

PEDAGOGICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE NETHERLANDS

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The problem. Modern state of foreign education in Ukraine demands straightforward changes in the system of Ukrainian education. The processes of world integration and globalisation of education are actual for our country today. That's why today it is necessary to analyse experience of foreign countries in the sphere of teaching and learning languages and to make conclusions for remake of our system.

Analyses of investigations and publications. Nowadays there are such research in this sphere held:

theory and practice of distance language teaching

teaching languages in British universities

multicultural foreign languages learning in the USA and others.

But, the state of investigation of the problem is not full. Namely it is necessary to analyse the foreign education systems of different countries.

The aim of the article is to analyse pedagogical premonitions of the system of education in the Netherlands..

The main body. Education in the Netherlands is characterized by division: education is oriented toward the needs and background of the **pupil**. Education is divided over schools for different age groups, some of which are divided in streams for different educational levels. Schools are furthermore divided in **public**, **special** (religious), and general-special (neutral) schools, although there are also a few **private schools**. The **Dutch grading scale** runs from 1 (very poor) to 10 (outstanding).

The **Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)**, coordinated by the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, ranks the education in the **Netherlands** as the 9th best in the world as of 2008, being significantly higher than the OECD average.

Educational policy is coordinated by the **Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science** with the municipal governments.

Compulsory education (leerplicht) in the Netherlands starts at the age of five, although in practice, most schools accept children from the age of four. From the age of sixteen there is a partial compulsory education (partiële leerplicht), meaning a pupil must attend some form of education for at least two days a week. Compulsory education ends for pupils age eighteen and up or when they get a degree.

Public, special (religious), and general-special (neutral) schools are **government**-financed, receiving equal financial support from the government if certain criteria are met. Although they are officially free of charge, these schools may ask for a parental contribution (ouderbijdrage). Private schools rely on their own funds, but they are highly uncommon in the Netherlands, to the extent that even the Dutch **monarchs** have traditionally attended special or public schools. Public schools are controlled by local governments. Special schools are controlled by a school board and are typically based on a particular **religion**; those that assume equality between religions are known as general-special schools. These differences are present in all levels of education.

As a result, there can be **Catholic**, **Protestant**, **Jewish** and **Muslim** elementary schools, high schools, and universities. A special school can reject applications of pupils whose parents or caretakers disagree with the school's educational **philosophy**, but this is uncommon. In practice, there is little difference between special schools and public schools, except in traditionally religious areas of the **Dutch Bible Belt**. All school types (public, special and private) are under the jurisdiction of a government body called Inspectie van het Onderwijs (Inspection of Education, also known as Onderwijsinspectie) that can demand a school to change its educational policy and quality at the risk of closure.

In elementary and high schools, pupils are assessed annually by a team of teachers who determine whether they advanced enough to move on to the next grade. Since forcing a pupil to retake the year (blijven zitten; literally, "stay seated") has a profound impact on the pupil's life in terms of social contacts and remaining in the educational system longer, this decision is not taken lightly and mechanisms are in place to avert retaking years, such as remedial teaching and other forms of guidance. As a result, retaking a year is uncommon, but it happens more often in elementary schools than in high schools because there are fewer negative consequences at a younger age. **Gifted** children are sometimes granted the opportunity to skip an entire year, yet this happens rarely and usually happens in elementary schools.

Between the ages of four to twelve, children attend elementary school (basisschool; literally, "basis school"). This school has eight grades, called groep 1 (group 1) through groep 8. School attendance is compulsory from group 2 (at age five), but almost all children commence school at age four (in group 1). Groups 1 and 2 used to be held in a separate institution akin to **kindergarten** (kleuterschool; literally, "toddler's school"), until it was merged with elementary schools in 1985. From group 3 on, children will learn how to **read**, **write** and do **arithmetic**s. Most schools teach English in groups 7 and 8, although some start as early as group 4. In group 8 the vast majority of schools administer an **aptitude** test called the Cito Eindtoets Basisonderwijs (literally, "Cito final test primary education", often abbreviated to Citotoets (Cito test), developed by the Centraal instituut voor toetsontwikkeling (Central Institute for test development)), which is designed to recommend the type of secondary education best suited for a pupil. In recent years this test has gained authority, but the recommendation of the group 8 teacher along with the opinion of the pupil and its parents remain a crucial factor in choosing the right form of secondary education.

The Cito test is not mandatory; some schools instead administer the Nederlandse Intelligentietest voor Onderwijsniveau ("Dutch **intelligence** test for educational level", usually abbreviated to NIO-toets) or the Schooleindonderzoek ("School final test").

