with the Snoezelen concept. The student is offered some criteria according to which they can focus and direct their work. It is essential to realise that the work in Snoezelen has its own structure, organisation, objectives, i.e. a comprehensive methodology. Even though the style of work is mainly chosen by the therapist/educator, it must accept the client's peculiarities, motives and needs, but also individual development goals of a complex nature, which must be discussed in a team, the possibilities of the environment and the competence of the staff. In the division of the text we followed the order of importance – sorting according to the client and their characteristics, sorting according to the goals, the possibilities of the environment and the competences, skills and abilities of the workers – special educators.

KEY TO REVIEW QUESTIONS



11. a; 12. b; 13. a; 14. d; 15. d.

OTHER RESOURCES



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- Strategy of the Czech Republic's education policy until 2030+. Available at: <https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/strategie-2030>
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- Act No. 563/2004 Coll., as amended by Act No. 198/2012 Coll. and Act No. 333/2012 Coll. on Teaching Staff.

4 A SPECIAL PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO SNOEZELEN

QUICK CHAPTER PREVIEW



Chapter Four is devoted to the specification of procedures that should be implemented within the multi-sensory rooms of Snoezelen by the special educator. First, the traditional and innovative special pedagogy of today is defined, together with its goals and focus. In the specific methods and techniques sub-section individualization and differentiation as essential moments in the work of the special educator are highlighted. It is also pointed out that the multisensory room must be clearly organized, subject to certain rules of space and time, structured according to the requirements of the client and the special educator, multi-sensory learning takes place in it, and it uses concrete and visualization elements. Thus, this chapter gets more into the educational support activities of the special educator.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER



The aim of this chapter is:

- to define the goals of special education (pedagogy) which should be appropriately enriched with multi-sensory rooms and the concept of Snoezelen;
- to recall individualization and differentiation as fundamental approaches in Snoezelen;
- to identify those moments of the special educator's work that belong to the principle ones: structuring, visualization, concretization, multisensory learning and multisensory approach;
- to introduce structured lessons as a viable applicable methodology associated with the Snoezelen concept;
- to break down structured lessons according to their parts and phases.

TIME NEEDED TO STUDY



8 hours of self-study + preparation of correspondence tasks no. 6 and 7



KEYWORDS OF THE CHAPTER

Individualization, differentiation, structuring of space and structuring of time, visualization, concretization, lesson phasing, structured lessons, preparation phase, implementation phase, evaluation phase.

Special education as an academic discipline has been undergoing noticeable modifications in recent years and demonstrates many of its new forms.

This field has already surpassed the strictly interdisciplinary approach to itself. The forms of special pedagogy are emerging in the context of modern trends typical for the age which is open to **global transformation of the approach to the individual and their qualities, to societal changes and innovations at an international level.**

The current paradigm of special education is considered **multidimensional** in contrast to the historically interdisciplinary tuning and character of the discipline. Special education as an academic discipline is dynamically evolving, reflecting the current state of knowledge of the cooperating disciplines, which primarily include pedagogy, psychology, medical science, sociology, social work and law.

In its framework, it pays attention to promoting the concept of lifelong learning, reducing inequalities in education, supporting education and upbringing objects and entities, and legal representatives. It pays attention to the workers in the educational sector, bearing in mind the issues of diversity, heterogeneity, equality, equity, which are highlighted by the professional community in institutionalised education.

The key areas of interest of the academic discipline are the persons, factors, processes, mechanisms and their contexts that enter a person's life and cause barriers and limits in socialization. It is involved in all areas of lifelong education, counselling, diagnosis, rehabilitation, compensation, employment, prevention and other areas related to quality of life.

The traditional diversification of special education includes the person with a special need in the context of their heterogeneity, i.e. differences in development or functional impairments or chronological peculiarities, and the degree of support we provide to ensure a certain quality of life. However, the modern academic discipline accepts the specificities of persons with special needs as a challenge to society for social inclusion, inclusive policies and systematic humane development of the population.

It is through the person with a certain otherness that we get a chance to **define originality and individualizing approaches that would otherwise lack the meaning and essentiality of the uniqueness of human existence. Snoezelen undoubtedly belongs to this new concept of special education.**

TO REMEMBER



Snoezelen is considered in special education as an educational, therapeutic or combined educational and therapeutic method. It is interpreted as a whole, as a concept that includes specific methods, techniques, approaches that can be used in field practice.

