

OECD Initial Teacher Preparation study

Promising Practices

Industry-developed Professional Standards for Teacher Educators in the Netherlands

Country category: Netherlands

Teacher education pathway category(ies): Equipping teachers with what they need to know and do; Supporting beginning teachers

Stakeholder category(ies): teacher educator

Date of publication: March 2019



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.

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgement of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org.

Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d’exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.

Promising Practice 4.

Industry-developed Professional Standards for Teacher Educators in the Netherlands

Context

Teacher educators are important influencers on teacher candidate learning – just as teachers are influential on student learning. A study by Binks-Cantrell et al (2012) showed that teachers could not explain basic language constructs if they had learned about these from teachers educators who did not grasp these constructs well. This so-called Peter Effect shows that one cannot teach what one does not possess. Indirectly, this thus shows the importance of (well qualified) teacher educators as well. Despite this importance, teacher educators have been neglected in research and policy making and often do not get the support and development they need to improve their work (Cochran-Smith, 2003^[2]; European Commission, 2013^[3]; Snoek, Swennen and van der Klink, 2011^[4]).

More than 30 years ago already, the Dutch Professional Association for Teacher Educators (VELON) was founded “...to foster the professionalization of individual [teacher educators] and the professional group as a whole.” (Melief, Van Rijswijk and Tigchelaar, 2012, p. 1^[5]). In line with this ultimate goal, the VELON developed the first iteration of the Dutch Professional Standard for Teacher Educators (“the Standard”) and a registration procedure for teacher educators in the late 1990s. Dutch teacher educators are admitted into the professional register if they can demonstrate that they are meeting the Standard in their work, which is described in a series of books on the knowledge bases regarded as required for teacher educators. This series of books on the knowledge bases for teacher educators was developed over the years and updated by VELON. If a teacher educator subscribes to the register now, when meeting the Standard, his registration is valid for a period of four years. In 2012, VELON revised the Standard to apply to all types of teacher educators, regardless of their work environment or subject domain. Currently, VELON has 1 500 individual members who are professionally involved in both pre- and in-service teacher education in the Netherlands (Dutch Association for Teacher Educators, 2018^[6]).

What is the Standard for teacher educators?

The Standard provides clarity about the nature of the profession, a guideline for professional development, and a benchmark for professional registration.

The Standard is for all types of teacher educators, who are defined as those “...who [work] at universities of applied sciences or university (institute-based educator), or at professional development schools (school-based teacher educator), and who provide a formal contribution to the development of prospective and active (school) teachers.”

(Melief, Van Rijswijk and Tigchelaar, 2012, p. 2_[5]). The Standard contains a set of fundamental principles and four competency areas for prospective and professional teacher educators.

The fundamental principles encompass the three essentials of being a teacher educator: students' learning, the teacher candidates' learning, and the learning of the teacher educator him or herself (Box 1).

Box 1. The fundamental principles for teacher educators from the Dutch Professional Standard for Teacher Educators

“A teacher educator teaches (prospective) teachers: he has a particular modelling role, which he can apply in a specific manner. He is able to model the three essentials of the pupils' learning, the (prospective) teachers' learning and his own learning in an open and transparent manner. He focuses on the personal and professional development of (prospective) teachers and – derived from this – on the development of pupils. A teacher educator is a committed teacher, capable and knowledgeable. He is motivating, innovative, and interested in education and in those employed and learning in it. He is conscious of his responsibility towards (prospective) teachers, pupils, society at large, and himself. He is capable of positioning his vocation inside the social context of education. He is clear about his views on teaching and educating, and he is trustworthy and transparent.

A teacher educator has knowledge of the relevant (scientific) insights into learning, training, and teaching, in the setting of school and of teacher education (first- and second-order pedagogy). He possesses broad teaching experience, and can act upon it.

A teacher educator is aware of his own values, norms, and educational opinions. He supervises and monitors the moral-ethical development of (prospective) teachers, and thus - indirectly - of the pupils. He stimulates the (prospective) teachers in developing opinions and taking stances towards values. He respects cultural and ideological diversity.

