

OECD Initial Teacher Preparation study

# Promising Practices

## Schools and Teacher Education Institutions Co-creating ITE Programmes in the Netherlands

*Country category: Netherlands*

*Teacher education pathway category(ies): Ensuring quality of ITE programmes;  
Supporting beginning teachers*

*Stakeholder category(ies): teacher candidate; teacher educator; researcher*

*Date of publication: March 2018*



This case study describes a “promising practice” drawn from an OECD review of initial teacher preparation in the Netherlands from 6-10 March 2017.

The OECD Review Team – Hannah von Ahlefeld (OECD), Michael Day (University of Roehampton), Kjetil Helgeland (OECD) and Danielle Toon (Learning First) – identified a number of “promising practices” in each country. These practices may not be widespread or representative, but seen in the context of other challenges, they represent a strength or opportunity to improve the country’s initial teacher preparation system – and for other countries to learn from them.

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### *Promising Practice 3.*

## *Schools and Teacher Education Institutions Co-creating ITE Programmes in the Netherlands*

### **Context**

In a recent paper, Toon and Jensen (2017<sup>[1]</sup>) decry the increasing number and diversity of partnerships in initial teacher education – and propose a framework to better understand the effectiveness of partnerships in terms of the depth of collaboration, roles, and the accountability of the various partners and systems involved in or implicated by the collaboration. In the Netherlands, there are several examples of the deepest type of partnership described by these authors, in which partners jointly design, deliver, evaluate and improve preparation and early career development. These partnerships are supported and encouraged at the system level in the Netherlands, by linking partnerships with accreditation of ITE programmes, and also at the policy level.

In the Netherlands, an independent accreditation body, the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO), approves each school-university partnership before they are funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The body determines if there is a clear and manifested vision, a shared focus on improvement, leadership, co-operation and self-management, and a commitment to improving learning for students. Partnerships are also reviewed after they receive funding.

Responding to concerns from schools and school boards about the “classroom readiness” of newly qualified primary teachers, the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science launched a range of initiatives to improve the fitness for purpose of primary initial teacher education (ITE). These initiatives have included facilitating and funding much closer integration of universities of applied sciences (HBOs), which provide training in primary education, with school boards, at the strategic level, and with individual schools at both the strategic and operational level.

The initiatives have had a major impact on the ITE system. During interviews, the ministry reported that almost half of ITE courses are now working closely with schools on course design and delivery. Clearly, there is a continuum in the deepness of the partnerships between schools and HBOs. To illustrate the depth and commitment to partnerships in the Netherlands, this case study describes a partnership between an HBO and school, and a pilot project in academic training schools in the Netherlands.

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## What does the partnership between Hogeschool Leiden and Snijderschool, Rijswijk entail?

The partnership between Hogeschool Leiden and Snijderschool, Rijswijk is a strong example of the deepest type of partnership.

Snijderschool is one of 50 primary schools controlled by the LUCAS school board, and LUCAS is one of five school boards involved in a partnership project with Hogeschool Leiden. In this project, the school boards and the Hogeschool are building a sustainable partnership to develop ITE and professional development programmes together and drive improvement across their schools.

Of LUCAS's 50 schools, 20 are involved in ITE. There are three models of school involvement:

- regular: offering one day a week placements for students, with school-based mentors
- school-based ITE: two days per week with co-designed and delivered programmes
- school-based research as well as ITE.