For special education, Snoezelen is an innovation in procedure, content and function. By placing a fundamental emphasis on experience and experiencing, and doing so in an individualistic spirit, it ranks among educational and therapeutic concepts and formative concepts.

Snoezelen can be a very expressive, flexible and adequate tool in the hands of a special educator. It can have its place in schools, but also in day care, homes, counselling centres and activation and relaxation centres.

Snoezelen finds its application in clients of different ages:

Due to its possibilities, it is often used **in early childhood**. This is due to its flexibility and the applicability of different modifications of Snoezelen **in the context of progressive ontogenetic changes in the child's personality development**. Through a multi-sensory environment, it is possible to ensure the **development of the individual while respecting the peculiarities, specific needs or circumstances** that accompany their development.

In the periods of preschool and school age, it is advisable **to imply Snoezelen directly into educational structures**, not only for the cognitive development of pupils, but especially for the prevention and desirable intervention of special educational care, taking into account the special educational needs of pupils.

As we have already mentioned many times, its origin was related to **people in adulthood**, so within the current goals of special education, which in the Czech Republic is not only focused on children's age, its use is mainly **leisure, therapeutic**, but also developing and **relaxing**, suitable for adult clients and seniors.



STATEMENT

Thanks to the empirically proven results, we can recommend Snoezelen as a re-education, rehabilitation or compensation method, as a means for activity as well as relaxation.

Special educators or teaching assistants use it in their work, especially for school education of pupils with moderate and severe mental disabilities, multiple disabilities and autism.

A special educator is primarily an **educational professional** whose work goals are fulfilled by creative, empathetic and motivational activities through which they develop individuals with special needs towards improving their inclusion, their ability to build and maintain relationships, and to communicate with other people. Field school practice shows the efficient applicability of the Snoezelen concept **in the curriculum system of school institutionalized education, in counseling and for self-actualization and leisure activities of children.** The Snoezelen in conjunction with the "**special room**" guarantees a pleasant atmosphere, a pleasant temperature, avoidance of too penetrating light, too loud sounds or voices, which is beneficial for the acceptance and interaction of social relations, haptic or other sensory stimuli.

The Snoezelen concept answers the questions of **how to teach, how to motivate, how to engage and how to convey the curriculum in a fun way** and make it easier for even those pupils with very extensive special needs to get to know the world around them better and in a broader way. A special educator can create a unique atmosphere in a multi-sensory room, in which they can offer their clients **to experience different moments and situations in a different way than the usual way**, and thus gain a personal **experience**. In this way, each pupil can more easily remember, retain and subsequently recall what they need. In this way, we strengthen their self-confidence, accept their uniqueness, promote being in the here and now and emphasize the uniqueness of the experience. Snoezelen rooms, due to their variability, can use different aids, and the stimuli that arise through them are most often directed towards the development of perception, imagination and thinking. Pupils have a greater opportunity for self-realisation. On the other hand, Snoezelen gives teachers the opportunity to **overcome the traditional methods, contributes to professional growth, stimulates creativity** and improves the upbringing and educational process.

Snoezelen can be **incorporated into various lessons at school, into various school and extracurricular activities**, whether it is the development of reading, mathematics or musical or artistic skills, into classroom lessons or personal interviews, relaxation moments etc. Snoezelen in schools are made up of small corners as well as whole rooms.

4.1.1 METHODS AND WAYS OF WORKING

The Snoezelen rooms offer special educators various possibilities for meeting the development goals of specific clients, so in the hands of special educators we most often refer to the educational goals of specific students.

If we take inspiration from modern pedagogy, then the special educator should see the Snoezelen environment as an opportunity that offers itself for the fulfilment of educational goals, i.e. pupils can learn there thanks to multisensory stimuli and the special educator must use this opportunity to their advantage. (cf. Starý et al, 2008)

If we start to think about the pupils with whom a special educator works competently in Snoezelen, **their prerequisites and conditions for learning differ significantly**, and they are inherently **very different**, especially for working in such a specific environment as Snoezelen.

