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LEAD COUNTRY PAPERS: THE NETHERLANDS



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EDUCATION AND INNOVATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

- a contribution of The Netherlands to the toolkit
- for presentation at the OECD-Forum on *Schooling for Tomorrow*
- at Toronto, Canada, on June 6-8th 2004

1. Foreword

In this report, a current and very brief overview is given of the education innovation policy of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences (hereafter referred to as OCW). It concerns the policy of the current government, which was launched in mid 2003, especially the policy of the minister of Education, Culture and Science, Mrs Maria van der Hoeven.

This overview is intended to give the participants in the OECD-Forum of *Schooling for Tomorrow* a first impression of the current development of policy in the Netherlands. It is not meant to be comprehensive. The themes were chosen for their relevance to the OECD project as it has been developed up to now. This also means that relatively more attention has been given to primary and secondary education.

Other members of the delegation have devoted a special memorandum to several of these themes. These are added to this report as annexes:

- the current state of affairs in educational opportunities policy – a continuation of the presentation at the OECD Forum 2003 in Poitiers;
- the concept of ‘the new learning’, which can be characterised as an innovation initiated from below;
- a presentation of the Dutch Academy for School Heads concerning school management as a precondition for innovation from below.

2. General Overview

Innovation is a priority of the government in three respects:

- innovation in the national government’s relationship to educational institutions;
- innovation in education (and research) in order to strengthen the economy;
- innovation in the labour organisation and in the teaching profession.

Each of these aspects will be discussed briefly.

- Innovation in the national government’s relationship to educational institutions.

The new management philosophy is characterised by deregulation, a limited setting of frameworks on the part of the national government, greater space given to the institutions themselves, incentives for maximum utilisation of the available space, and finally a good account of the choices made by the institutions to government and society, and monitoring of compliance with the frameworks established.

- Innovation in education (and research) to strengthen the economy

As a continuation of the EU ambition of 2000 in Lisbon to become the most competitive knowledge region in the world by 2010, the Netherlands wants to be a part of the European vanguard in the area of higher education, research and innovation. In order to develop an effective strategy for achieving this goal, an Innovation Platform was established for the duration of the 2003-2007 cabinet term. The platform is composed of three parts: business, education and research. The Dutch Prime Minister, J.P. Balkenende, acts as its Chairman. This *Innovation Platform* should lead to updated insights in the area of knowledge

development and exploitation. An explicit attempt is being made to increase the number of graduates in the exact sciences and technology sector.

- Innovation in the labour organisation and in the teaching profession

Working in education should be made more attractive because the demand for teachers is greater than the supply. We should stem the tide of new personnel who leave the profession and increase the influx of teachers from sources other than teacher-training colleges.

The international agenda of OCW also gives considerable attention to innovation. One of the starting points for the future of innovation and the knowledge infrastructure is the creation of a world market for students and knowledge workers. A healthy knowledge economy has a well-balanced knowledge balance sheet. This is why the influx and outflow of students and knowledge workers is in balance over the long term. In the period to come, this policy will be given a higher profile because the Netherlands will hold the presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2004.

3. Elaboration after the first year

The different aspects of innovation come together in the development of multiple-year policy plans in each sector of education. (This also occurs in the form of the multiple-year *Science Budget* for research, but that is left out of consideration in this context.) A multiple-year policy plan is a document which outlines the course for a certain sector over the coming years. A characteristic of all plans is that the field of education itself is included more often and more directly.

3.1 Primary Education (ages four to twelve)

The project *Course for Primary Education* should provide a vision of the future for the sector in the short term (the four years of this cabinet term) and in the long term (eight to ten years). The new management philosophy is the starting point for this. The government will establish clear frameworks, can also provide incentives, but will in any case reduce rules in order to give schools greater room to take their own initiative and responsibility. Lump-sum funding will therefore be introduced in order to give schools greater spending freedom.

The government and the world of education have in the meantime started a series of discussions to develop a common vision and policy programme. The results of these discussions will then be discussed with Parliament. Subsequently, the cabinet will finally establish the *Course for Primary Education*, which indicates for each theme what steps will be taken in both the short and the long terms. The main themes are: education quality and innovation, teaching staff and organisation, and the social task of the school in relation to its surroundings.

Although the quality of Dutch primary education is generally good, there is still a widely shared view that the education sector is too closed and that it links to other sectors too infrequently. Learning is a process that a school must organise more in conjunction with others outside the school.