A considerable number of elementary schools are based on a particular educational philosophy, for instance the **Montessori Method**, **Pestalozzi Plan**, **Dalton Plan**, **Jena Plan**, or **Freinet**. Most of these are public schools, but some special schools also base themselves on one of these educational philosophies. After attending elementary education, Dutch children (by that time usually 12 years old) go directly to high school (voortgezet onderwijs; literally, "continued education"). Informed by the advice of the elementary school and the results of the Cito test, a choice is made for either **vmbo**, **havo** or **vwo** by the pupil and its parents. When it is not clear which type of secondary education best suits a pupil, or if the parents insist their child can handle a higher level of education than what was recommended to them, there is an orientation year for both vmbo/havo and havo/vwo to determine this. At the end of the year, the pupil will continue in the normal curriculum of either level. For havo/vwo, there is an additional second orientation year when inconclusive. A high school can offer one or more levels of education, at one or multiple locations. A focus on (financial) efficiency has led to more centralization, with large schools that offer education on all or most educational levels.

Since the Dutch educational system does not have middle schools or junior high schools, the first year of all levels in Dutch high schools is referred to as the brugklas (literally, bridge class), as it connects the elementary school system to the secondary

education system. During this year, pupils will gradually learn to cope with the differences between school systems, such as dealing with an increased personal responsibility.

It is possible for pupils who have attained the vmbo diploma to attend the final two years of havo level education and sit the havo exam, and for pupils with a havo diploma to attend the final two years of vwo level education and sit the vwo exam. The underlying rationale is that this grants pupils access to a more advanced level of higher education. This system acts as a safety net to diminish the negative effects of a child's immaturity or lack of self-knowledge. For example, when a bright pupil was sent to vmbo because it was unmotivated but later discovered its potential or has acquired the desire to achieve better, the pupil can still attain a higher level by moving on to havo. Most schools do require a particular grade average to ensure the pupil is capable of handling the increased study load and higher difficulty level.

Aside from moving up, there is also a system in place where pupils can be demoted to a lower level of education. When for example a pupil has entered secondary education at a level it cannot cope with, or when it lacks the interest to spend effort on its education resulting in poor grades, it can be sent from vwo to havo, from havo to vmbo, and from any level of vmbo to a lower level of vmbo. The vmbo (voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs; literally, "preparatory middle-level applied education") education lasts four years, from the age of twelve to sixteen. It combines vocational training with theoretical education in [languages](#), [mathematics](#), [history](#), [arts](#) and [sciences](#). Sixty percent of students nationally are enrolled in vmbo. Students can choose between four different levels of vmbo that differ in the ratio of practical vocational training and theoretical education. Not all levels are necessarily taught in the same high school. Theoretische leerweg (vmbo-tl; literally, "theoretical learning path") has the largest share of theoretical education. It prepares for [middle management](#) and the mbo level of tertiary education, and allows students to resume vocational training at havo level. It was previously known as "mavo". Gemengde leerweg (vmbo-gl; literally, "mixed learning path") is in between vmbo-tl and vmbo-kl. Kaderberoepsgerichte Leerweg (vmbo-kl; literally; "middle management-oriented learning path") is composed of an equal amount of theoretical education and vocational training. It prepares for middle management and vocational training at the mbo level of tertiary education. Basisberoepsgerichte Leerweg (vmbo-bb; literally; "basic profession-oriented learning path") emphasizes vocational training and prepares for vocational training at the mbo level of tertiary education. Praktijkonderwijs (literally, "practical education") mainly consists of vocational training. It is tailored to pupils who would otherwise not be able to obtain a vmbo-diploma. This form of on-the-job training is aimed at allowing pupils to enter the job market directly. At all of these levels, Leerwegondersteunend onderwijs (literally, "learning path supporting education") is offered, which is intended for pupils with educational or behavioural problems. These pupils are taught in small classes by specialized teachers. Secondary education, which begins at the age of 12 and, as of 2008, is compulsory until the age of 18, is offered at several levels. The two programmes of general education that lead to higher education are havo (five years) and vwo (six years). Pupils are enrolled according to their ability, and although vwo is more rigorous, both havo and vwo can be characterised as selective types of secondary education. The havo diploma is the minimum requirement for admission to [hbo](#) (universities of applied sciences). The vwo curriculum prepares pupils for university, and only the vwo diploma grants access to [wo](#) (research universities). The first three years of both havo and vwo are called the basisvorming (literally, "basic forming"). All pupils follow the same subjects: languages, mathematics, history, arts and sciences. The last two years of havo and the last three years of vwo are referred to as the second phase (tweede fase), or upper secondary education. This part of the educational programme allows for differentiation by means of subject clusters that are denoted "profiles" (profielen). A profile is a set of different subjects that will make up for the largest part of the pupil's timetable. It emphasizes a specific area of study in which the pupil specializes. Compared to the havo route, the difficulty level of the profiles at the vwo is higher, and lasts three years instead of two. Pupils pick one of four profiles towards the end of their third year: Cultuur en Maatschappij (C&M; literally, "culture and society") emphasizes arts and foreign languages ([French](#), [German](#) and less frequently [Spanish](#), [Russian](#), [Arabic](#) and [Turkish](#)). In the province of [Friesland](#), [West Frisian](#) is also taught. The [mathematics](#) classes focus on [statistics](#) and [stochastics](#). This profile prepares for artistic and cultural training. Economie en Maatschappij (E&M; literally, "economy and society") emphasizes [social sciences](#), [economics](#), and [history](#). The mathematics classes focus on statistics and stochastics. This profile prepares for management and [business administration](#). Natuur en Gezondheid (N&G; literally, "nature and health") emphasizes [biology](#) and [natural sciences](#). The mathematics classes focus on algebra, geometry and calculus. This profile is necessary to attend [medical](#) training. Natuur en Techniek (N&T; literally, "nature and technology") emphasizes [natural sciences](#). The mathematics classes focus on algebra, geometry and calculus. This profile is necessary to attend [technological](#) and natural science training.