The basic approach a special educator must work with in Snoezelen is **differentiation**. Different pupils are suited to different ways of presenting the material, different paces, different aids, different stimuli, different support etc. Therefore, it helps the teacher to **sort the pupils into different groups or work with them individually**. Depending on the pupils' internal or external prerequisites and the individual environmental conditions, the special educator must take into account that it is not possible to work in the same way in a Snoezelen as in a regular classroom. The task of the special educator is, in the first phase, to **systematically organise the pupils in a way that suits them and their education in the Snoezelen**.

The following pupil prerequisites can be helpful, which the special educator notices before starting the Snoezelen intervention (Fig. 13):

Fig. 13: Diagram of students' prerequisites for the Snoezelen intervention

| Internal prerequisites | External prerequisites |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• motivation• previous knowledge and skills• attention• memory• intelligence• personality traits (especially volitional ones)• learning style• competences to learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• family background• material and non-material properties of environment,• school environment - every pupil reacts in a different way to teaching conditions of the school and classroom, kind of curriculum, its relevance and clarity, time conditions for learning at school, ways of external motivation to learning at school and other prerequisites |

The follow-up approach is **individualisation**, i.e. tailoring the work to each individual, i.e. in the context of information on differentiation, it is a form of intervention concentrated on supporting one individual pupil. The **individual approach** is the cornerstone of every teacher's work. It allows us not only to respect the originality of each child, supporting their unique characteristics and needs, i.e. in the conventional sense, their positive and negative features, but also to respect their requirements in terms of the layout of space, the organisation of educational patterns, the time available and the pace of work etc.

In a regular classroom setting, individualization is often a difficult task, but when complementing the educational process with a specific Snoezelen corner or even a whole multi-sensory room, this approach can be applied much more easily. The result can then be not only greater satisfaction on the part of the pupil, but progress in learning and the acquisition of competences that were difficult to achieve when working together with all pupils. Respecting the individual peculiarities of each pupil, both in terms of content and method, is a fundamental prerequisite for the work of special educators. What helps us in this respect is the principle of exercising the right to a unique educational path and the methods that are most appropriate for human development (see Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007).

For Snoezelen and the work in it, we most often use external differentiation of pupils, i.e. their division according to individual requirements, needs, abilities and performance so that we focus not only on educational goals but also on **internal emotional attunement, positive motivation, work with social skills, establishing and building relationships, competences not only for work, but especially for personal development, communication and social.**

According to our leading experts, with pupils who are divided into smaller units for work or are educated individually the threat of problem behaviour, which is often related

to different educational needs, motivation and goals, is eliminated. (cf. Mareš, 2013) Educators can achieve higher educational results in Snoezelen right by means of this form of education, not only for those who are considered to be rather average to below average performers, but also for those whose learning aptitude and prerequisites are higher and educators do not have any available capacity to pay more attention to them.

Another method of working, which is often used by special educators in multi-sensory rooms, has been adopted, in a way, from the TEACCH programme and the Loovas intervention therapy. It is the method of **structuring**. This style of work facilitates the student's transition between successive activities throughout the day. Structuring is used in schools during the school day, in the daily routine and in the individual routine of the children. Its undeniable advantage is **respect for the child's developmental stage and his or her mental and emotional level**.

As for Snoezelen, we often miss the basic fact of this environment, namely its **structured layout**. Multisensory rooms must have a **well-organized structure** for the individual, providing them with a certain charm and pleasant impressions. However, we must nevertheless maintain a certain **degree of navigational ability and control over the environment** so that the client can engage in specific activities without feeling overwhelmed by an excessive amount of aids, tools and techniques producing too many stimuli and thus potentially triggering rather negative reactions.

In Snoezelen we maintain a **visible arrangement that** helps us to answer the questions: where I am, at what time, for how long and why I am here, what tasks I will solve here, what feelings I have here, because this is the only way the client will avoid a stressful situation, will not panic, will not respond with affective behaviour, aggression or other undesirable types of behaviour. This is also related to a **certain phasing and structuring of space, time and activities, which must be thought out in advance for the intervention in the multi-sensory room**.

Snoezelen is therefore related to a certain stable structure of the space, which does not bring constant changes, but on the contrary a calm, pleasant stability of the environment into which the client enters, a clearly structured space that ensures a positive stay in the room. This structure must be adequately adapted to the personality of those who will be staying there, but also to their motor skills, intellect and educational objectives. Such an environment can then compensate for the client's deficiencies, and we can then respond flexibly to newly manifested requirements and to the long-term special needs of clients.

