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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews special education provisions (specifically regarding individualized education programs-IEPs) in Holland. Regular and special education operate fairly independently. Policy changes regarding IEPs are noted. IEPs are formulated to be both initial planning and instructional tools. Interviews and surveys were completed by 84 teachers regarding their concrete plans for newly admitted pupils. Teachers responded to questions regarding information available, information used, the content of the plan, educational goals set for students, teaching content of the IEP, instructional approaches and learning activities, planning of teaching materials, evaluation of the instruction, organization of instruction, and any needed adjustments of planning. It is concluded that the efforts to develop IEPs with goals and methods based on pupil learning problems are unrealistic. (CL)

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANS IN DUTCH SPECIAL EDUCATION*

So far, no good?

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INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANS IN DUTCH SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. THE CARE FOR PUPILS HAVING DIFFICULTIES

Children with serious handicaps (i.e. deafness, blindness, mentally or physically handicapped) who may be expected beforehand to be unable to attend regular education visit schools for special education in the age of 4-6 years. The selection of a particular type of school depends on the nature of the handicap. There are 17 types of school belonging to four main groups: schools for the sensory, mentally and physically handicapped, and schools for children having learning problems.

A vast majority of pupils, however, attend regular schools. But in course of time it becomes obvious that a number of them experiences difficulties in regular education. On account of their performance they can be classified as failures. Regular education reacts to this group of pupils by giving them some additional assistance during schoolhours, by offering a few hours of remedial teaching, or by holding them back a grade (Huistra, 1980). If learning problems cannot be solved or diminished, the pupil can be referred to special education. The pupils concerned are slightly deficient in intelligence (educable mentally retarded), are primarily or secondarily disturbed (learning disabled), or they have minor physical or sensory handicaps. Here, too, the principle applies that the nature of the pupil's problems determines the selection of the type of school for special education.

The school which the pupil has been referred to, subjects him/her to an entrance test which is compulsory by law. This test consists of a psychological, an educational/instructional, and a (para-)medical part. This entrance test establishes whether the referred pupil meets the criterion for admission; it is actually an assessment aimed at placement decisions. If the pupil concerned meets the criterion, he is admitted to the school for special education. If he does not meet this criterion, he is referred to a different type of school for special education, or referred back to regular education.

This procedure shows us that there is a strict separation between regular and special education, being two completely separate educational systems. Hybrids of regular and special education, a great variety of which have been realized in the United States under the mainstream philosophy, are quite rare in the Netherlands. But closing the gap between regular and special education is an

important issue in an educational innovation process (I.C.B.,1977). So far, little progress has been made in closing this gap (Blaauboer, 1982).
The essence of the innovation process in regular education is the realisation of a far-reaching individualization and differentiation in teaching. The consequences of individualized and differentiated teaching are that pupils will be labelled less easily as slow learners, or as intractable or stupid, and consequently will be referred to special education less quickly. It is expected that, in due course, it will be possible to retain many pupils in regular education, who, at present, are still referred to special education. This objective is known as the extension of educational service, and its main purpose is the prevention of placement in special education, rather than bridging the gap between regular and special education - an issue in mainstreaming.

The intended changes in regular education will also affect special education. In the future, a great number of the pupils who are slightly deficient in intelligence, the children with learning difficulties and those with minor physical and sensory handicaps will stay in regular education. We expect the population of special education to be, on average, more seriously handicapped. This prospect makes it even more necessary to solve a number of problems presently experienced in special education. With the governmental publication 'Special Education', published in 1977, an impulse was given to the internal innovation of special education.

2. PROBLEMS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

The internal innovation of special education has as its object to solve a number of problems encountered in education, problems most strongly felt by teachers. These problems may perhaps best be illustrated by following a newly-admitted pupil. When a pupil has been admitted to a school for special education, he is placed in a class. At that time, the class teacher knows hardly anything about the new pupil. The only information which is available are the assessment data which were collected during the entrance test. In this entrance test the underlying question was selective: does this pupil meet the requirements for admission?
Assessment, aimed at obtaining selective decisions, does not normally yield much information which can be of use in teaching (Schenk, 1980; Pawlik, 1984; Krapp, 1982). This is the first problem: an often missing diagnostic/instructional link.