Innovation therefore means that schools should be given the ability to organise their classroom teaching differently. Innovation does not mean a new 'grand design' for teaching. It means innovation that is given shape from and by the schools. The initiative for monitoring and improving the quality of education and for experimenting with modernisation will be expressly left up to the school. The school head will play a decisive role in this. The school will give an account of the quality thereby achieved both to the people in its immediate

surroundings and to the government. At schools that have their own quality assurance in order, the supervision of the Inspectorate could be less intensive. The important question to answer is how the government can stimulate and support schools in the development and dissemination of modernisation from below. There are only very modest innovation funds available. ICT will play an important role in spending these funds.

3.2 Secondary Education (ages twelve to eighteen)

For the sector of secondary education, the same path was taken to come up with a *Course for Secondary Education*. A management starting point was provided here as well: clear frameworks from the side of government and more space for schools.

One of the themes is innovation and strengthening the knowledge infrastructure. The responsibility for continually adapting education to the changing requirements of society lies primarily with the schools. The discussions held between the government and the world of education focus on the question of how schools think they will organise their innovation and how they will utilise the education infrastructure (teacher-training colleges and educational support) for this purpose. Also to be discussed is the question of what the government and other actors should do to enable the school to fulfil its own responsibility. The Education Council recently recommended using knowledge communities for this purpose, which can be seen as networks of practical know-how and scientific knowledge of education. This proposal was accepted in that the Association of School Heads in secondary education has taken it on.

3.3 Senior Secondary Vocational Education (ages sixteen to eighteen or twenty)

It was already common practice for the sector of senior secondary vocational education to establish a path for the *Course for Vocational and Adult Education* every four years. This is now being done for 2004-2008, using the same management philosophy: providing maximum space with the requirement of having to give an account of the results achieved.

A new emphasis for the coming period is the reinforcement of the regional knowledge infrastructure, which the educational institutions of this sector are a part of. Intensive exchange of knowledge between institutions for senior secondary vocational education and regional businesses (especially small and mid-sized companies) could lead to more innovations. Innovation is also the subject of discussion in strengthening the so-called sector: improving the harmonisation between pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO), senior secondary vocational education (MBO) and higher professional education (HBO) – the three different phases of vocational education that young people between approximately the ages of fourteen and twenty-four can move through.

3.4 Higher Education (ages eighteen and up)

The sector of higher professional and university education already has a system of medium term plans. Every four years a *Higher Education and Research Plan* is drafted, this time for the period 2004-2008.

Although the institutions for higher education are already fairly autonomous, for this sector too the relationship between government and institutions is reassessed. The government formulates a general outline of national policy goals and asks the umbrella organisations or institutions to individually contribute to this. Based on these discussions, performance agreements are then reached. It should be clear that, particularly for higher education, the objectives lie in extending the ambition of the Netherlands to rank among the top three knowledge economies in Europe by 2010. Institutions of higher education should be a more

active part of the regional and national knowledge infrastructure and thus strengthen relations with trade and industry.

The most important instrument for this is the *Innovation Platform* mentioned above. In this platform, the ministers involved in education and innovation policy and representatives of social parties such as education, research and the business community, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, develop strategies and plans for knowledge development and exploitation.

4. Conclusion

The new management philosophy of clear but limited government frameworks, in combination with institutions that give accounts of their results, produces considerable room for innovation from below. Top-down modernisation would no longer work because it ignores the nature of the situation in which professionals work and inherently turns out too uniformly. The development of education is a continual process in which a school community determines, from the bottom up, what changes are preferred for their own organisation in their own environment.

We do not need to start from scratch for this.

A number of good examples are available (among other things) on which, as mentioned earlier, separate memorandums have been drawn up for this OECD workshop:

- the educational opportunities policy that is based heavily on school development from below;
- the concept of ‘the new learning’, developed from the KPC group, an innovation institute that works on behalf of OCW on the development of education;
- the Dutch Academy of School Heads, established with the understanding that school leadership is an indispensable factor for developing education from below.

We can refer to these developments as leading edges in the field of innovation of education that can contribute to the toolbox of *Schooling for Tomorrow*.

It should be clear that the transition from a strong, centrally determined policy to a continual and systematic development process from below within limited government frameworks cannot be put into effect in a short time span. This also involves getting both politicians and society to put trust in the inherent strength of the educational world.

This is all the more difficult because politicians and public opinion in the Netherlands in recent years have attached greater value to finding quick and decisive solutions for the short term instead of looking to policy that strives to achieve sustainable solutions. Schools that are failing to do something well should, according to the Second Chamber of Parliament, be brought immediately into line by the minister instead of being given the chance to learn how they can improve their performance.

As the *Course*-documents relate mostly to a medium long period, OCW now have to look at a horizon further ahead of us in order to make possible an actual transition from the education system. We have invited the OECD for a meeting with senior executives of the ministry to work with the scenarios in order to get a better hold over a distant horizon. In realising this ambition, we meet each other in the OECD project *Schooling for Tomorrow*.