STATEMENT



The client must understand the structure of the environment and gradually navigate in it in order to be able to comprehend the tasks that are related to this environment.

Structuring also involves **time** in sense of a certain methodical approach. For many clients, time is a completely abstract quantity that must be **governed by pre-set limits that indicate its use**. Such a **limit is usually the same routine of the day, the boundaries of the beginning and end of activities, a certain sequence of events and the anticipation of other activities**.

It is exactly due to the clear time structure in Snoezelen why we use **ritualizations and stereotypes associated with transitions, beginnings and ends of activities**. These often non-verbal activities can ensure a better understanding of the clients, who, even with the speech deficits and reasoning abilities that are associated with verbal instructions, often do not understand the questions asking what we are going to do now, what will follow, what we have already done here etc.

In Snoezelen, we manage to support the time structure with specific visual elements, which can be specific 3D objects, 2D images, time orientation maps, but also other materials. All the **structures we use in Snoezelen are always completely original and individual in nature, adapted to the client or clients in question**.



TO REMEMBER

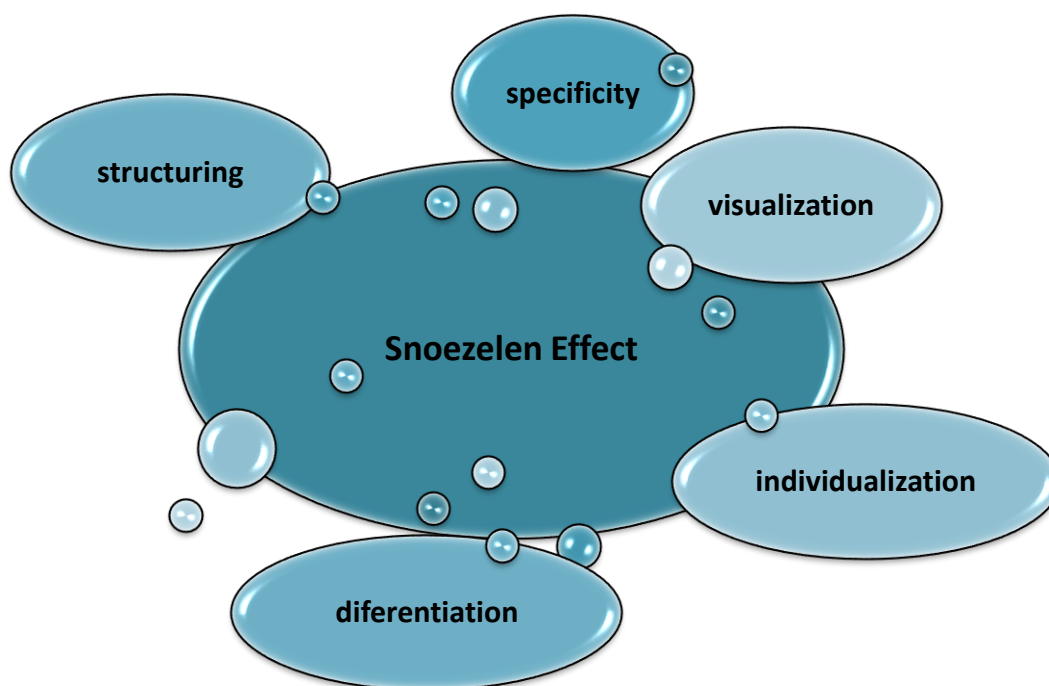
The structure of the environment and time helps both the pupils and special educators, too. They can build upon the established arrangement, flexibly expand and adapt it, while introducing inspiring novelties, interesting and diverse activities that will support the pupils in their development through emotional and joyful experience and acquired skills.

The visual support that is associated with this structuring not only allows for a quicker understanding of the entire situation, but also fosters and facilitates the client's independence and self-sufficiency in other situations.

The Snoezelen thus becomes an **organized room** which has an obvious motivational potential for activities and work for the pupil and the special educator,

The effect of using Snoezelen is supported by the systems of structuring, concretization, visualization, differentiation and individualization, as we can see in the following diagram (Fig. 14).