In teaching the new pupil one of the existing courses is used. If learning progress is slow, the subject matter is repeated once more; some extra exercises are given, and finally a different course is tried. No goals have been laid down, there is no considered selection of a certain course, no evaluations haven been made; the instruction has a strong trial and error character. The second problem: the lack of a systematic approach in teaching. This second problem is due to the teacher's training; or rather, to the lack of teacher's training. A large proportion of teachers in special education have hardly any more schooling than their colleagues in regular education. The third problem: a general lack of properly trained teachers.
Our new pupil has not only to do with the teacher at school, but also with for instance the speech therapist and the fysio-therapist. Their therapies do not take the teacher's instruction into account. The fourth problem: experts at cross-purposes.
In the class in which the new pupil is placed, there will be pupils with similar handicaps or learning problems. Even so, it has become clear again and again that the similar labels for different children are no guarantee that their educational needs are identical. At the same time it has become evident that the same instructional approach can be equally successful with children who have different handicaps. The fifth problem: a medial subdivision into schooltypes which is hardly relevant for instruction.
The new pupil enters the special school with a learning backwardness. Because of all the extra attention given by other experts, because of a lack of time-pressure (no final goals) and because of the pupil's learning problem, his learning backwardness, as compared to his fellows in regular education, will gradually become larger. His chances of ever returning to regular education will, therefore, become gradually smaller. The sixth problem: the small number of pupils who are referred back to regular education.

In the preceeding we have painted a somewhat unfavourable picture of special education in order to bring out the six problems. The problems were: insufficient diagnostic/instructional link, lack of structure in teaching, insufficient schooling, experts at cross-purposes, an out-dated subdivision of schooltypes, and, finally, insufficient return to regular education.

3. SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY

These problems in special education have in common the question how the teaching of children with learning problems should be organized. In special education teachers have been working for a long time on the assumption that a description of the kind and seriousness of the pupil's handicap would be a sufficient guarantee for proper treatment. In this philosophy the treatment of the pupil follows rather directly from diagnosed handicap (label equals placement). The validity of this notion has been doubted for some time now. The help which pupils need is not only determined by the kind and seriousness of the handicap, or: not all pupils with a certain handicap are in need of the same kind of help. An approach in special education is advocated in which the actual need for help is stressed (see, among others, Rispens, 1980), and in which the handicap is less a determining factor for educational/instructional actions. The consequence of this is, that it is necessary to determine the most effective way to help each individual pupil. After this a plan for treatment is drawn up, which is based on a careful formulation of the child's need for help (Kok, 1977). This procedure is described as working with individual educational plans.

In a statement of policy of the Ministry of Education (Concept Plan of Activities, 1977), an individual educational plan is described as a framework for a systematic approach through which the child's development can be stimulated in a positive sense and which takes the child's requirements for help as its starting point.

A more concrete definition of this plan was given by De Ruyter (1978): an individual educational plan is a written report which contains directives on the goals, methods and curriculums of special instruction to a child or a small group of children, while taking the individual's or the group's requirements for help as its starting point. It also mentions the points in time when the educational goals should be realized, according to expectations.

In this definition the plan is thought of as a document with a certain content. It is, however, of vital importance that the purpose of the IEP proces is not only to produce a document, but also to use the plan in teaching.

Thus, two points of emphasis can be pointed out in working with IEP's: drawing up a plan on the entry of a new pupil in school or in class, and teaching on the basis of this plan, with continual feedback to the plan itself. Elsewhere we described the two separate elements as the initial planning and as plan-based teaching. (Pijl, 1981).

The initial planning can be looked upon as a time restricted self-contained proces.