A teacher educator takes his responsibility in a multidisciplinary team of school- and institute-based trainers and educators, who are all involved in the training and education of (prospective) teachers. He is able to connect school - and institutional practice.

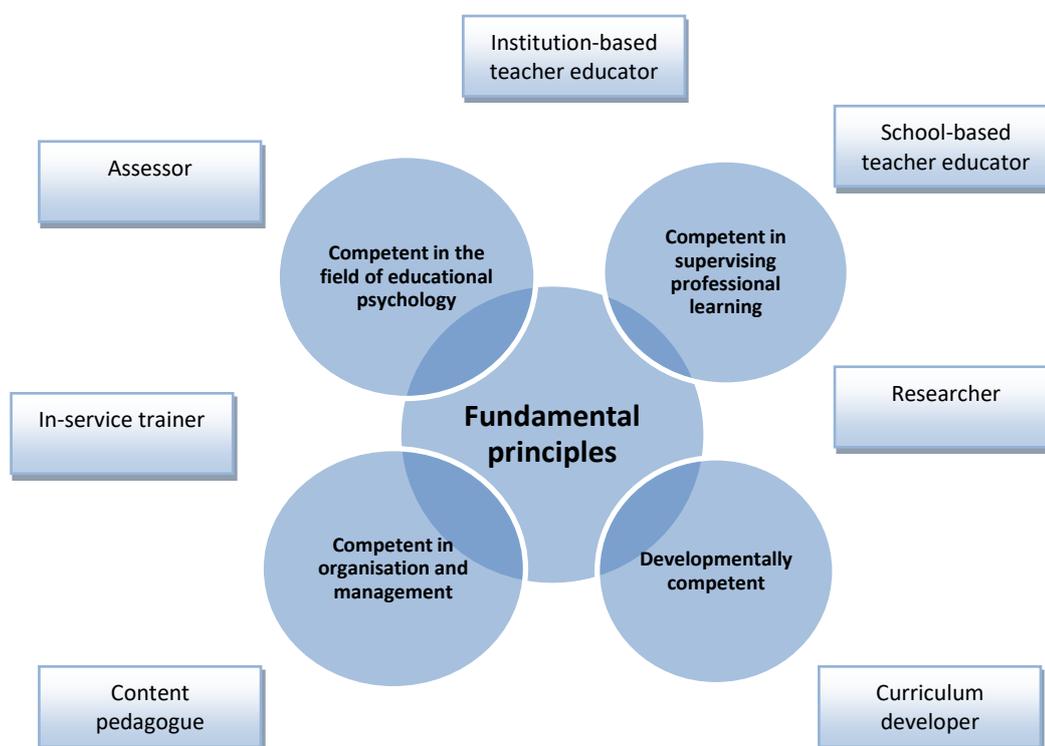
A teacher educator has a questioning attitude. He is informed about ongoing research in his subject domain and has knowledge about relevant research methods. In supervising students doing (practice-led) research, he knows how to strike a fair balance between being supportive and challenging.

A teacher educator is reflective. He reflects on and organises his own development and that of others critically and constructively. He knows his own strengths and weakness as a teacher educator, and can measure his functioning against the competencies formulated in the field of educational pedagogy, supervising professional learning, organization and management, and the steering of one's own development.”

Source: Translated from VELON (Dutch Association for Teacher Educators) (2012_[7]), *Professional Standard for Teacher Educators (Appendix)*, VELON (Dutch Association for Teacher Educators), <http://www.lerarenopleider.nl/velon/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Appendix-Professional-Standard.pdf>.

Four competency areas illustrate the skills and practices of effective teacher educators (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Figure 1. The four competency areas for teacher educators from the Dutch Professional Standard for Teacher Educators



Source: Based on VELON (Dutch Association for Teacher Educators) (2012^[7]), *Professional Standard for Teacher Educators (Appendix)*, VELON (Dutch Association for Teacher Educators), <http://www.lerarenopleider.nl/velon/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Appendix-Professional-Standard.pdf>.