The Hague, the Netherlands - 25th May 2004

J.S.M. Boot, policy advisor of the Managing Council
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

TRANSFERPUNT ONDERWIJSACHTERSTANDEN
(Centre for Combating Educational Disadvantages)

The aim of the Transferpunt Onderwijsachterstanden (Centre for Combating Educational Disadvantages) is to prevent and combat educational disadvantages by a concerted effort of the national government, municipalities and school boards. These partners enter clear mutual agreements and hold one another accountable for the results and/or the efforts made. The aims formulated in the 2002-2006 National Framework of Educational Disadvantages Policy in Municipalities provide the guidelines for this. One of these aims is the implementation of the educational opportunity policy.

Main Activities

Providing for communication beyond the local level:

- Setting up and maintaining a website about preventing and combating educational disadvantages
- Dissemination of information, for example, via Nieuwsflits Onderwijsachterstanden and TooN
- Organising meetings for those concerned with (the implementation of) policy for children with educational disadvantages and for experts

Augmenting and applying knowledge:

- Analysis and study of GOA plans and school development plans;
- Conducting a study and disseminating the findings

Monitoring progress:

- Creating conditions for determining progress with a monitor and with the Information and Communications System for Educational Opportunities (ICO)

Strategic Choices

- Educational disadvantages of children are linked to socio-economic and socio-cultural factors and not the result of individual intellectual limitations
- Schools are not in a position by themselves to combat educational disadvantages specifically related to the social environment
- The school is the central focal point
- The municipality has an administrative role
- Transparency and communication are essential for good teamwork

Our Questions

- What kind of support do the municipalities and schools need to realise the objectives of the 2002-2006 National Policy Framework of Educational Disadvantages Policy in Municipalities?
- How will schools arrive at school development plans in which the specific pupil population is taken as the starting point and in which the aims of SMART are formulated?
- How do we encourage alliances among municipalities, school boards, schools and the school surroundings?

Jantine Kriens, Project management

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THE NEW LEARNING

by drs. Harry Gankema, KPC group, The Netherlands

“Education stands at the threshold of a paradigm change” is the firm conviction of many people working in education today. Our educational system has failed. It no longer speaks to young people. It does not teach them the knowledge and skills they must have to participate in today’s knowledge-based economy. Scenarios such as the one formulated by the OECD impressively show what the consequences can be of such a paradigm shift.

But to bring about this latest scenario, different shifts in the paradigm must occur in various domains: in the area of learning and knowledge; in the area of school organisation; in the realm of the social significance of the educational institution. The question is what efforts must be brought to bear in order to bring about these types of changes.

In thinking up scenarios, we rely heavily on external factors that force education to change its orientation. In the Netherlands, we can see that in the last 150 years education policy and, in the last 40 years, constructive, innovative education policy have hardly changed the essence of our education system at all. Over these 150 years there have been many external changes in society. In the last 40 years the changes have been very substantial, but the education system has in essence remained unchanged.

ICT has dramatically changed the world since 1985. But schools, the best institutions for passing on information and for communication, are still struggling to identify what significance ICT has for education and ICT has not led to any dramatic processes of change there. Apparently, external factors cannot change a school.

In my view, a school’s opportunities for change are directly influenced by the manner in which that school is able to bring its own practises up for discussion and to distance itself from the matter-of-course manner in which it views its current structure.

The same is true for society in its relation to a ‘school’ as an institution. To what extent can society distance itself from the current manner in which it wants to achieve social objectives in and through education?

The speed at which scenario innovations are achieved no longer depends on external developments: the pressure to do so is already so enormously large that it is incredible that the system can maintain its present course.

But to launch change from within, two conditions must be met:

A strategic orientation of the school management team with respect to the preferred place of the school in society.

Management of the factors that are necessary to bring about a strategic reorientation.

Sub. 1)

Change calls for strategic leadership. Strategic policy is aimed at keeping the course of an organisation in line with the developments within the chosen target group.

In most countries schools are executive agencies of the government or at least were until very recently. The strategic capacity of the management is limited, certainly the strategic capacity to translate external developments into complex internal restructuring in order to make the organisation fit for new challenges. Usually we see issues arising from the outside solved within the standard model of the existing organisation, This standard model is based on the

didactic triangle of teacher ⇔ pupil ⇔ method, in which the subject teacher and the pre-standardised knowledge in the method are simply seen as given elements.