Fig. 14: Diagram of the systems that support the use of the Snoezelen concept



At Snoezelen, **multisensory learning and multisensory teaching** take place, which involves using visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile and other stimuli to make the information we receive more permanent, longer lasting, and easier to be recalled. Multisensory learning is related to improving memory and cognitive abilities, as well as improvement of learning.

4.1.2 STRUCTURED LESSONS

A typical activity of a Czech special educator in Snoezelen is an **implementation of a structured lesson**.

TO REMEMBER



Structured lessons are **thematic and targeted lessons** that correspond to the abilities and competences of specific clients and **their task is to introduce the selected topic in**

the environment of Snoezelen and to develop, differentiate, specify and concretize the topic using this environment and the possibilities of work offered here – multisensory approach, individual approach, structuring, visualization and other methods.

Structured lessons are implemented in the following stages:

PREPARATION

- Preparing for a client – what do I know about you?

This first and very important preparatory stage includes a diagnostic profile of the client, i.e. a special education diagnosis for the purpose of working in Snoezelen. Here, special educators focus primarily on examining the level and quality of the following areas of the client's personality that influence the work in the multi-sensory room:

- motor skills (gross, fine, eye movements, articulatory motor skills, graphomotor skills, sensorimotor skills and motor coordination);
- level of perception (vestibular, tactile, kinesthetic, visual, auditory and rhythmic);
- verbal and non-verbal communication;
- reasoning skills, memory, concentration and observation skills;
- spatial and temporal orientation;
- social ties
- emotional state
- behaviour patterns, stereotyping and specific behavioural styles (e.g. related to autism)
- level of other skills and abilities.

- Preparing the topic – what will be our goal and how will we reach this goal by choosing a specific topic?

At the beginning, we recommend that special educators consider whether they will use the multi-sensory room to develop a specific thematic unit derived from the Framework Curriculum (primary education, special elementary schools, preschool education etc.) or to conduct activities that are not related to it. Snoezelen can be used not only for educational support, but also to build positive motivation in the child, their self-realization, personal growth, relationship development and other areas, either in leisure time or for social therapy purposes.

Goals related to education are associated with work objectives and in structured lessons they are often linked to the cognitive development of the student. Each goal and its sub-tasks should be carefully defined and designed to be followed in the long term.

Preparation simply means thinking through the following components of future lessons:

- setting the tasks and objectives of the lessons
 - considering the time allocation for individual segments
 - defining didactic and methodological support (how I will work, including activation and relaxation)
 - creating content for activities
 - thinking about adequate rituals, evaluation method and lesson conclusions.
- **Preparing the environment – what will I need for the chosen topic? How will I structure and modify the Snoezelen environment according to the chosen topic (see pictures and examples of topics from our faculty (FVP) students)?**

TO REMEMBER



The aids and specific items that we prepare for the structured lessons do not have to be "*primarily*" related to the topic. For example: if we prepare a structured lesson titled *The Bee*, we can prepare seemingly unrelated objects such as: toothpaste, soap or an umbrella. As the aim is not to prepare only what the client would guess at first sight, so to speak. Items that are *seemingly unrelated to the topic* offer a bridge to other topics, stimulate analytical and synthetic operations, logical reasoning, activate memory, stimulate discussion, sharing of experiences etc.

Following the grouping of items in the pictures below themes of the bees, hunting and wood are suggested. The photographs were used in a course for students at the Faculty of Public Policies of the Silesian University in Opava.

Fig. 15, 16 and 17: Structured lesson themes





IMPLEMENTATION

- **What exactly will the structured lesson in Snoezelen include? What will be its content?**

Implementation means that we will be transforming the preparation into the sub-content of individual lessons together with the client.

Each structured lesson should include:

- greeting (ritual)
- active part
- relaxation part
- conclusion (ritual)
- feedback

The **proportion of active and passive parts** of the lessons does not have to be the same, but it should be adequately adapted to the needs of the client, where the distribution of these parts can be repeated and developed.

EVALUATION

- **We always record, systematically evaluate, give feedback and evolve.**

We must always remember there has to be a conclusion and evaluation or assessment. It is the only possible termination to each activity, session or class. Of course, the client also expects a conclusion of an activity. In order to have a unified understanding of the situation and to grasp the evaluation of completed activities, it is necessary to work together on the closing ritual. For this ritual it is possible to use specific and specifically designed activities, informal evaluation and various alternative elements. The ritualisation anchors the acquired knowledge and consolidates the client's experiences in the room.