Shortly after a new pupil has made his entry in class, the teacher draws up an instructional plan for this pupil, in collaboration with others (the head teacher of the school, the psychologist, the remedial teacher, the speech therapist, etc.). In drawing up the plan the data available about the pupil are used (the entrance test, a report of the previous school, a report of test placement, etc.) and the situation in class is taken into account (level, teaching materials, additional help, etc.). On the basis of the IEP, teaching can be effectuated.

Plan-based teaching, which follows on the initial planning, has more the character of a cyclic process: the instruction is guided by the plan, and the teaching experiences are fedback to the plan. Ultimately at the first evaluation provided for in the plan teaching is reconsidered. If the proceeds are according to plan, the general outline can be maintained. If not, a number of major or minor changes will be introduced into the plan. Naturally, a new evaluation of the educational approach will be included in the plan. A characteristic of that situation is, briefly, a growing and shifting plan. Growing because of a constant new supply of feedback experiences, and shifting in a way that the optimum course of action is determined anew whenever this is found necessary.

Summing up: the essential element in working with IEP's is not the fact in itself that a plan is drawn once, but the instruction on the basis of an individual educational plan with continual feedback to the plan.

The function of the IEP in teaching, as described above, makes clear what the content of the plan should be. An IEP is a plan for teaching a particular pupil. In this plan a description is given of the content of the teacher's instruction, in view of the special needs of the pupil. Therefore, the content of the plan is mainly concerned with the teacher's planned actions. In a great number of schools for special education it is impossible to characterize teachers' actions solely as actions aimed at teaching. Apart from this instructional aspect, it is possible to distinguish an educational aspect (concerned with emotional and behavioral aspects) and an aspect which aims at the development of certain functions (physical, sensory, etc.) (see, among others, Van Weelden, 1980). In dealing with a pupil the emphasis put on each of these aspects depends on the pupil's requirements for help. Since the ultimate planning and performance of duties in special education is the teacher's

task (also see Van der Leij, 1981), it is to be expected that especially the instructional, and to a lesser extent, the educational aspects of their actions will be included in the IEP After all, the teacher's training, experience and interests are directed towards these fields. The planning of the function developmental aspects (such as fine motor development) is mainly the task of the (para-)medical staff in special education, and teachers are requested to take over and support this planning.
The content of the IEP can now be described as instructional and/or educational activities planned by the teacher, aiming at the realisation of certain educational achievements in the pupil.

So far, we have discussed the principle behind working with IEP's, the IEP's as initial plan and as plan-based teaching, as well as the content of the plan. In the innovation policy, the introduction of IEP-guided teaching is also regarded as a device to realize changes connected with the IEP. These effects of working with IEP's may solve a major part of the discussed problems in special education, such as the missing diagnostic/instructional link, - the lack of a systematic approach in teaching, - the insufficient schooling of the teachers and - the experts at cross-purposes. As input when drawing up plans the teacher uses the data collected in the entrance test, the information obtained from the ordinary, everyday assessment of progress and from the regular evaluation of teaching and learning processes. From these assessment data, teachers require more information which is directly relevant in teaching. As a consequence, the content and set-up of the evaluations may be altered to realize a better diagnostic/instructional link. Working on the basis of a plan may trigger thinking about teaching practices, mutual adjustments and a clearer way of consultation.
Using a more carefully planned approach forces the teacher and the staff to a regular reflexion on their actions. In this way, experiences about the effects of actions in certain situations are won in a more systematic way than before, which is a way of making teachers more professional. Based on an IEP coordination of the assistence of the members of the team (teacher, remedial teacher, (para)medical staf, etc.) can be maximized. Finally, the IEP enables quicker and more structured meetings about pupil progress.
The experiences gained in the planning of teaching will lead to an understanding of which teaching strategies are feasible and will succeed in their school. This will have immediate consequences for the admission policy of the school,

and following from that, for the type of pupil that will be admitted. If schools show a clearer profile in the matter of teaching strategies, this could be the starting point for further thoughts on a new classification of schooltypes.