Sub. 2)

ICT, which has made such an enormous impact on the structure of the global community since the 1980s, has become so important primarily because entire fields of business were integrated and restructured as a result. In the large sectors (e.g. food distribution, banking, publishers and entertainment) chain leaders surfaced that, owing to their strategic policy and their economic power, had the capacity to fashion the operations between the suppliers in the sector to their liking. As a result, business processes became organised integrally, better and often radically different throughout the business chain. Particular layers in the sector were also often cut altogether. Education also has such a chain, from the organisation that comes up with the grand aims of the system to the school where professional people trained elsewhere distribute the knowledge contained in books produced elsewhere. The logic of this chain is never critically reviewed. Innovation takes place within the 'beschränkte Rationalität' of such a layer. No fundamentally new arrangements are made.

Currently, the paradigm shift hangs in the air. What has actually happened is that strategic leadership has finally surfaced in schools which are able to listen to external developments with the intention of introducing them internally.

But they do this within the framework of the system. They see the restrictions of the system, of course, but they get around these restrictions instead of tackling them head on.

This leads to innovations of the first type:

- Giving the teacher a different role, changing from a transferor of knowledge to a supervisor of learning, or
- Allowing teachers to work in teams, or:
- No longer expressing the knowledge to be learned in qualifications but rather in competencies, or:
- Bringing the curriculum targets up for radical review and valuing learning in itself as the highest aim;
- When there is a lack of authentic context, explaining that the pupil is responsible for himself or should learn independently. That he should learn for the sake of learning because the school is not in the position to create a school that encourages learning as a matter of course.
- Having learning take place outside the school. Appreciating out-of-school learning highly without sufficiently indicating how that relates to the aims of the curriculum.

Even deschooling falls within the innovations of the 1st type. It is an option in which we establish that the school cannot meet the requirements of the consumer and that, finally, the consumers themselves can organise their own education.

This ignores the preserving power that society exercises with respect to the functions of education. Employers and government institutions are utterly against virtual educational routes in which there is no longer any guarantee of the learning results achieved by pupils.

Deschooling points to a failure, but proposes no better organisation as an alternative, but rather an implicitly organic network organisation. The type of organisation that was hip during the Internet hype era around the turn of the century.

The traditional school unites two value chains within itself.

- One in which the school is a social instrument of society in order to build a sufficient infrastructure. The school and its teachers are the production arsenal, the pupils are semi-manufactured goods that need to be finished. This finishing work is done on the basis of

objectively established norms, the organisation is orderly and adapted to the logic of the production arsenal – the school and its teachers.

- Another in which the pupil is a customer of a school that helps him to formulate his future dreams and provides him with the tools to achieve them. The school organises uninterrupted lines of development for the student, ensures that teaching is tailored to his needs, positions itself as a school around a chosen population and adapts teaching practice, staff and teaching aids to this population.

They are two incompatible value chains and they can be striven after simultaneously in the school because the teacher, who primarily engages the student as a client, is relatively autonomous and pays relatively little attention to the school organisation, which is primarily focused on the social role of the school.

With innovations of the 1st type, in which the school strategically positions itself, the organisation also focuses primarily on the client. The motto is: ‘The pupil is the point of focus!’

This leads to neglect of the significance of the school for the national education infrastructure: finding learning on its own more important than the ‘subject’ of learning; virtually denying the civilising role of education. Or it leads to a paradoxically authentic learning process: independent learning, authentic learning in a context that is not authentic, using methods that presuppose linear learning, or embedded in subjects that have no relevance for the authentic development of the pupil.

Innovations of the 2nd type only come about if the education sector is adapted in its entirety to the learning for the 21st century. If a chain leader appears that sets requirements for publishers, instructors, institutions that guarantee curriculum aims, test developers, etc.

Because only through shrewd organisation of the chain as a whole can fundamental modernisation occur. Only then can the school strive to achieve authentic learning and treat the pupil as a client, while the chain guarantees that this learning addresses the requirements of the new society the pupil will step into later on.

It presupposes these guaranteeing organisations venture to come up with definitions of knowledge other than those taken from the domain of formal, codified knowledge. That other sectors besides publishers alone will facilitate educational routes. That teacher-training colleges no longer have a monopoly on the supply of staff to a school. That high-quality ICT can be produced that is not absorbed within the system, as is now happening, but that provides the possibility of making the system more effective and efficient.

The motto of the school is now no longer ‘the pupil is the point of focus’ but rather ‘developing the insight of the pupil is the point of focus’. This means insight into the complexity of our society. The combination of authenticity as a means for the ‘how’ and insight as a neurological phenomenon of the ‘what’ that is independent of the subject.

The problem we face is that the educational sector contains no parties that have the power to achieve such an integral chain organisation.