Because each profile is designed to prepare pupils for certain areas of study at the tertiary level, some hbo and wo studies require a specific profile because of specific basic knowledge is required. One for example cannot study [engineering](#) without having attained a certificate in [physics](#) at the secondary educational level. Aside from the subjects in the profile, the curriculum is composed of a compulsory segment that includes [Dutch](#), [English](#) and some minor subjects, and a free choice segment in which pupils can choose two or more subjects from other profiles. Picking particular subjects in the free curriculum space can result in multiple profiles, especially the profiles N&G and N&T that overlap for a large part.

In general, all schools in the Netherlands observe a summer holiday, and several weeks of one or two-week holidays during the year. Also schools are closed during [public holidays](#). [Academic terms](#) only exist at the tertiary education level. Institutions are free to divide their year, but it is most commonly organized into four [quadrimesters](#).

The summer holiday lasts six weeks in elementary school, and starts and ends in different weeks for the northern, middle and southern [provinces](#) to avoid all families to go on vacation simultaneously. For the seven-week summer holidays of all high schools, the same system applies. Universities have longer holidays (about 2 months, but this may include re-examinations) and usually start the year in late August or early September. The summer holiday is followed by a one-week autumn holiday in the second half of October at all levels except for most research universities. At elementary and high school levels, the week depends on the north/middle/south division also used around the summer holidays. There is a two-week Christmas holiday that includes New Year's in the second half of December, and a one-week spring holiday in the second half of February (around [Carnival](#)). The last school holiday of the year is a one- or two-week May holiday around 30 April ([Queen's Day](#)); sometimes including [Ascension Day](#). Easter does not have a week of holiday, schools are only closed on [Good Friday](#) and [Easter Monday](#). The summer holiday dates are compulsory, the other dates are government recommendations and can be changed by each school, as long as the right number of weeks is observed.

Conclusions. The Dutch system of education is unique to a certain degree due to its ethnicity and traditionality. It is stable and gives high results and outcomes. In future it is necessary to analyse the model of teaching foreign languages in the Netherlands and to make parallels with that of Ukraine. Consequently it is possible to work out the special algorithm of teasing the Ukrainian system of education towards the European and World standards.

Резюме. В статті проаналізовано педагогічні засади організації системи навчання та виховання в королівстві Нідерланди. Наведено класифікацію навчальних закладів в Голландії, зроблено акцент на їх функціональному призначенні. Досліджено позитивні риси системи освіти Нідерландів та виділено напрямки інтеграції цих процесів до

вітчизняного освітнього простору. **Ключові слова:** королівство Нідерланди, система освіти, освітні заклади

Резюме. В статье проанализированы педагогические аспекты организации системы обучения и воспитания в королевстве Нидерланды. Приведена классификация учебных заведений в Голландии, сделан акцент на их функциональном назначении. Исследованы положительные черты системы образования Нидерландов и выделены направления интеграции этих процессов в отечественное образовательное пространство. **Ключевые слова:** королевство Нидерланды, система образования, образовательные учреждения.

Summary. Pedagogical aspects of educational system in the Netherlands are analysed in the article. The classification of the educational establishments in Holland is given. The stress on their functions is put. The positive traits of the educational system of the Netherlands are investigated and the directions of their integration to national educational environment are singled out.

Keywords: the Netherlands, educational system, educational establishments.

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