EXAMPLE 1

Example of activities that can be used for structured lessons on the topic "Autumn and autumn-related activities" The topic is prepared according to the methodology of the RVP Primary School, so it is prepared as a topic suitable for inclusion in the direct educational process, in the teaching of pupils. The topic was prepared by Mgr. Eva Janků, special educator at the Těšínská Primary School in Ostrava – Silesian Ostrava.

| Development area and lesson sub-objectives | Examples of activities |
|---|--|
| Visual perception | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ pictures and products – differentiation, recognition and comparison ➤ puzzles and matching real objects to pictures ➤ activities with fruit, vegetables and natural products ➤ observation of a potato growing in the jar |
| Auditory perception | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ playing simple musical instruments ➤ singing and listening to folk songs with the theme of autumn days |
| Haptic perception | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ harvesting and sorting of crops ➤ walking barefoot on chestnuts and acorns ➤ activities with fruit, vegetables and products of nature ➤ massages |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Olfactory perception | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ activities with fruit, vegetables and products of nature ➤ aromatherapy lamp with the scent of forest trees and fruits |
| Taste perception | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ fruit and nut tasting, potatoes ➤ products |
| Gross motor skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ playing the chimes ➤ movement exercises ➤ collecting acorns, chestnuts, walnuts and hazelnuts ➤ walking barefoot on chestnuts and acorns |
| Fine motor skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ products, massages ➤ differentiation by blindness ➤ recognising fruit and vegetables without visual inspection |
| Graphomotorics + visuomotorics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ making products inspired by the theme "harvest" |
| Thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ matching the months of the year to autumn ➤ matching real objects to pictures ➤ selecting the current month ➤ counting the number of acorns and chestnuts collected ➤ sorting chestnuts and acorns and dividing them according to size ➤ learning about fruit and vegetables |
| Memory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ poem about a potato accompanied by movement ➤ matching of individual months ➤ selecting the current month ➤ songs with the theme of autumn crops ➤ recognising fruit and vegetables without visual check |
| Imagination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ looking at and naming fruit, vegetables and products of nature in pictures ➤ recognising fruit and vegetables without visual check ➤ observation of a potato growing in a jar ➤ guessing game with food |
| Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ matching of months ➤ naming fruit, vegetables and product of nature in pictures ➤ poems and songs associated with the theme of autumn crops |
| Attention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ playing simple musical instruments ➤ competition in collecting acorns and chestnuts hidden under leaves ➤ picking walnuts and hazelnuts ➤ guessing game with food ➤ observation of a potato growing in the jar ➤ massages |

A special pedagogical approach to Snoezelen

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ a letter from Mr. Autumn➤ competition in collecting acorns and chestnuts hidden under leaves➤ guessing game with food➤ food tasting➤ observation of a potato growing in the jar➤ massages |
| Self-care skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ preparation of a simple dish (salad) |
| Social behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ competition for collecting acorns and chestnuts hidden under leaves (promoting healthy competition and cooperation)➤ mutual massages |
| Personal experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ learning about and tasting of foods➤ massages➤ collection of products of nature➤ products |

| Structure of lessons | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a letter from Mr. Autumn with a task and a sweet reward |
| Ritual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ poem and playing the chimes |
| Busy, active part | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ putting on raincoats and rubber boots ➤ wind and rain simulation with fan and laundry sprinkler ➤ walking barefoot in a pool of leaves ➤ demonstration of autumn weather forecast on the backs of pupils (classmates copy the teacher's example on each other's backs) ➤ collecting earthworms ➤ movement exercises: playing the falling leaf game, demonstrating trees blowing in the wind (swaying from side to side) |
| Teaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ short explanation about autumn with visualisation, pictures of autumn months and their characteristics, use of visual aids ➤ demonstration of rain by spraying around the face, wind by blowing into the fans, wind in the hair with a hair dryer and sun with a lamp ➤ matching the months and weather cards describing autumn to the big autumn sign (describing and reading them), choosing the current month ➤ matching coloured leaves to colours in pictures ➤ poems and songs with autumn themes ➤ September food tasting |
| Relaxation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ positioning and listening to a short autumn story ➤ listening to relaxing music with sounds of rain and light wind ➤ aromalamp ➤ listening to the folk song "It's raining, it's raining" |
| Product | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ making a simple kite: fold a square sheet of paper twice, glue the prepared strips of paper as tassels and add a string tail ➤ planting watercress ➤ printing, pressing and tracing leaves ➤ tearing leaves following the veins |