In the Netherlands we have taken part in a large innovation programme (ICES KIS) in order to organise small and expensive practices simulating the situation in which innovations of the 2nd type are realised. In Appendix 1 you will find a short analysis from the ICES KIS proposal.

This was not accepted.

Fortunately, we have found private parties that are willing to adopt such practices. Slash/21 is just such a school. It is now actually functioning and professes to achieve an innovation of the 2nd type, but within an overly restricted financial context. In Appendix 2 you will find a short description of the manner in which Slash/21 is structured. Slash/21 is a secondary school. At present, we are also working at a primary school, Wittering.nl, and at a vocational training school, Sint Lucas. With industrial partners from the broadcasting sector and ICT, we are actively discussing whether these partners would like to become the chain leaders in order to reshuffle the relationships within the education sector. The initial prospects look favourable. In the conference we will discuss the learning model behind Slash/21 and Wittering.nl, as well as the business approach to the education sector.

N.B. Appendices not enclosed

DUTCH PRINCIPALS ACADEMY; FOR A PROFESSION WITH CONTENT WITH MANY FACETS

A brief introduction

The DPA (Dutch Principals Academy) is an independent non-governmental body for leaders in primary education. The DPA stimulates guards and promotes professional quality and expertise of management in primary education.

The DPA believes that leadership in primary education is a profession that can rely on a broad social appreciation. Leaders registered with the DPA are professionals who take their work and their continuous professional development seriously.

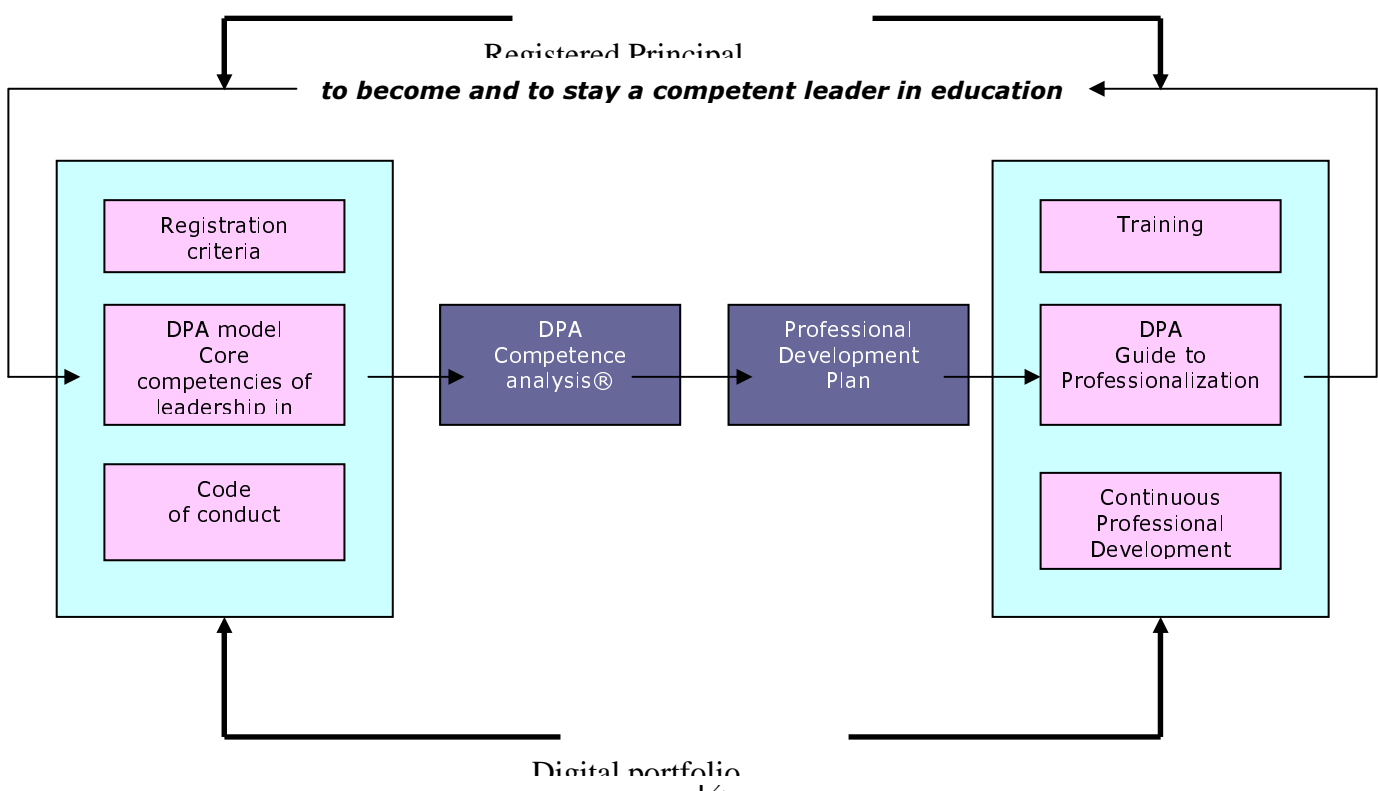
Our four main assignments are:

- To develop a professional standard
- To keep a register of competent leaders in primary education
- To accredit and certify contributions towards professionalisation
- To develop the starter qualifications for the profession

Other aims are:

- To initiate research into professional quality
- To stimulate dialogue and professional development
- To develop user-friendly instruments for professional development
- To support (inter)national cooperation
- To prevent a quantitative and qualitative shortage of future management
- To support initiatives for the revaluation of the profession

Our CPD framework

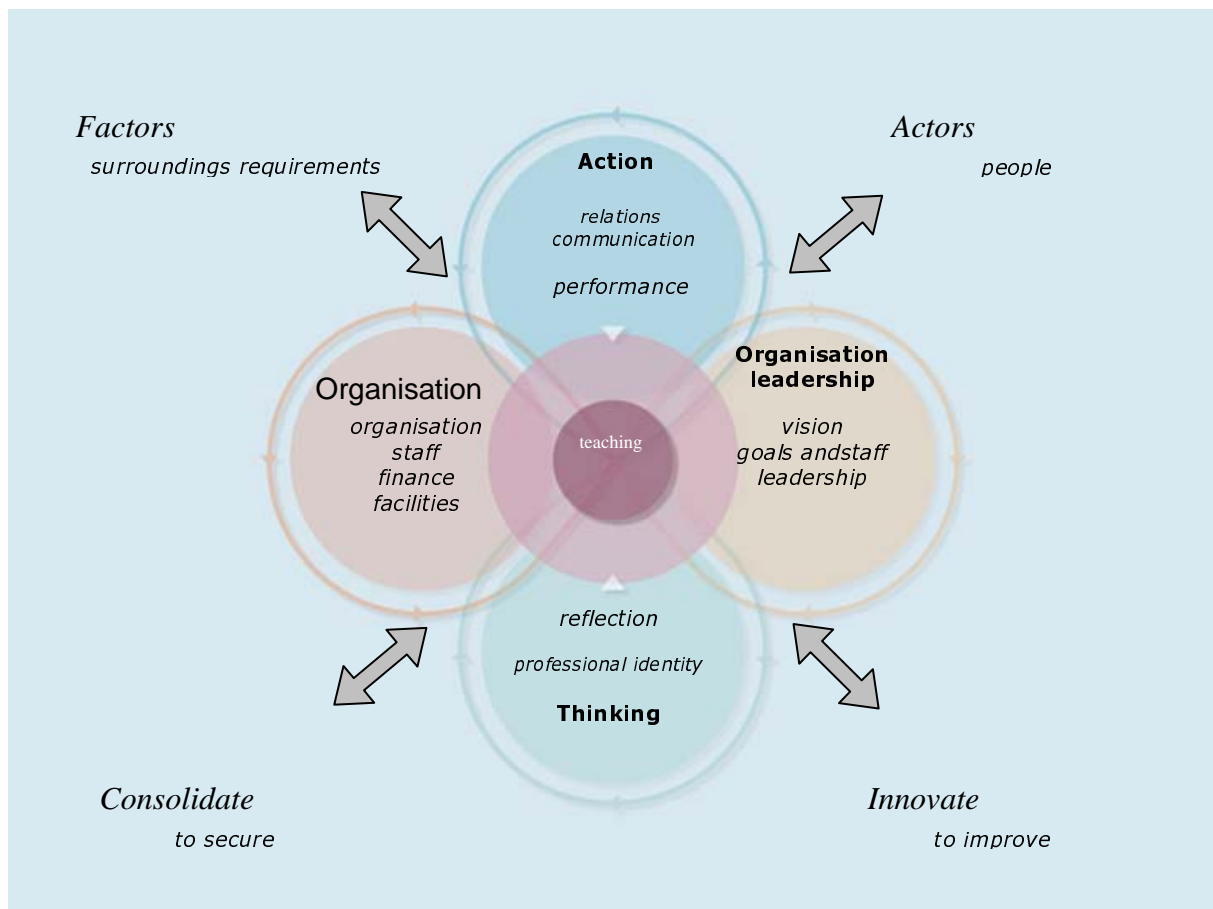


The DPA Professional Standard

The DPA Professional Standard offers people inside and outside the field of education clarity on the key purpose of the profession, and the competencies needed to be a leader in primary education. The DPA Professional Standard lists:

- A code of conduct for acting in a professional manner
- A competency profile for leaders
- Registration criteria

The DPA Model ‘Core competencies of leadership in education’

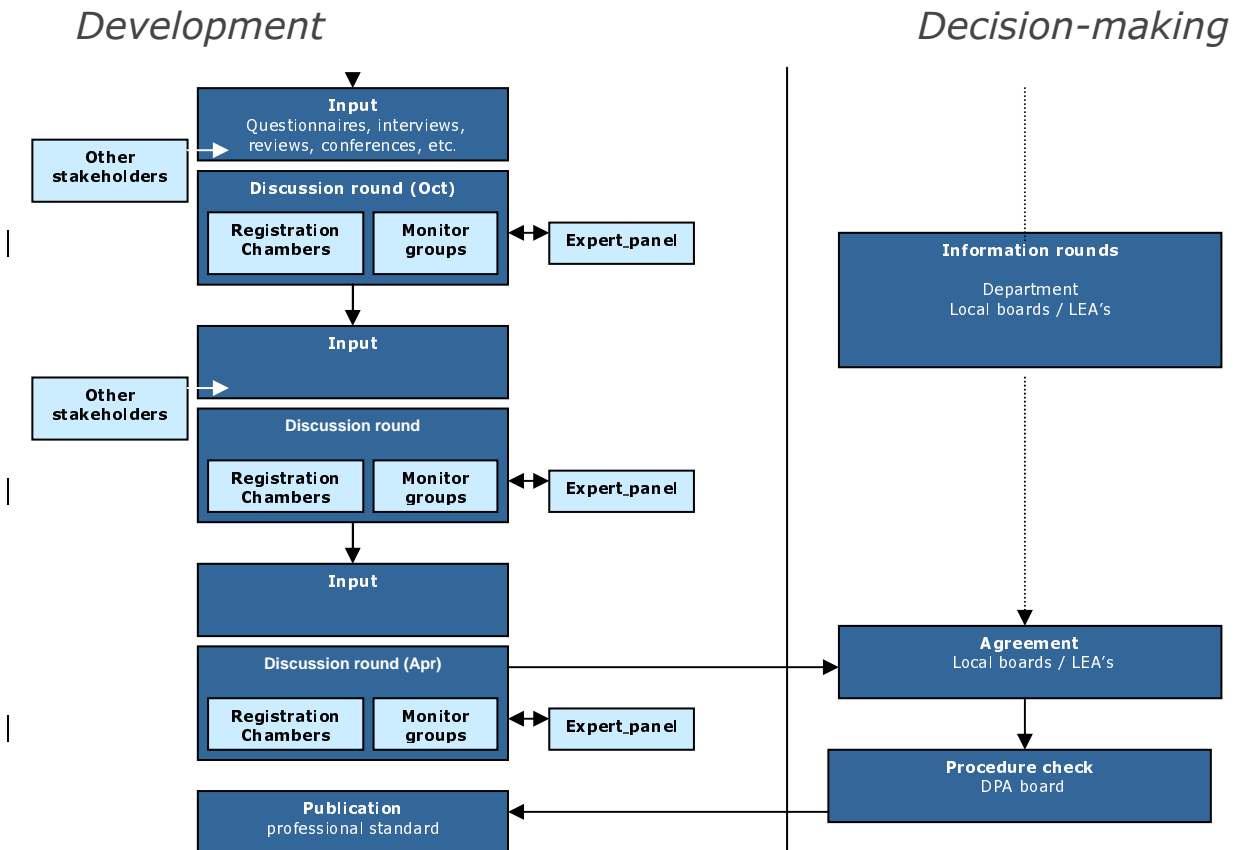


The development of a professional standard, i.e. defining the heart of the profession, is pre-eminently something that has to be established by leaders in primary education themselves. The DPA arranges the dialogue between principals, employers, teachers and other experts in the field of management in primary education according to the Delphi method.

The Delphi-method is a scientific method, which structures the communication process of large groups. It also enables the participants to take notice of the ideas and visions of others, so that participants are able to solve a complex problem effectively in several rounds of discussion.

This method is also very useful in a broad discussion on ‘future thinking’. It enables participants for instance to start a dialogue about the possible themes in the ‘Toolbox for forward-thinking, innovation, and school system change’.

The Delphi method as used by the DPA



The management philosophy of the Dutch Ministry of Education is characterised by deregulation. This allows greater space for bottom-up processes such as the development of the DPA professional standard. We present the main characteristics of the Delphi method that is used by us.

