

ARTS AND  
CULTURAL  
EDUCATION

 **Quality Now!**

TO THE  
NEXT LEVEL

12-14 February 2014  
Amsterdam

# Conference report

## Quality Now! Inspiring and instructive

Over 150 people from 26 European countries gathered in the heart of Amsterdam: policymakers and professionals from various institutions (ministries, cultural organisations, inspectorates, universities, schools). Not all of them were equally fluent in English, but they were united in a common aim: to improve the quality of arts and cultural education in primary schools and to give it a firm place in the curriculum. *Quality Now!* was the fitting title of the conference organised by the Netherlands' Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the City of Amsterdam, the Cultural Participation Fund (FCP) and the National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA).

The setting for the conference was *De Bazel*, a former bank building which now houses Amsterdam's city archives, complete with an exhibition space, a conference centre and a range of other facilities. It provided exactly the right ambiance for a conference on the importance and quality of arts and cultural education.

Between the official opening by Queen Máxima, who treated those assembled to the first four bars of a song, and the festive finale by a group of traditional Amsterdam musicians who had everyone singing along, the conference goers took part in a demanding programme of lectures and workshops. The organisers' intention of facilitating an open exchange of knowledge and experiences about good and bad practices proved successful. The participants connected with one another, exchanged phone numbers, business cards and e-mail addresses, and made arrangements to stay in touch and meet again. "This is such a great experience!" said one participant from Scotland. "Hearing everyone talk about how they tackle things and the issues they encounter is really instructive."



# Conference Programme

## Thursday 13 February

- 09.30 Opening**  
Chairman Thijs Adams, Her Majesty Queen Máxima and Jet Bussemaker, Minister of Education, Culture and Science
- 10.00 Keynote Cultural Education for the Future: a policy vision**  
Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin, OECD
- 11.30 Workshops (including lunch)**
1. The Curriculum: art disciplines or subject integration
  2. The Curriculum: objectives and outcomes
  3. Expertise of the Teachers: initial training and professional development
  4. Expertise of the Teachers: contributions from the cultural infrastructure
- 15.30 Keynote Objectives and outcome of Cultural Education**  
Ernst Wagner, Institute for School Quality and Research in Education (Munich)
- 16.30 Presentation of cultural education policy Amsterdam**  
Carolien Gehrels, elderperson municipality of Amsterdam
- 17.30 Drinks**
- 18.30 Dinner**  
Welcome by Marjan Hammersma, Director-General of Culture and Media at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

## Friday 14 February

- 09.30 Opening**  
Chairman Thijs Adams, Ocker van Munster, National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA) and Jan Jaap Knol, Cultural Participation Fund (FCP)
- 10.00 Keynote Quality Guidance: the Role of National Governments and the EU**  
Marc Vermeulen, TiasNimbas
- 11.30 Workshops (including lunch)**
1. The Curriculum: art disciplines or subject integration
  2. The Curriculum: objectives and outcomes
  3. Expertise of the Teachers: initial training and professional development
  4. Expertise of the Teachers: contributions from the cultural infrastructure
- 15.30 Closing session**
- 15.30 Drinks**

# Opening on Thursday

## A royal opening: the precious gift of music



“A truly inspiring subject.” That was how Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands described the theme of the conference. In her opening address, she showed herself to be a fervent advocate of education in culture and the arts, eager to share her passion for music and education: “I have never met a child who does not love music.”

Recognising the importance of giving all children the opportunity to develop their musical talents and inspired by the success of Venezuela’s remarkable El Sistema programme,

Queen Máxima launched the Children Make Music programme three years ago. It offers children more than just musical skills: “Making music with other people involves listening to others and working with others. You have to develop a feel for the rhythm of the group. Behave with discipline. Take good care of a precious instrument. These are all essential skills children have to learn as they develop with music education.” Children also gain a sense of pride and self-confidence when they realise that they can make their own music.

The programme has now achieved national fame and has reached out to thousands of children.

## Dutch ministry: focus on quality

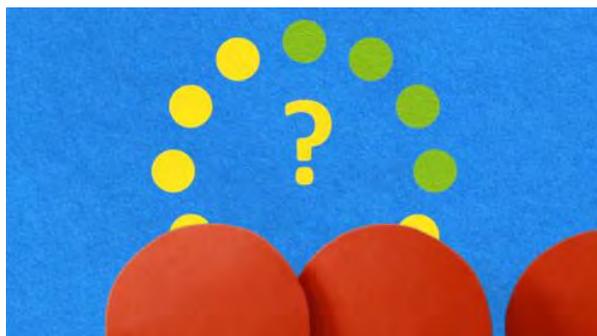


Jet Bussemaker, the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, also spoke in favour of high standards in arts and cultural education: “We don’t know what will trigger the children of today to become the cultural leaders or great artists of tomorrow. What we *can* do is give them the opportunities to discover culture and the arts. And if we can, we must.”