The changes which have been discussed above, should ultimately result in improving the quality of education, and with that in improving the pupils' progress. This might in due course, become evident from an increasing number of pupils who are placed back in regular education and from the realisation of intermediate forms between regular and special education.

4. SUMMARY

In the preceeding, we saw that regular and special education are two educational systems which operate fairly independent. In the current educational innovations, the intention has been voiced that more cooperative forms should be created, but we can only conclude that the innovations in special and regular education put a much greater emphasis on improving the actual instruction. In regular education through further individualisation and differentiation; in special education through adopting a more plan-based method of working.

In the innovation of special education the IEP plays a central part.

Two stages can be distinguished in the IEP: the drawing up of a starting plan (initial planning) and teaching on the basis of the plan and with feed- back towards the plan (plan-based teaching).

In terms of Lerner's subdivision of the IEP: the second step in the IEP stages and the cyclic version of the stages beyond the IEP (Lerner, 1980).

Assessment activities aimed at referral and placement decisions are not counted as part of the IEP; belonging more to the basic information.

In the Dutch view on working with IEP's the emphasis is put on the working according to plan in teaching, and not on the IEP-document itself.

All the aspects of the teacher's actions are counted as the content of the IEP. The overlap with the IEP under Public Law 94-142 mainly consists of the items annual goals, short term objectives and evaluation criteria and procedures.

The objective of the innovation process is the introduction of IEP's in special education, while, at the same time, the IEP is a means to bring about a number of other changes.

Meanwhile, the first experiences in working with IEP's in Dutch special educa-

tion date from a few years ago. In 1981 a national investigation was carried out into the state of affairs in this field (Pijl; 1981).

5. RESEARCH

5.1. OBJECT AND OUTLINE

The object of this study is to examine the question of whether and how teachers draw up plans for teaching their pupils, and if they do, what the content of these plans is.
Regarding the potential planning contents, a restriction has been made to the actions of the teacher which are related to instruction. In this the emphasis has been laid on teaching procedures within well-known, well-organized subjects, such as reading, arithmetic and language. Further, this project mainly devotes attention to the initial planning (comparable to drawing up the legally compulsory IEP; in the United States), whereas what we have called working according to plan, will only be discussed in digressions.
The project, then, has as its objects the very first stages in working with IEP's and the most easily planned actions of teachers (the teaching of reading, arithmetic and language).

From the formulation of the object of this study, it has already become clear that we are both interested in the question of what is planned and in the question of how it is planned.
The question of what is planned refers to the contents of the IEP, that is, which elements of the instruction-related actions are included in the planning. In analysing instructional actions we used the analytic model for instructional analysis by Van Gelder (1979)(comparable to the work on instructional design of Gagne & Briggs (1974)).
The following elements will be distinguished as the content of the IEP: educational goals, teaching content, instructional approaches and learning activities, teaching materials, evaluation and organisation.
The question of how something is planned is related to the manner in which teachers do their planning. In analysing the planning process, we used studies of teachers' planning behaviour (see, among others, Yinger, 1978).
As a result, we will pay attention to the following aspects in our study:

- the available information, - the reasons for planning, - the planning procedure, - the information used, and the adjustment of the planning. It will be clear that, particularly in this last aspect, the adjustment of the planning, we are moving away from initial planning towards working according to plan.

In collecting the data, a combination of an interview and a survey was used. In the interview, 84 teachers were asked about their concrete plans for newly-admitted pupils (already in their class) ('newly-admitted' is here used in the sense of having been at their school for 3 to 6 months).
From the survey conducted among 250 head teachers and 250 ordinary teachers we gained an understanding of a number of general (not pupil-specific) aspects connected with working with IEP's in their schools. The sample (of head teachers and ordinary teachers) was drawn from 12 different schooltypes.
The schools for mentally handicapped pupils were not included in this study because of the emphasis we put on reading, arithmetic and writing, and some of the smaller schooltypes had to be left out.

5.2. RESULTS

In the presentation of the outcome of this project we won't pay attention to the different schooltypes, the differences between head teachers and ordinary teachers or the survey and the interview.
We will integrate all the information into the following themes:
- the available information, - the reasons for planning, - the planning procedure, - the information used, - the contents of the planning and - the adjustment of the planning.

