Projects   (W3-12)
Information Technology in the Netherlands: From Project Initiation to Total School Commitment

Ton Diepeveen and Pieter Hogenbirk
PRINT (Project for the Implementation of New Technologies

Betty Collis and Gerrit Carleer
University of Twente

Pieter de Vries
University of Leiden

Tineke Zeelenberg and Bram van Weering
SLO (National Institute for Curriculum Development)

Abstract
In this session we will examine the process of implementation of technologies into school practice in The Netherlands. In particular, we focus on the progression from treating technology as a "special project" to the position in which technology becomes integrated into the everyday life of the school and teacher. We examine this progression from different perspectives: that of the national leadership to stimulate new technologies in education, that of the educational software developer, that of the teacher trainer, that of the curriculum developer, and a perspective involving one of the new technologies itself– telecommunications. In each case we see an evolution from well-planned central support of a "special project" toward system–wide integration and school-based initiatives. The examples we consider include those mentioned briefly in the Spotlight Session, "Going Dutch, By Satellite." In that session, the intention was simply to give an overview of activities in The Netherlands. The purpose of this session is to look more reflectively on the evolution of our experiences.

The Perspectives

1. National Leadership
In the Netherlands we have had a number of centrally established initiatives for the national stimulation of the use of information technology in Dutch education. The PRINT Project (1989-1992) is a four-year initiative of this sort. We will look briefly at the strengths of a national stimulation project, and will also discuss why the balance in The Netherlands is now moving toward school based partnerships and initiatives. As a special example of the projects being executed under the PRINT framework, we will look more closely at the "Proefstation" project, involving a four-year examination of what happens throughout a school when support is given to the integration of technology in every aspect of school practice.

2. Software Developers
Educational software development has been subsidized by the government in The Netherlands, but always with an orientation to partnerships with the educational community and commercial educational publishers. The PRINT and the POCO Project are large-scale national software development projects of this sort. We will look at the strategies that are evolving for the transition between nationally supported projects such as POCO and PRINT and a situation oriented among school-based demand with respect to the development and distribution of educational software.

3. Teacher Trainers
In The Netherlands the contents and funding of in-service training will, in the near future, no longer be centrally led and managed, but will be funded and determined in contents by the special needs of schools. On the basis of a total school commitment schools will establish their own policy. As a result the in-service training institutes have to face an increasing demand for more flexible education and new forms of training. We will look briefly at the strategies that are evolving to meet the special demands of school-based partnerships and initiatives.

4. Curriculum Developers

In The Netherlands there is a National Institute for Curriculum Development (the SLO) which has been involved in many of the national initiatives to stimulate the use of technology in education. How to integrate this use within the curriculums of "traditional" subjects is a major focus of the work of the SLO in this area. We will briefly examine the evolution of "technology as a special project" to "technology integrated within traditional curriculums" from the perspective of professional curriculum developers, with "COMPUTERJOURNAAL" as a particular example.

5. Technology Specialists

Finally, it is interesting to look at the evolution of technology use from special project to total school integration from the perspective of specialists in a particular technology itself. Our example here will be tlecommunicaitons. We will examine the evolution of telecommunications use in The Netherlands, from isolated special short-term initiatives to provision for ongoing support and service. Examples from earlier projects as well as current practice relative to the ongoing support of teachers through special resources for teachers, both off-line and on-line, will be discussed.

Conclusion

From each of the above perspectives, we will note the challenges of making the transition between the "special project" approach for stimulating the use of new technologies in education toward that of nurturing technology integration within ongoing practice. We note particulary the implications of moving toward an integrated approach centered on the needs and commitment of the school itself—what does this evolution mean in terms of national leadership, software development, teacher training, curriculum development, and new technologies such as telecommunications (whose effective use requires a significant prior investment in resource/infrastructure development and support) when more and more initiative is given to schools? What are the new opportunities and how can we apply what we have learned from the "special project" approach to an integrated, school-centered orientation for new technologies in education?