All of the four competency areas include a description, three or four sub-areas, a number of illustrative behavioural indicators, and links to the knowledge base for teacher educators (VELON, 2014^[8]).

Knowledge base for teacher educators

The knowledge base for teacher educators consists of shared knowledge (knowledge a team or community should have) and distributed knowledge (knowledge each member should have) (Shulman and Shulman, 2004^[9]). Inspired by the notion that the knowledge base of a profession is not static and requires continuous innovation, the first version of the knowledge base for teacher educators dates from 2012, when the Dutch Association of Teacher Educators (VELON), administering the knowledge base for teacher educators, revised the Standard.

The VELON (2014, p. 2^[8]) defines the knowledge base of teacher educators as follows:

“... a structured and easily accessible collection of knowledge of the professional community. It includes theoretical, pedagogical and practical knowledge, and offers teacher educators the opportunity to confirm, interconnect, share and develop their professional knowledge, vision, motivation and practices.”

The renewed and updated knowledge base builds on the 2012 version and now covers several new areas:

- the teacher educator
- policy and organisation
- teaching methodology: how do we train teachers?
- course content and subject methodology
- school-based teacher education
- research and teacher educators
- training in teacher education

Why is it a strength?

The OECD Review Team in its review of the Netherlands from 6-10 March 2017 concluded that the Standard is a strength in that it:

- *Is part of a number of frameworks that set system-wide standards for quality.* The Standard, and a number of other frameworks – such as the knowledge bases for initial teacher education and teacher educators – help set system-wide expectations for the base level of what teachers and teacher educators need to know and be able to do. There is a large amount of support for the frameworks as they are developed and owned by teacher educators.

How could it be improved?

The OECD Review Team also noted there could be:

- *More professional development and feedback opportunities for teacher educators.* The availability of professional development opportunities for university and school-based teacher educators is mixed, with not all receiving initial induction training or ongoing support and feedback for their work. There are opportunities to provide teacher educators with more structured professional development and feedback aligned with the Standard.

For more information

- Binks-Cantrell, E. et al. (2012), “Peter effect in the preparation of reading teachers”, *Scientific Studies of Reading*, Vol. 16/6, pp. 526-536, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2011.601434>. [1]
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2003), “Learning and unlearning: The education of teacher educators”, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 19/1, pp. 5-28, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(02\)00091-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(02)00091-4). [2]
- Dutch Association for Teacher Educators (2018), *About VELON*, <http://www.lerarenopleider.nl/velon/about-velon/> (accessed on 22 May 2018). [6]
- European Commission (2013), *Supporting Teacher Educators for Better Learning Outcomes*, European Commission, Brussels, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/school/doc/support-teacher-educators_en.pdf. [3]

-
- Melief, K., M. Van Rijswijk and A. Tigchelaar (2012), *Accounting for the Dutch Professional Standard of Teacher Educators*, <http://www.lerarenopleider.nl/velon/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Dutch-Professional-Standard-of-Teacher-Educators.pdf>. [5]
- Shulman, L. and J. Shulman (2004), “How and what teachers learn: A shifting perspective”, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 36/2, pp. 257-271, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0022027032000148298>. [9]
- Snoek, M., A. Swennen and M. van der Klink (2011), “The quality of teacher educators in the European policy debate: Actions and measures to improve the professionalism of teacher educators”, *Professional Development in Education*, Vol. 37/5, pp. 651-664, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2011.616095>. [4]
- VELON (2014), *Knowledge-base Theoretical Framework*, <http://www.lerarenopleider.nl/velon/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Knowledge-base.pdf>. [8]
- VELON (Dutch Association for Teacher Educators) (2012), *Professional Standard for Teacher Educators (Appendix)*, VELON (Dutch Association for Teacher Educators), <http://www.lerarenopleider.nl/velon/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Appendix-Professional-Standard.pdf>. [7]