The information available

When teachers draw up an IEP, it is important that they make the best possible use of the information available on a certain pupil. Depending on the situation, this information may consist of the data from the entrance test, data from the previous school, data from the observation period, etc.
From our project it became evident that practically all teachers are broadly informed concerning the information available on the pupil. The problems the pupil experienced at the previous school (actually the reason for referral) are known to all. 85 per cent of the teachers knows the substance of the psy-

chological and educational/instructional parts of the entrance test: 35 per cent can tell us the exact conclusions, 50 per cent can reproduce the gist. 15 per cent of the teachers do not know the results of the entrance test. The findings of the medical and/or paramedical parts are well-known to practically all teachers. Teachers get their information from the files and from the heads of their schools. Teachers are rarely involved (only in 20 per cent of the cases) in the actual collection of the information (administering the entrance test).

The reasons for planning

When the new pupil enters the class, a planning can be made in which a broad outline is given of the instruction for the next periode. In our project we asked teachers what their reasons were for drawing up a plan or refraining from this during this period (0 to 3 months after placement). A lot of the non-planning schools think drawing up a plan during the first three months is premature: they want to get to know the child, or they think a first stage of familiarisation, rest and security is needed. Planning, if necessary, can always be done later.

Those schools which do draw up a plan before three months have passed, give the following reasons for this:

1. Pupil-centered reasons (the pupil can work towards a goal; his development can be made more systematic; a more adequate reaction to the pupil's problems is possible);
2. teacher-centered reasons (the plan gives the teacher something to go by and is a goal he can aim at);
3. reasons centering on the functioning of the school (the plan makes it possible to work towards a goal more efficiently, the evaluation of the pupil's progress is given a firmer basis).

Planning procedure

A total of 64 per cent of the teachers discusses drawing up the teaching programme for the new pupil with others.

Especially the head teacher, the colleagues and the psychologist participate in this discussion. A separate plan is made for each individual pupil in 40 per cent of the schools and an equal proportion only draws up a plan when the need arises. This is mostly in the case of pupils having serious difficulties. Twenty per cent of the schools only plans for groups and assigns the new pupil to

one of these groups. Taken altogether, this means that, in half the schools, the planning does not take the shape of separate plans drawn up for individual pupils.

As far as the registration of the plans is concerned, this study shows that approximately 50 per cent of the plans is put down in writing.

In 70 per cent of the schools the points of time at which plans are made for the instruction of the pupil, is about 2 to 3 months after admission; 30 per cent of the schools draw up plans immediately after admission. The fact that a relatively great number of schools claim to plan only after some time has elapsed, can be understood when looking once again at the reasons given by a number of schools for refraining from making plans during the initial stages. These schools have the opinion that they should get to know the child before a plan can be drawn up. In this connection we can also point at the small number of schools which obtain information from the entrance test which can be of practical use in teaching. In such cases a first exploratory stage is necessary in class: the entrance test is found to be an insufficient basis for further action.

The information used

It has been discussed above to what extent teachers know of the information available on the new pupil. In our project it has also been examined which data were actually used for drawing up the teaching programme of the new pupil. Naturally, also information with no immediate reference to the pupil (such as the characteristics of the class, the availability of teaching materials, etc.) may be of importance. From our project it has become clear that especially the information on the pupil is used in determining the instructional programme. The relevant data are taken from the entrance test (especially from the educational/instructional part), from the information provided by the previous school and from observational data concerning behaviour, concentration, aggression, etc. Data from the medical and paramedical parts of the entrance test and the past history of the child play a minor part in determining the instructional programme. It should be noted that about 20 per cent of the teachers collect their own information on their pupils and do not use the data from the entrance test.