1. The DPA works in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Peter Slegers, head of the Expertise Centre, School Management and Educational Innovation of the University of Amsterdam and his team.
2. In the Delphi method we make a distinction between development and decision making.
3. Input in the discussion process:
 - Research amongst our professional group (leaders in primary schools)
 - Consultation of other stakeholders (parents, other sectors, teacher organisations etc)
4. Participants
 - Registration chambers
 - o 3 panels (20 – 30 members) from middle management, principals, superintendents for terms of 2 years (1/3 replacement each year)
 - o Representation according to denomination, geographic dispersal, school size, etc.
 - o 3 live discussion rounds each year

- The chambers decide unanimously on the content of the standard
 - Monitor groups
 - All registered principals
 - Receive a written report after each discussion round
 - Can respond and deliver input for the following discussion round by mail
 - Expert panel
 - 12 well-known and respected experts on leadership and management from universities, leadership training centres, departments, the commercial sector, etc.
 - They function as a sounding-board for the registration chambers. They provide input for discussion based on their own opinions and guarantee validation of the standard and the correct use of research methods.
5. Decision making
- Each year we have two information rounds with our department and a Panel from local boards and local education authorities.
 - Each year in May we try to reach an agreement with the Panel. If the proposed standard is accepted, the DPA board will check if all procedures are followed correctly before publishing the updated standard. If not accepted an additional discussion round is organised.

The DPA competence analysis®

The DPA competence analysis® is a diagnostic tool which has been developed in cooperation with ten renowned organisations in the field of HRM. It gives the principal a thorough image of his competencies compared to the DPA Professional Standard, the professional performance in his current position and his job perspective.

The DPA competence analysis® is a significant 'professional mirror' for the principal. Together with an expert he can explore his own competencies in relation to his work situation and his further development. The analysis is a good reference point to help a principal to make the right choices from the DPA Guide to Professionalisation. Thus he chooses a quality offer made to measure. With the DPA competence analysis® he will always know that he is fully equipped for future developments.

Professionalisation

Leaders in primary education are constantly confronted with changing political, educational, moral, social, and organisational demands put on their profession. Sometimes these demands overlap, sometimes they are opposites.

Managers have to function in a turbulent setting. Recent research shows that only 25% of managers feel sufficiently equipped for the job. Only by working on their professional development constantly and systematically can principals maintain their skills. The DPA supports the professional development of managers in primary education in the Netherlands in two ways:

Training

DPA is considered by law as the independent voice of the professional group. In cooperation with two outstanding Principals Training Agencies, DPA is developing a recommendation for

the Department of Education on starter qualifications for the profession. We expect that the starter qualifications be mandatory in 2006.

All principals training agencies are already working according to the DPA Professional Standard and are using the digital portfolio of the DPA. In the near future we hope to be acknowledged as the accreditation body for principals training agencies.

Continuous professional development

Although the word 'Academy' in Dutch Principals Academy might seem to suggest differently, the DPA does not offer any "continuing education" courses. However, the DPA does concern itself with the professional development of leaders in primary education.

Besides useful publications and tools as competence analysis and a digital portfolio, the DPA Guide to Professionalisation contains the data of more than 100 organisations and institutes and describes more than 500 products and services. What's unique about this is that all these products and services are linked to the competencies from the DPA Professional Standard and are recorded in a database. Registered principals have access to the database, which is maintained online by the organisations themselves.

On behalf of the professional group DPA certifies the contributions to professionalisation with the DPA Quality Hallmark. Certification can take place on three levels:

- a quality organisation or institute (external quality hallmark)
- a quality product or service (evaluations are available for principals)
- satisfaction research among participants (DPA Quality Hallmark)

DPA Register

In principle the DPA register is open to all leaders in primary education. The DPA aims to guarantee the professional quality of those registered and to encourage their professional development.

The DPA registers naturally lists only people. If they fulfil the registration criteria as set by the professional group, they can carry the copyright title Registered Principal (RDO) after their name for as long as they are registered.

Registered Principals are experts who carry this quality title with due pride, thus giving the image of the profession a new esteem. Board members, teachers and parents will know: this is not just any principal, but someone capable of filling complex leadership roles and completing managerial tasks in contemporary primary education efficiently. This is someone who thinks highly of professionalism and who works continuously on his professional development.

Digital portfolio

The digital portfolio is a kind of personal working environment for a principal. It records relevant information about his professional development. Next to details about experience, training and development, principals can also file their personal development plan, the results of their competence analysis, their selected courses, reports on their networks, minutes of meetings, papers and articles, etc.

The digital portfolio is used by principals:

- to provide insight into their progress with regard to competence development

- to direct their training and professional development activities
- as an assembly point of proof in order to meet with the registration criteria

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