

Evaluation Trends in Dutch Curriculum Research and Development

Jan van den Akker

University of Twente, the Netherlands

Curriculum evaluation is a many-sided concept. It links two comprehensive and well-established domains in the field of education, illustrated by the fact that each has its own separate volume of *The International Encyclopedia of Education* (Lewy, 1990; Walberg & Haertel, 1990). The many sides of curriculum evaluation are also reflected by the multitude of curriculum evaluation models presented in the literature (see Alkin, 1994, for a recent overview).

This presentation on curriculum evaluation in The Netherlands will focus on evaluation approaches and results in both curriculum research and professional curriculum development practices. Since both constitutive domains, "curriculum" and "evaluation", are somewhat notorious for their elusiveness and the gap between rhetoric and reality, special attention will be paid to the user perspective of curriculum evaluation.

We will concentrate our analysis on trends and findings in the last decade. We will refrain from dealing extensively with general, less curriculum-specific forms of educational evaluation, like large-scale (inter)national assessment studies of student achievements. However, we will broaden the curriculum scope by including evaluation of less traditional objects and contexts, e.g. evaluation of courseware, and evaluation of training in business and industry.

The review starts with a brief description of the organizational scenery of curriculum evaluation in The Netherlands, distinguishing various aims and contexts of evaluation. Next, we will provide an overview of curriculum evaluation research in the last decade, discussing the methods and outcomes of these studies. In this overview we will distinguish between evaluation research on products from generic curriculum development projects and evaluative findings from other curriculum research. Then, we will pay attention to evaluation practices in different professional development contexts. The article will be closed by some discussion on recent trends and future challenges for curriculum evaluation.

J.J.H. van den Akker
 University of Twente
 Faculty of Educational Science and Technology
 P.O. Box 217
 7500 AE Enschede
 The Netherlands

Phone: 053- 893551

Fax: 053 - 329136