

1.1 Case study twenty-two: The Netherlands: CKV1 (Arts and Cultural Education1) Monitoring Project

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| Chief investigator(s) and/or investigation team: | Harry B.G. Ganzeboom Ineke Nagel Both researchers were at the time of the research employed at University of Utrecht. Both work at University of Amsterdam at the moment. Both can be contacted through Cultuurnetwerk Nederland. |
| Contact details: | Organization: Cultuurnetwerk Nederland, Netherlands Expertise Centre for Arts- and Cultural Education Address: Ganzenmarkt 6, P.O. box 61, 3500 AB, Utrecht Country: The Netherlands Phone: + 31 (0)30 2361200 email: info@cultuurnetwerk.nl Website: www.cultuurnetwerk.org |

Aims

The aim of the project was to evaluate the implementation of the subject *Arts and Cultural Education1* and secondly to find out to what extent it serves its purpose of changing the participation of younger people in the cultural field.

Arts and Education1 is a compulsory subject (introduced in 1998) at the senior school level of general secondary education and pre-university education. In pre-vocational secondary education a somewhat different form of this subject was implemented in 2003.

Project outline

The general goal of *Arts and Cultural Education1* is that students learn to make a motivated choice of cultural activities that are meaningful to them. The core of the subject is the participation in cultural activities such as visiting an exhibition or a concert: so students should experience culture.

Most of these cultural visits must be paid for, and to cover part of the expenses the government provides each student with an amount of about 20 euros in vouchers that can be used as payment in museums, theatres, cinemas, etc.

Knowledge of arts and culture is not taught by rote learning art historical facts and figures, but by understanding the inter relationships between the different art disciplines by means of a thematic approach. A school is free to choose themes, but there are resources offering teaching models with themes such as 'heroes', 'the city', 'eternal love', etc.

Practical arts activities (such as studio art, singing, dancing etc.) only form a small part. They are meant to support the preparation and 'digestion' of cultural activities, but they are no ends in themselves.

The new subject has an examination. It goes by the name of the '*arts portfolio*' and it consists of reports of the cultural activities, reports of the thematic studies and the results of practical work. Once the portfolio is ready, the pupil gives his or her views on choices, experiences and findings. This reflection takes the form of the student holding a presentation, preparing a report or giving a speech for the supervising teacher.

Arts and Cultural Education is preferably taught by a team of teachers of different subjects, such as mother language, foreign languages, visual arts, music and drama. Every school has one or two people who coordinate the activities, provide information and maintain contacts with the arts organizations in the city or the region. Within the boundaries of the examination program, each school can itself determine the contents and organization of the subject.

The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science commissioned the research project to make an assessment of the implementation of Arts and Cultural Education¹, and secondly to find out to what extent it serves its purpose, that is: does it change the participation of younger people in the cultural field? The Utrecht University, together with *Cultuurnetwerk* Nederland carried out the long term (from 1998 to 2003) research project.

The main research questions were:

1. How do schools give shape to Arts and Cultural Education¹ with respect to its content and didactics at the one hand and its practical organization on the other hand?
2. With what problems do teachers and students meet and what are their opinions on this new subject?
3. What cultural activities for Arts and Cultural Education¹ are chosen by students as far as genre and complexity are concerned?
4. Does Arts and Cultural Education¹ increase the cultural participation of the students for the short range (that is while taking or directly after the arts lessons) and for the medium range (that is after a year or more)?

Research methods

- Interview and questionnaire.
- In this long term research project data was collected at secondary schools throughout the Netherlands. The data collection was divided into several waves. The first wave was 1998, followed by waves in 2000, 2001 and 2003. A total of 67 secondary schools in 14 municipalities in the Netherlands were visited. At the schools the coordinator of the arts education program, the art teachers and students were questioned. Coordinators were submitted to a face-to-face interview. Furthermore, teachers of the arts education program answered a written questionnaire. A total of 2463 students in these classes were questioned.

Results

Extensive results were revealed concerning each of the main research questions.

Main Impact

Concerning the research project itself: The government got answers to the main research questions (which were formulated at their request).

Concerning the topic of the research namely the subject *Arts and Cultural Education I*:
The subject does increase the cultural participation of the students for the short range.

Main Challenges

The main challenges/issues/concerns of student, teacher and assessment issues concerned the subject *Arts and Education I*, not the associated research project.