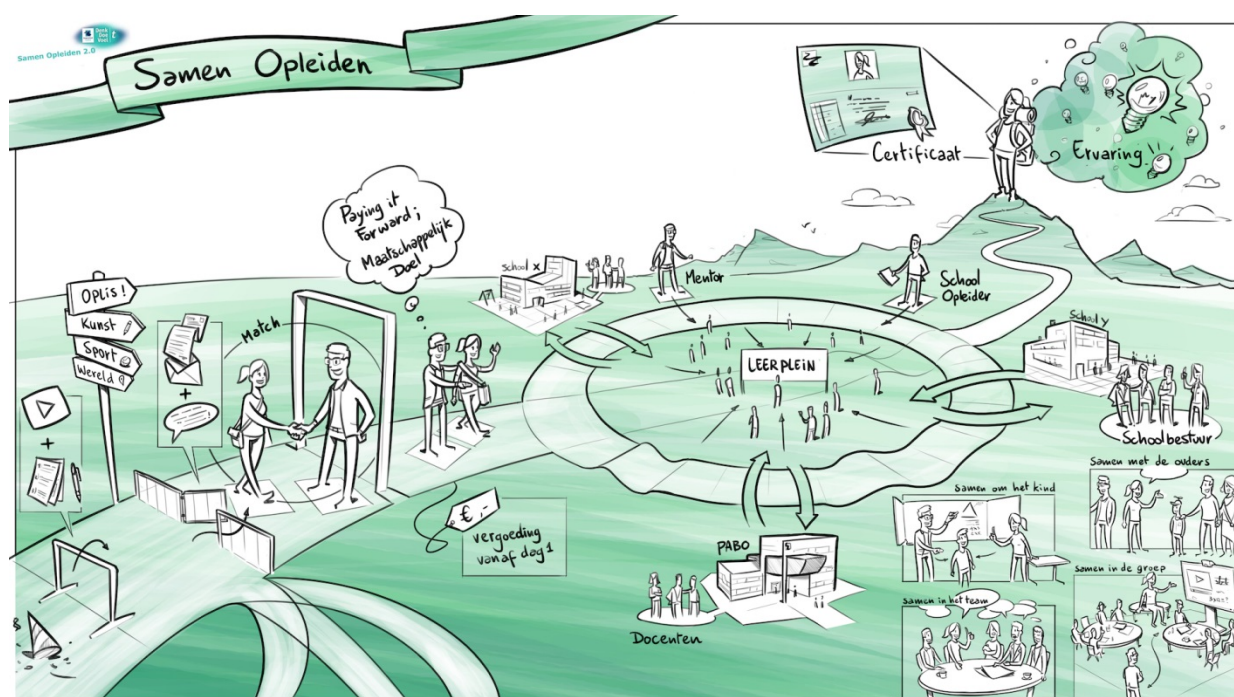
Snijderschool is in the third category, with students working alongside teachers to research practice based issues, facilitated by academic staff from the Hogeschool Leiden.

Initially the partnership was self-funded, but the ministry has now provided three years of project funding to develop the partnership and employ dedicated partnership staff.

The key characteristics of the partnership are (Figure 1):

- LUCAS employs a teacher educator to oversee the partnership, and provides strategic leadership.
- The school and Hogeschool exchange staff and work in each other's institutions.
- The staff from the school and Hogeschool work closely together to develop and refine the ITE curriculum and delivery.
- The school board and the Hogeschool have jointly constructed a selection programme for students and are jointly involved in selection (the programme has a dispensation to select recruits).
- The Hogeschool employs a link person to provide mentor training for teachers interested in undertaking this role and to brief mentors on what is happening in the Hogeschool element of the programme to ensure good co-ordination between the theory and practice elements.
- The school grades the student on their teaching practice, and the student must achieve a pass mark to be awarded their teaching certificate as part of their Bachelor of Arts degree.
- Students, mentors and school leaders are asked every two years for feedback on the programme.

Figure 1. Schools and teacher education institutions co-creating primary ITE programmes



Source: Hogeschool Leiden (2018<sup>[2]</sup>), Hogeschool Leiden, <https://www.hsleiden.nl/leraar-basisonderwijs-pabo/opbouw-studie/opleiden-in-de-school.html> (accessed on 22 May 2018).

## What is an academic training school?

In 2006, the Dutch education ministry selected 16 schools to participate in a pilot programme to create academic training schools – partnerships between schools and teacher training programmes.

As of 2012, there were 22 university-affiliated (academic) training schools. Teacher training in these schools is strongly linked to applied research and development (Box 1).