Since 2013, the *quality* of arts and cultural education has been a focal point of Dutch government policy, embodied in the Quality in Cultural Education Programme for the period 2013-2016 and its predecessor the Culture & School programme. For, as the minister argued, nurturing talent and enabling it to flourish cannot be left to chance; it should be the result of deliberate policy. This will not happen overnight, but calls for a long-term approach. For this reason, the ministry has joined the Primary Education Council, the major municipalities and almost all provinces in signing an administrative agreement in which they commit themselves to the Quality in Cultural Education programme for the next ten years. Dr Bussemaker called for patience, but also for vigilance, reminding us that “bad cultural education is worse than none at all”. She expressed the wish that every participant in the conference would take home at least two good ideas for the improvement of education.

## Why, what and how?

The opening session concluded with an animated film (PAK Productions 2014) which raised a number of questions about the content and development of arts and cultural education. Does the lesson centre on the artistic product or the artistic process? How much time is devoted to the subject? Is two hours a week enough? Who determines that? And how can you assess the products of a child's artistic expression? What effects are we out to achieve? "Multiple questions, multiple answers" was the bottom line of the film. Chairman Thye Adams took this approach a few steps further: "We need to find answers to the why, what and how of arts and cultural education. The why is a political-philosophical question; the what and how are educational matters. In short, there is plenty to fuel discussion for a two-day conference."



# Keynote by Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin

## The effects of arts and cultural education



In the first keynote speech, Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin\* highlighted the conclusions of the OECD report *Art for art's sake?* The central question for the OECD is whether and to what extent arts and cultural education can contribute to innovation and the acquisition of 21st century skills. Research shows that competencies such as presenting new ideas, analytical thinking and new knowledge are becoming increasingly important for employees.

This OECD review of more than sixty

years of research from eleven countries looked at the effects of arts and cultural education on three types of skills: cognitive skills (verbal, maths, spatial-visual) skills in thinking and creativity (such as curiosity and problem solving) and behavioural and social skills (such as self-confidence, motivation and empathy). Plenty of claims have been made about the impact of arts and cultural education, but there is hardly any evidence to support them. While several studies do show numerous correlations between arts education and pupils' academic performance, causal relations have rarely been observed.

## Effects found

There are some positive exceptions, one being music education, which has been shown to have a positive effect on IQ and academic performance. This is probably because playing music relies on behavioural skills such as perseverance, practice and patience – characteristics that are conducive to learning in other areas. Music education also trains the ability to listen to sounds and is therefore a good precursor for learning foreign languages. Contrary to popular belief, however, there is no correlation between music education and performance in mathematics.

Classical drama classes encourage skills in reading and writing. "An important message for school leaders who want to improve their PISA scores," Vincent-Lancrin argued. "Just do it!" Lessons in dance promote visual and spatial skills, while the visual arts are conducive to scientific observation.

Hardly any research has been done into the relationship between arts and cultural education and critical thinking and creativity, while no firm conclusions can be drawn from research into social and behavioural skills, except that theatre education improves empathy and perspective taking.

## Renewal

The big question is therefore: why arts and cultural education? "For the sake of art itself and for the possible collateral benefits," was Vincent-Lancrin's answer. You learn to hear better by making music, you gain better social skills by taking part in theatre and by dancing you practice your visual and spatial skills. Moreover, graduates from the arts sector make a higher than average contribution to innovation.

A question from the audience as to whether the quality of arts and cultural education matters, was met by Vincent-Lancrin with a resounding "yes". "Good cultural education is more effective than poor cultural education." For example, explicit teaching emerges as good pedagogy: "If a teacher is less explicit about the goals of art classes, there are fewer effects."

Arts and cultural education can also serve the purpose of school renewal. Vincent-Lancrin mentions SOTA, Singapore's School of the Arts, as a prime example, along with creative partnerships in various countries. Through the arts, schools can realise a different pedagogical climate in which students and teachers feel more comfortable and motivated. Vincent-Lancrin therefore concludes with the words: "Art for art's sake, yes, but there are crossing paths with other objectives."