A total of 50 per cent of the teachers informed us that in determining a teaching programme, the class in which the new pupil will be placed, is also ta-

ken into account. The most important factor in this is the level at which the group is taught, or rather, the different streams within a class. Also connected with this is the fact that some teachers employ class teaching for some subjects. The educational programme of those subjects is determined in advance, for the whole group, including of course the new pupil. A third group of considerations is tied up with the group's socio-emotional character/ behaviour. In a number of cases this will affect the instruction of the new pupil's instruction.

The nature of the pupil's problems/handicaps may be involve a total or partial lack of materials as fas as educational appliances are concerned. This lack might be a reason to organise the instruction of the pupil concerned along different lines. However, the availability of materials normally does not play a part in determining a teaching programme. In general enough material is available.

About 45 per cent of the schools considers the following factors as important impediments in school organisation, which make it more difficult to plan teaching: lack of time (for instance because of meetings), restrictions in space, therapies and physical rehabilitation programmes.

The content of the plan

As a possible content of the IEP we have mentioned before the educational goals, the teaching content, the instructional approaches and learning activities, teaching materials, evaluation and organisation. In our study we made an inventory of which elements of each of these aspects had been included in the planning.

Educational goals

Educational goals provide us with an answer to the question of what the instruction intends to achieve in the pupils. In the formulation of the goal a statement is made concerning the intended change in pupil characteristics and behaviour. A total of about 45 per cent of the teachers lays down educational goals for their pupils within a few months after the pupils'placement in class. These educational goals are mainly concerned with the academic subjects reading, arithmetic and language. In the answers to the question of which educational goals were used, seldom real goal descriptions were given. Generally, only the subject is mentioned in relation with which a goal has a certain meaning. Concretely formulated goals (such as jump over ten in arithmetic and

auditory synthesis in reading) were encountered very rarely. The time within which educational goals have to be realized, varies greatly. It varies from two weeks at one extreme to two years on the other, with a modus of 3 to 6 months. Half of the schools which lay down educational goals, do not fix a time.

Teaching content

The teaching content is one of the means to effectuate the set goal. When choosing a teaching content a subject matter is determined. A subject matter on which the intended form of behaviour, formulated in the goal, is practiced. A great deal of the subject matter which has to be taught, is accessible in the form of teaching programmes and courses. Generally, these also give a sequence of the teaching content. The question of whether any attention was paid to the planning of the teaching content, was answered in the affirmative by many schools (70 per cent). The answers to the next question of the interview, asking what these teaching contents were, however, showed a very different picture indeed. A vast majority of the teachers mentions the academic subjects reading, arithmetic and languages as the teaching contents. A mere 13 per cent of the teachers gives real examples of planned teaching contents, (such as mathematical operations with numbers under 20, reading CVC words, etc). Our impression is that the decision to teach a certain academic subject determines the course, and that the course determines the actual subject matter taught. This is stressed once more in the answers to the question of whether a sequence was determined in the teaching content. 45 per cent of the teachers who plan their teaching content referred to the sequence of the course book used in their school. The answers to the question concerning the point in time at which teaching contents have to be taught, are similar to the answers given when asked about the point in time at which educational goals should be effectuated. It may be assumed that teachers when talking about long- or short-term goals, are really referring to a certain section of the coursebook from which they are teaching, and on which a certain amount of time is spent.

Instructional approaches and learning activities

The term 'instructional approaches' refers to the teacher's actual classroom activities. A distinction can be made in lecture forms, discussion forms and assignment forms. These types of teachers activities have as their objective

certain types of pupil behaviour in learning. Therefore, pupil's learning activities are considered complementary to instructional approaches. As a result of the initial planning, 61 per cent of the teachers have made a decision as to the presentation of their instruction and as to the intended learning activities. On closer inspection, it becomes clear that teachers often mention instructional approaches, but rarely pay any attention to learning activities. Of the forms of instructional approaches attention is mainly paid to discussion and assignment forms.

Teaching materials

69 per cent of the teachers pays some attention to the planning of teaching materials on, or shortly after the arrival of a new pupil in class. Nearly all the schools mention courses or course books on the subjects: reading, arithmetic, language and writing. Occasionally mentioned are also materials mainly for the benefit of the instruction in arithmetic: slide-rule, abacus, blocks, etc.

