



Erasmus+

# SNOEZELLEN

Multisensory environment



Support of the Snoezelen concept and its integration  
into university education

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

The concept of Snoezelen is a therapeutic, supportive, or recreational method, the essence of which lies in the use of a structured multisensory environment as a means of sensory stimulation, development of perception and active learning, calming and relaxation, and the development of socialization and communication in children and adults with disabilities, seniors, and other marginalized groups.

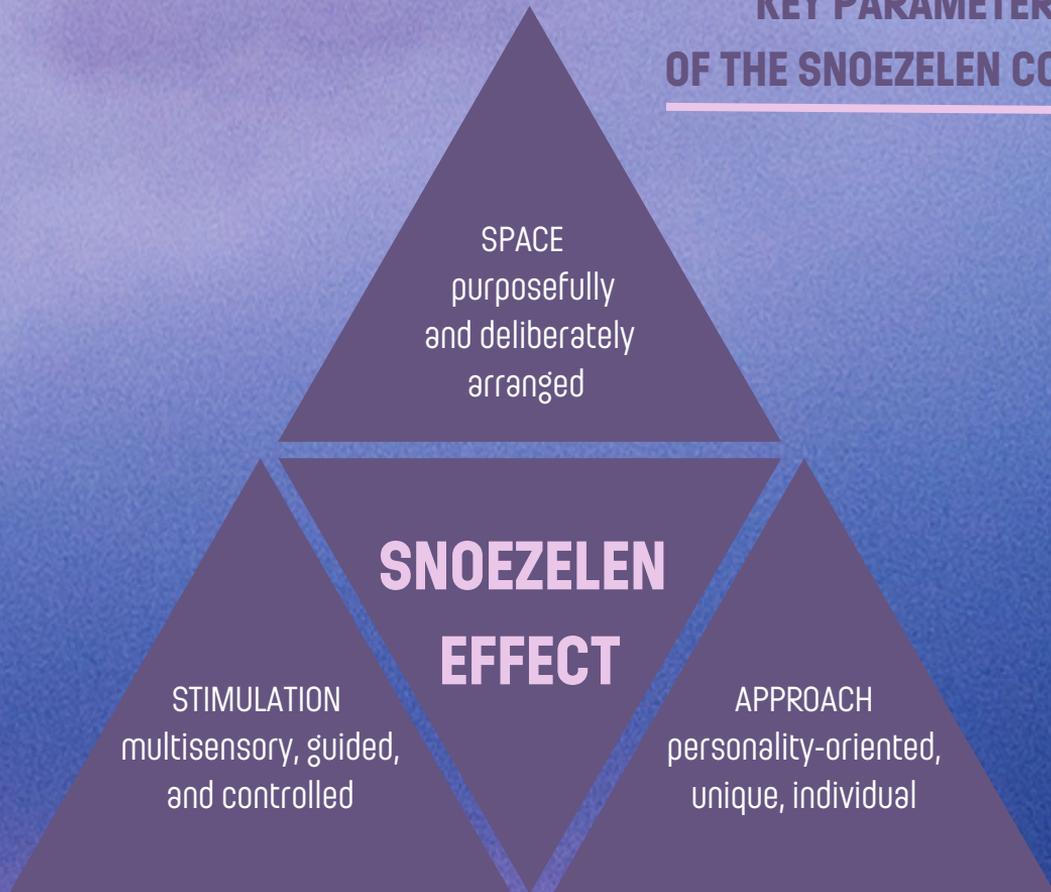
Snoezelen is always related to a stimulating multi-sensory environment. Its aim is to harmonise the personality of individuals and offer varied stimuli and experiences. The added value of this method is the possibility of working individually and specifically with each person, adapting to their needs and finding their unique path.

Thanks to its flexibility and functionality, the Snoezelen concept is very often used in 24-hour care and in health, rehabilitation, and educational institutions. Its concept offers a controlled number of sensory stimuli and works on the basis of a positive empathic relationship between its participants. Snoezelen work, which is based on the acquisition of many sensory experiences, is a deeply enriching process, especially for those individuals who are limited in their acquisition of information, e.g., due to their disability or age.



## KEY PARAMETERS OF THE SNOEZELEN CONCEPT

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The patronage of the Snoezelen concept is held by the International Snoezelen Association (ISNA). ([www.isna-mse.org](http://www.isna-mse.org), 2022)





## SNOEZELLEN IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The first Snoezelen Rooms in the Czech Republic were created in the late 1990s and since then their number has been growing. In 2007 there were about 60 in the Czech Republic and today there are between 450-500 Rooms all over the country.

As early as 1997, Snoezelen began to be taught as a partial subject at the Department of Special Education in the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University in Brno. The establishment of multi-sensory rooms in the Czech Republic was mainly due to the expertise of the psychologist Hana Stachová from Ostrava, who organised the first domestic conference in 2003 based on her own findings, entitled "Why we have Snoezelen or everything you want to know about this method". Renata 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, became an important propagator of Snoezelen in the Czech Republic. Currently, Filatova is the president of the Czech branch of ISNA - MSE for the Czech Republic and Slovakia and is responsible for certified courses.