Conclusion

- chimes and a poem
- short lesson evaluation (praise) and a sweet reward



EXAMPLE 2

*Example of a structured lesson **A day on the beach** is prepared for adults and seniors, especially those living in year-round homes. The theme can be modified to *Day in the Forest, Day on a Meadow, Day in the Garden, Day in the City, Day in the Mountains*. We always base these lessons not only on the motivation of the client alone, but also on their life experience and personal development goals.*

- **Goal:** to feel like as if you were on the beach, imagine a day on the beach with all your senses and relive it in Snoezelen
- **Tasks:** to activate imagination, memory, creativity and thinking, to feel positive emotions, to self-realize on the beach by the sea
- **Aids:** sand, seashells, seaweed, starfish (natural material), cellophane, aluminum foil and art materials, fan, wheat bag, sun cream and aloe vera gel, hammock, spotlight, projector (with coloured slides of the sea, fish, dolphins etc.), fruit and vegetables, juicer, plastic fish, bubble tube, thermo-insulating silver foil blanket), white umbrella, fish prints, paper kites, audio equipment, aroma-therapy diffuser, coconut essence, ice cream etc.

The aim of this example of a structured lesson is to **show the development of individual senses and sensory perception.**

Tactile – Touch

- Create sea animals from different materials and natural materials, collect sand, shells and seaweed;
- Touch with your fingers the dry starfish and some of the marine "artifacts" you have or can get;
- Explore the wind from the fan and try to feel the heat from a bag of wheat;
- Make seaweed with strips of cellophane;
- Warm up some sand and compare the difference between warm and cold sand and wheat;
- Reach for hot wheat packets (preferably make the cloth bags in advance);
- Try and put on some sunscreen and smell the aloe vera gel (for sunburn).

Fig. 18: Aids for the focus on the sea



Movement (vibrations and body perception)

- Lie down in a hammock or on a vibrating mat;
- Make a massage on the beach using sand or pebbles;
- Place an object nearby so that clients want to grab it with their hands (activation) - for example, a hanger made of foil and blue cellophane (let it blow through a fan);
- Set a spotlight with discs (beach motifs) on the foil to make it brighter or make a beach "mobile" using different shaped papers;
- Use audio technology for the sounds of waves, splashing, swimming, birds flying etc.

Air

- Place the plastic fish in the bubble tube and watch it move through the bubbles and waves;
- Insert a colour reel with a surfer or seascape and fish into the projector and project it onto a blue fabric;
- Highlight the sun by projecting light on a thermal blanket (silver) or by casting yellow light throughout room;
- Display beach motifs on a white umbrella (sunshade) (feel free to paint and colour the umbrella!);
- Decorate the room with fish prints and flying kites;
- Illuminate unpainted kite templates using discs.

Fig. 19: Visual aids



Hearing

- Crumple cellophane seaweed, listen to the sound of waves, dolphins, fan wind, seagulls and beach songs;
- Embrace the bubble tube and put your ear to it to hear the bubbling of the sea;
- Create a soundscape of the sea and the beach – the sounds of waves and birds chirping;
- Listen for the echo from the seashell, direct the fan towards the seashells to make them move and clink against one another.

Smell

- Use a diffuser for aromatherapy with the scent of the beach – for example, coconut and other tropical fruits;
- Inhale the aroma of the coconut essence, coconut body lotion, seaweed, sunscreen, and aloe vera gel.

Taste

- Bring, for example, a fruit cocktail with an umbrella and straw, or ice cream to taste and savor in the lesson;
- Make some ice cream;

- Use a juicer to make different kinds of fruit and vegetable juices or smoothies – for example, from watermelon, bananas, pineapples and carrots.

Fig. 20: Visual support for the theme "Day on the beach".



Creation: manually and cognitively skilled individuals can put together a puzzle with the theme of the beach and a day at the beach.