Evaluation

On the arrival of a pupil in a class or group, 81 per cent of the teachers makes a decision on the evaluation of the instruction to the pupil. In 63 per cent of the schools, this evaluation is at least concerned with all subjects taught, while 37 per cent of the schools also wishes to evaluate the pupil's overall functioning, i.e. behaviour, working attitude, motivation, etc. As the goal of the evaluation of pupil's the teachers mention the assessment of instructional progress, the planning of a further policy, the mutual exchange of information and the discussion of educational strategies. Simultaneously with the planning of the pupil evaluation, its frequency is determined. 35 per cent of the schools evaluate pupils with a frequency of once in every 2 or 3 months, and 22 per cent with a frequency of once in every 4 to 6 months. A quarter of the schools only evaluate pupils after problems have been risen.

Organization

When the instruction is actually carried into effect, the help of others may be required. When this is the case, a number of situations can be distinguished:

1. another person carries out part of the teaching, for instance to make possible the realisation of individual and/or differentiated teaching:

2. tasks connected with the development or adjustment of new teaching materials are shared by several members of the staff;
3. other members of staff can collect additional information (through research or applying for information), on the basis of which the instruction of the new pupil can be shaped;
4. in those situations in which, in addition to teaching, therapies are given which interfere with teaching, a mutual consultation on a regular basis is necessary.

One or more of these possibilities of making arrangements with others before starting the teaching programme were taken into consideration in 58 per cent of the schools. Especially the situations described under point 1 and 4 are important. A planned request for outside help is rare when developing new materials or when obtaining extra information.

So far the discussion of the content of the IEP.

The percentages which were given in the discussion of the various planning contents range from 45 to 81 per cent. This does not imply that 19 per cent of the interviewed schools does not do any planning at all. Only one school out of 84 does not plan anything at all in the initial stages. Eight schools (10%) include one aspect in their considerations, ten schools (12%) include two in their planning. The remaining 65 schools (77%), therefore, plan at least three of the planning aspects mentioned above. The results of this part of our project show that practically every school does some planning: only in some cases this planning is of limited scope and in most cases not very detailed.

Adjustment of planning

In the preceeding, teacher's planning caused by the entry of a new pupil in their class, is given major attention in this report. Teachers who have a new pupil in their class, will start teaching this pupil, if necessary after a period of familiarisation and further observation. At a given moment it will almost certainly become clear that their instruction needs adjustments. In this paper we will pay attention to the evaluation and adjustments of the instruction, and their consequences for the planning. With 'adjustments' we refer to those activities which become necessary as soon as educational experiences make it clear that what is taught and what has been planned should be changed.

Teachers have different ways of keeping track of their pupils' progress (giving oral assignments in class, correcting written work, tests, observation of a pupil at work, etc.). When adjustments of the instruction are required on

the basis of the everyday assessment of a pupil's progress, in two-thirds of the cases this is discussed with those directly involved (head teacher, class assistant, remedial teacher). Teachers show a considerable consensus (88%) in their assumption that the everyday assessment of progress is a form of evaluation that gives them immediate support in teaching. This immediate support consists of things like keeping records of pupil's progress, an early recognition of problems, observing the pupil's learning strategies, a fast feedback of the selected methods and - 45% - the adjustment of the plans.
In order to get an impression of the incidence of radical changes in the plans, based on data from the everyday assessment of pupil progress, we asked the interviewed teachers whether it had been necessary to adjust their plans. More than one-fifth of the teachers had found a radical change in their instruction necessary within 6 months. Since these changes in instruction were profound, the expectation would seem justified that the changes entailed consequences for the originally made plans. However, only one school gave a fairly concrete account of what had been changed in their planning. We cannot but conclude that schools do not incorporate the adjustments made on the basis of the everyday assessment of the pupil's progress into their plans.
Nor do the regularly planned evaluations lead to changes in the IEP. Several things were mentioned as an answer to the open-ended question about the goal of those evaluations, such as recognizing problems, recording the pupil's progress, the judging of academic achievement and others, but the adjustment of the planning was not even mentioned once.