Snoezelen in the Czech Republic is very much connected with the field of special education. The concept of Snoezelen is interpreted in special pedagogy as a whole, which includes usable attributes in the form of techniques or methods applied in special education field practice; thus representing a functional, content, and process innovation of the whole field. Within the Department of Education, Snoezelen is mostly used in primary special schools, for which it is a beneficial, varied, and stimulating environment. After only a few lessons in the Snoezelen Room, pupils may be observed to be more motivated, positively attuned, and to have a more positive attitude towards education (pupil activation), confirmed by numerous research studies in the Czech Republic and abroad. The application of the Snoezelen concept is possible in almost every area of the curriculum.

By being introduced to topics in Snoezelen Rooms, pupils are offered the opportunity for real experiences, concretization, and supportive and innovative experiences, which are based on perception through all the senses, supporting the development of the emotional and cognitive areas of the pupil's personality. In addition to supporting education, Snoezelen also serves as a form of self-realization and recreation, which, together with educational achievements, increase pupils' self-esteem. The potential of pupils who change learning environments is greatly increased, their interest in learning increases and a multi-sensory educational approach is incorporated.

The multisensory room, which was created at the Faculty of Public Policies in Opava in 2019, serves not only for the purposes of teaching students of the current accredited disciplines (Special Education, General or Pediatric Nursing, Educational Care of the Elderly, and Social Pathology and Prevention), but also for scientific research purposes, collaboration with the public, and practice.

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## SNOEZELEN IN POLAND

In Poland, Snoezelen commenced only after the breakthrough of 1989 when Poland began to function as a democratic country and could freely receive information about new therapy methods from the West. In 1993, thanks to kind consent and support from Ad Verheul and Jan Huslegge, Agnieszka Smrokowska-Reichmann (who is now Assistant Professor at the University of Physical Education in Krakow) translated their book "Snoezelen, another world" into Polish. The installation of the first Snoezelen Rooms in Poland took place in the mid-nineties. Nowadays there are about a thousand Snoezelen Rooms throughout Poland in various facilities: kindergartens, special schools, children's homes, hospitals, nursing homes, homes for the elderly, homes for the disabled, facilities for the mentally ill, therapy centres, and day care centres.

In Poland, we aim at a synergy effect by combining three factors, namely: 1. implementing Snoezelen theory and practice into the academic field, 2. offering training courses on Snoezelen, and 3. improving therapeutic practice in Snoezelen rooms.



In 2009 the late Professor Aleksandra Zawiaślak from the University of Bydgoszcz was one of the first academics in Poland to highlight Snoezelen as an important and promising therapy method. In 2013-2019, before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, six nation-wide conferences were organized, dedicated entirely to Snoezelen, under the patronage of Polish Universities (for example the University in Wrocław in 2017).

In Poland the professionalization of the Snoezelen method coincided with the professionalization of occupational therapy. We grasped the opportunity and in 2014 established Snoezelen as an occupational therapy method within the higher education system, since we believe that there are many interfaces between occupational therapy and Snoezelen. Today Snoezelen is part of the syllabus in bachelor and master's degree studies for occupational therapists at the University of Physical Education in Krakow and, since 2021, also at the University of Physical Education in Warsaw. There is a research lab "Snoezelen Room" at the University of Physical Education in Krakow, functioning as part of the Scientific Research Center, under the quality standard registration EN ISO. Snoezelen is also the topic of numerous bachelor, master, and PhD theses, and Snoezelen lectures are held in various postgraduate studies throughout Poland.

In 2017, ISNA-MSE Poland was established as part of the ISNA-MSE (International Snoezelen Association – Multi Sensory Environment). In co-operation with the University of Physical Education in Krakow, ISNA-MSE Poland organizes regularly two-day and three-day training courses in Snoezelen for various helping professions nation-wide, creating a platform for exchanging experience among those who work in Snoezelen Rooms in Poland. Every year about 80-100 people participate in such training courses.

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## SNOEZELLEN IN SPAIN

In 2011, the Sensory Stimulation and Snoezelen Association was created in Catalonia (ISNA Spain). Its president, M. José Cid has been the main promoter of international training in Snoezelen in professional teams working in different fields - mainly disability and the elderly with dementia, but also in mental illness, early care, and others – and has also promoted research projects and publications on the subject. ISNA Spain currently has more than 50 professionals throughout the country working in Snoezelen Rooms.

In this context, in 2018, with the advice of ISNA Spain, the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Social Work of the University of Lleida created a multisensory Snoezelen Room with two basic objectives. The first was to include the resource within the training of undergraduate and postgraduate students. The second objective was to offer the Snoezelen space to community entities - mainly schools and nursing homes - for educational and therapeutic activities.

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The project Support of the Snoezelen Concept and its Integration into University Education, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, is aimed at developing and extending the Snoezelen concept at university level. Specifically, the project concerns the integration of Snoezelen as a subject into the education of students of special education, educational psychology, social work, therapy, and rehabilitation. The main objective of the project is to develop a comprehensive teaching methodology, teaching materials, and syllabus for Snoezelen as a university subject taught internationally, in order to adapt it to the mobility of international students. However, the project also has the objectives of mainstreaming the subject in the form of workshops, articles, and information training.

For further information visit the project websites at:

<https://www.slu.cz/fvp/cz/snoezelen>

[http://www.fce.udl.cat/projecteerasmus\\_snoezelen/index.html](http://www.fce.udl.cat/projecteerasmus_snoezelen/index.html)



<https://www.awf.krakow.pl/o-nas/projekty-unijne/311-inne/projekty-unijne/snoezelen/4245-snoezelen>





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