\* Stephan Vincent-Lancrin is a senior analyst and project manager at the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI, Directorate for Education and Skills). Along with Ellen Winner and Thalia Goldstein, he is co-author of the review study *Art for art's sake? The impact of arts education* (OECD/CERI, 2013).

# Workshop 1 The curriculum: integration or segregation?

## Introduction: three possible models

Do the arts and cultural subjects serve an overarching purpose in relation to other areas of the curriculum? If so, should the various art forms be integrated into the general curriculum and how far-reaching should any such integration be? In his introduction, Lode Vermeersch (University of Leuven) posed these questions and was quick to point out that clear final answers have yet to be found. They are questions that reflect the worries of practitioners and policy makers about the role, place and reputation of arts and culture in the general curriculum.

Vermeersch presented three different ways of shaping a curriculum for arts and culture. The first model sees all art forms as distinctive, often separate areas in the curriculum. In this approach there is little scope for cross-curricular work. It is built on the idea that art forms contain important domain-specific knowledge. This view is firmly defended by specialist arts teachers. Secondly, there is the partly integrated curriculum model, based on the idea that art forms should not be viewed and studied separately simply because they belong together in a broader 'arts' area. The third model is the fully integrated curriculum, based on the idea that arts and culture can and should be woven into the curriculum wherever and whenever possible. We still lack fundamental empirical research on which curriculum model is the most efficient. Nevertheless, Vermeersch has noticed that in today's scientific literature, arguments in favour of an integrated curriculum predominate. He argues that this is "probably because a lot of countries are in the process of narrowing their curriculum".

Before choosing one model or another, it is important to reflect on the ultimate goals for arts and cultural education in primary education and on the question of how things are best taught. Vermeersch is upfront about stating his position: "Primary education needs a more integrative pedagogy with teachers making meaningful connections between different subjects, but without making the arts a mere 'servant to other subjects' such as history and social studies."

## Discussion: start with good teachers

Most participants in the discussion agreed with Vermeersch and favoured the fully integrated curriculum, despite there being a lack of clarity about what form it should take. The development of the child has to be the central focal point. Before developing curriculums, it is essential to think about what children need and their development into adults, and then to translate this into aims and goals within a curriculum. It is important to take a holistic view of the development of the child, and not simply to look at teaching skills and methods.

All participants stressed the importance of a good mindset and well qualified teachers. The professional development of teachers is one of the key factors that will help to integrate arts and culture into daily practice within schools. As Eija Kauppinnen (Sweden) puts it: "Our strength is that teachers have a lot of freedom, and they are well-trained. So that's part of the success."





In addition to pedagogical and didactic skills, a number of other skills were defined as necessary: self-confidence, eagerness to solve problems, creativity, open-mindedness and the ability to collaborate with others. The participants presented several ideas to stimulate the further professional development of teachers, including tandem teaching, peer education and train-the-teacher courses. "I think the key word is freedom," Susan Coles (United Kingdom) said. "If a school has a good set of

teachers, they will share their knowledge."

Every country has its own specific size of curriculum, based on both the aims and goals for the child and the skills and needs of the teachers. There is no international blueprint for the ideal curriculum. The difficult question that every country has to answer for itself is what kind of mix is needed between technical and pedagogical skills and knowledge. This all depends on the vision of what a child needs to learn, a vision that can be defined in many ways. As Lode Vermeersch rightly concluded, "It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it."

# Workshop 2 The curriculum: objectives and outcomes

## Introduction: initiation in the artistic process and artistic thinking

Decisions on the objectives and outcomes of cultural education depend on how we define cultural education, Diederik Schönau (Cito, the Netherlands) pointed out in his introduction. He referred to the definition provided by Barend van Heusden in his research project *Culture in the Mirror*: cultural education as the unique human ability to develop “cultural self-consciousness”. Human beings use the four basic intellectual skills – perception, imagination, conceptualisation and analysis – to reflect on their own behaviour, understanding and existence. According to Van Heusden these forms of self-reflection should serve as the content of cultural education. Schönau argued that this would involve redesigning education and introducing cultural education as part of all school subjects or as a kind of philosophical meta-subject. He believes it would be more relevant, effective and challenging to limit cultural education to the domain of activities that are connected to artistic behaviour: “the good old concept of arts education”. The domain of art is unique in terms of the ways of thinking needed to communicate personal, social or functional meaning using forms that express and support this meaning through their perceptual characteristics: this is the essence of “artistic thinking”. As objectives of arts education, Schönau mentioned the skills needed to *make* works of art, to *appreciate* works of art and to *understand* works of art as a socially and historically based process and product.