Fig. 20: Visual support for the "Day at the beach" puzzle (www.puzzlefactory.com, puzzle Martinus.cz).



CORRESPONDENCE TASK NO. 6

Prepare a structured lesson for a specific client/group of clients focusing on one topic. For this topic, independently prepare the aids, gather them and take photos. Write a description of the topic and its parts/tasks. To do this, describe what a multi-sensory room should look like in terms of color, music, and other ideas and tips.

Complete the assignment in writing and submit it as a correspondence task to the Course Assignment Repository upon consultation with your tutor.



CORRESPONDENCE TASK NO. 7

*Choose your own topic for a specific client and elaborate on their perceptual development as outlined in the example lesson *A Day at the Beach*. Think about what would be appropriate for a particular client and what kind of perceptual development the specific*

*aids and activities would relate to. Keep the principles of individualisation, visualisation, concreteness, lesson structure **and focus especially on the development of the senses.***

Complete the assignment in writing and submit it as a correspondence task to the Course Assignment Repository upon consultation with your tutor and as instructed by him/her.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 4



16. A style of work that facilitates the student's transition between successive activities throughout the day is called:
- a. Differentiation
 - b. Structuring
 - c. Concretization
 - d. Individualisation
17. The method that allows a faster understanding of the whole situation thanks to the visually available means is called:
- a. Visualization
 - b. Differentiation
 - c. Visual support
 - d. Individual concretization.
18. A structured lesson should include:
- a. Rituals associated with the beginning and end of the hour
 - b. Multisensory learning
 - c. Individually focused work
 - d. Introductory part
19. Reflection on the content of the structured lesson is included:

- a. Preparatory phase
 - b. Implementation phase
 - c. Evaluation phase
 - d. Pre-preparatory phase
20. What do you think is the most important part of the activities in the Snoezelen multi-sensory rooms?
-



CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter Four focuses more than the previous chapters on the relationship between the Snoezelen concept and special education intervention. It aims to present insight into the goals of activities and actions taken by a special educator, the focus of the field and its specific areas.

The main part of this chapter covers the essential approaches that are inherently connected to Snoezelen and serve as tools in the hands of every special educator. We have described these approaches here and consider them essential: individualization, personalized approach, differentiation, concretization, structuring, visualization, and multisensory learning.

In the last part of the text we defined the structured lessons, their phases and content. We have also presented the structured lessons in examples and photographic documentation.



ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 4

16. b; 17. a; 18. a; 19. a; 20. free response.

OTHER RESOURCES



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SUMMARY OF THE STUDY SUPPORT

In the last twenty years, special education has been striving to respond to new innovative and adaptable methods and strategies that continuously emerge. Multisensory methods have always belonged to special education, due to the necessity of employing compensatory approaches in the education of individuals with special needs, particularly students with rather severe and multiple disabilities. Throughout the last century, we have witnessed the emergence of concepts that not only deal with multisensory approaches, but are based upon them. Namely concepts with a psychological basis, but also purely special education directions, such as the concepts proposed by Prof. Fröhlich, by Ayer, the concept of sensory integration, the concept of multisensory learning, and others. A particularly important period related to these concepts is the turn of the 20th century (from the 1960s onwards).

The study resource „*Multisensory Concepts in Special Education*“ responds to the need to inform students and future graduates about alternatives that are not only useful in practice, but are also currently being widely used. In particular, the subchapters focus on the concept of Snoezelen – Multisensory Environment, which encourages the establishment of specific rooms, corners and outdoor spaces in the Czech Republic that can fully compare to similar environments abroad. An important part of the entire study support is the red line concerning special education, its goals and the utilization of the Snoezelen concept by special educators, professionals whose competence and expertise are clearly needed and essential in the context of promoting inclusive societal systems.

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OVERVIEW OF AVAILABLE ICONS

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|---|----------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | Time needed to study |  | Objectives of the chapter |
|  | Keywords |  | Don't forget to rest |
|  | Study guide |  | Text guide |
|  | Quick view |  | Summary |
|  | Tutorials |  | Definition |
|  | To remember |  | Case study |
|  | Solved task |  | Statement |
|  | Review question |  | Correspondence task |
|  | Answers |  | Questions |
|  | Separate task |  | Other resources |
|  | For those interested |  | A task for reflection |

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