Academic training schools co-operate closely with teacher training institutions to conduct practice-based research and innovation, ongoing professional development for teachers, and training for teacher candidates as follows:

- School-based research is conducted by a team of experienced researchers, candidates and teachers within the academic training school.
- A large part of a candidate's training takes place in the academic training schools and they are jointly mentored by a teacher educator from the teacher training institution and a mentor teacher in the school.

In one example, a group of teachers was allocated one day a week to conduct research of practical relevance to the school, based on a central theme decided by school leadership.

An early qualitative study (Snoek and Moens, 2011<sup>[3]</sup>) of one of the pilot programmes found that involvement in conducting research led to increased professional development at a range of levels, including expertise in the research topic, insights into how to conduct research, awareness of the school's overall vision and organisation, and understanding of how to work with colleagues and share knowledge.

### Box 1. In-school teacher training in the Netherlands

Training schools are partnerships between schools and teacher training programmes. Together, they provide prospective teachers with in-school training for a large part of their teacher training programme. Of the 56 training schools, 22 are university-affiliated, i.e. academic training schools. This means that teacher training in these schools is strongly linked to applied research and school development.

Participants in the academic training schools acknowledge the following benefits resulting from the partnerships (this list is not exhaustive):

- professional development of teachers and more career opportunities
- a real boost to the quality of teacher training programmes
- positive effects on school culture and student enthusiasm regarding the training programme
- a more evidence-based approach by teachers.

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2011<sup>[41]</sup>), *Working in Education 2012*, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science,  
<https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documents/reports/2013/02/27/working-in-education-2012/ocw-wio12-wio-en-compleet-final2-los.pdf>.

### Why is it a strength?

The OECD Review Team in its review of the Netherlands from 6-10 March 2017 noted that:

- *Schools are experts on knowing what they need from teachers*, so including schools' perspective in selection into teaching could improve selection quality.
- *There is a strong culture of collaboration, co-operation, and connecting preparation to practice*. The ministry reported during interviews that this "culture" is currently adopted by around one third of stakeholders. The many school-university partnerships enable ITE programmes to provide a good balance of theory and practice, as well as generic and specific skills. Some schools and universities have developed a continuum of skills to guide development of ITE into induction. In such collaborations, feedback from schools resulted in universities moving the requirement to master complex teaching skills like differentiation from initial teacher preparation to induction.
- *Use of a "quality check" to encourage deep collaboration between schools and universities*. The accreditation body looks at some school partnerships and approves these before they are funded. This helps set expectations across the system of what a good university-school partnership should look like, and incentivises partners with funding to work closely together.

### How could it be improved?

The OECD Review Team concluded that:

- *More incentives and scaling up of partnerships across the entire system*: A number of the successful pilots in school-university partnerships could be scaled

up across the entire system so more schools are using collaboration to improve teacher quality. The amount of funding (overall and per partnership) needed to scale effective partnerships should be reviewed, as there should be strong incentives for all institutions – especially those delivering “average” programmes – to participate in deep school-university partnerships.

- *Schools and school boards reported feeling a lack of influence over initial teacher training.* A number of the successful pilots in school-university partnerships and induction programmes could be scaled up across the entire system so more schools are using collaboration to improve teacher quality. The amount of funding (overall and per partnership) needed to scale up effective partnerships should be reviewed.

### For more information

- Hogeschool Leiden (2018), *Leraar Basisonderwijs (Pabo voltijd)*, [2]  
<https://www.hsleiden.nl/leraar-basisonderwijs-pabo/opbouw-studie/opleiden-in-de-school.html> (accessed on 22 May 2018).
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<https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documents/reports/2013/02/27/working-in-education-2012/ocw-wio12-wio-en-compleet-final2-los.pdf>.
- Snoek, M. and E. Moens (2011), “The impact of teacher research on teacher learning in academic training schools in the Netherlands”, *Professional Development in Education*, Vol. 37/5, pp. 817-835, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2011.587525>. [3]
- Toon, D. and B. Jensen (2017), *Teaching our teachers a better way: Developing partnerships to improve teacher preparation*, Learning First, Melbourne, <http://learningfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2columnsITECoPPaper2PartnershipsFINAL17Nov17.pdf>. [1]