So much for the presentation of the gathered information. So far, we have not taken the IEP to be a formal plan with a definite content, but rather as a special way of working in education: namely working according to plan. If nothing particular is required of the IEP, it would seem that Dutch teachers in special education are already working with IEP's on a fairly regular basis: nearly every school, drawn up within three months of the pupil's arrival, 80% plans in at least three aspects, etc. If, however, we want the IEP to meet certain requirements, such as having been put down in writing, applicable to all the pupils, with at least three fairly detailed descriptions of the former mentioned planning aspects, a mere 5 to 10% of the schools can meet these requirements. Or, putting it more bluntly, it is only common usage in 5 - 10% of the schools to draw up an IEP for the most easily planned aspects

of teacher activities (instruction in academic subjects). In even less schools, the IEP plays a role of some importance in teaching after its first drafting, let alone that working with IEP's should have any of the intented additional effects (a different content of the entrance test, a more systematic approach, learning from the acquired experiences, more pupils referred back to regular education, etc.).

Discussion

The conclusion is justified that it is a far from simple task for teachers to make and use an IEP. For some part the reasons will be due to: - insufficient schooling of teachers, - the, as yet, limited experiences in drawing up and working with an IEP, - the teachers' hesitations in connection with the administrative ado, - the as yet imperfect collaboration between all the persons concerned, etc. The American literature on the IEP-process mentions a number of similar problems: Tymitz (1980) on teacher training; Thies and Ubrein (1981), Quinn (1982), Fuchs (1981) on the time lost in paperwork; Alper (1978), Goldstein (1980) and Nevin (1981) on the problems involved in cooperation. Nevertheless, this explanation would seem to be inconclusive. It is questionable whether the principle behind IEP is not far too optimistic. When drawing up an IEP, the diagnostic data available on the pupil are used as the basis of the plan. The plan rests on the possibility of deducing educational consequences from the diagnostic data.

For we have assessment data on the pupil, and in the IEP we want to determine the goals and methods of education. This is by no means a new procedure. It has been known for a long time under the name of diagnostic-prescriptive teaching. This model, and especially the use made of it in education, have been subject to severe criticism. (Ewing & Brecht, 1977; Salvia & IJsseldyke, 1978; Arter & Jenkins, 1979). From these criticisms it can be understood that we may be able to base some instructional consequences on assessment data in some subfields, but that, in general, our present state of knowledge of learning problems does not admit this. This is also reflected in the teachers' problems: - they are having difficulty in making a significant use of diagnostic data (also see Dickson & Coster, 1981) and in formulating goals (also see Tymitz, 1980; Reisman & Macy, 1981; Sabatino, 1981).

The consequences of all this are that, beside the assessment data, the intuition and experience of its makers play a considerable part in drawing up the initial IEP. The weak basis of the plan urges for frequent evaluation

of the effects of the planned instruction: it will certainly be necessary to have an evaluation more than once a year.

This leads us to the second stage of the IEP, the plan-based teaching. The teacher regularly establishes whether the goals and methods in the plan-based teaching still lead to the desired results. Naturally it remains true that data from evaluations can by no means directly be translated into instructional conclusions.

This, too, is diagnostic-prescriptive teaching. Here, too, we will have to drop the pretence of a rational determination of teaching programmes.

What then, is the use of IEP's?. The advantage of working with IEP's is that the instruction can be systematized. Teachers lay down what their teaching programme is going to be, they can make sounder evaluations, they will be able to adjust their teaching more quickly and in a more well-considered manner, they can learn more from their own experiences, they find it easier to cooperate with others and to report on their pupils.

To conclude: Efforts to draw up IEP's in which the analysis of the pupil's learning problems determines the choice of the educational goals and methods is, considering the state of the art, not realistic. The IEP as a method to systematize instruction can, in the short run, lead to an improvement in education.

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