In terms of outcomes, the arts subjects should give all students the opportunity to learn these skills. Pride of place should therefore be given to the *processes* of learning. All students should have the opportunity to gain direct experience of the art-making process in as many disciplines as possible. But as soon as students find a particular element for which they have a talent and a passion, they should be given the freedom to specialise. Schönau argues that “This will make the artistic learning process more relevant and more effective.”

Assessment should concentrate on this learning process and the progress made in developing these skills. It’s not the products that should be assessed, but the learning processes that have led to these products.



## Discussion: a multitude of questions, few answers

Several participants lingered on the precise objectives of cultural education. Adri de Vugt (the Netherlands) wondered: “Why put so much emphasis on creativity and performance? Can’t people be creative in any discipline: sports, for example?” Karel Desloovere (Belgium) stated: “We don’t want all children to become professional artists. We want them to use artistic skills in everyday life.” Most participants were convinced that the objective of cultural education is to achieve literacy in a range of artistic disciplines, in relationship to heritage and media.

Is it necessary to make art, in order to experience and understand it? In Finland they think making, experiencing and understanding all overlap. Schönau thinks pupils should develop a repertoire by making and performing art – not only talking about it – and in doing so, learn and experience that art is a way to give form to meaning. The best way to teach children how art works is to give them a ‘wow’ experience. The child itself should be the starting point, says Carla de Koning (Dutch ministry): some learn by doing, others by experiencing. Another issue discussed was the question of who gets to decide the curriculum. Should schools and teachers be autonomous, should it be up to the state to decide and define, or is there a middle way?

With regard to outcomes, the central question is: what should we assess and how? Most participants agreed with Schönau that it’s not the product but self-reflection on the learning process that is essential. However, that poses its own set of problems when it comes to defining standards and awarding marks.



# Workshop 3: Should the teacher be a generalist or a specialist?

## Introduction: Finland as a case study

Seija Kairavuori worked as a visual arts teacher for many years and is now a teacher educator and researcher at the University of Helsinki. In her introduction, she explained that Finnish primary school teachers are trained to teach arts classes alongside other subjects. Finland has a national curriculum which includes a range of compulsory subjects under the heading arts and skills: visual arts, music, crafts (textile and technical work), physical education (gymnastics and dance) and home economics (wellbeing, health), each with their own content and learning objectives.



With 20% of the curriculum reserved for arts and skills, the Finnish education system appears to be a shining example compared to many other countries. However, Kairavuori does have some concerns. Until the end of sixth grade (when children are aged 12), generalists provide arts and skills education, with specialist subject teachers taking over from grade seven. Kairavuori has picked up on tensions within the system: “The subject teachers are concerned about the quality of education in the first years of learning, while the generalists are concerned about their ability to teach arts and skills.”

All student teachers are required to take a multidisciplinary module containing 28 hours for each compulsory subject within the field of arts and skills. That is not enough for substantial training in the actual subjects, which is why their professional training focuses on subject-specific teaching methods and thinking about relevant teaching objectives. Kairavuori illustrated this approach, taking the visual arts as her example. Students first discuss the question of the identity of visual arts and the points that they wish to highlight in this field. “In the past, the key idea was self-expression, but now it’s all about visual culture. The didactic approach depends on the key idea.”

## Discussion: how do we ensure quality in the classroom?

Alan Weisdorf of the Danish Ministry of Education gave an initial reaction to the Finnish example. He revealed that Denmark is opting for a new system in which all subjects are taught exclusively by specialist teachers, in primary schools as well as secondary schools. During their professional training at the university, student teachers specialize in three to four subjects (120-140 credits for theory and 30 credits for practical training). If they wish, they can also take modules at a music conservatory or another academy of the arts. “The reason for this change is, of course, PISA.”

Are subject teachers really necessary to ensure the provision of a high standard of arts and cultural education? Or is a generalist/specialist mix the ideal solution? What minimum requirements should teachers meet? And what should they be getting across to their students? These turn out to be the most pressing questions for the participants in the workshop. In addition, the participants took full advantage of the opportunity to hear from one another how these issues are tackled in various countries. For instance, Austrian teachers are restricted by minimal school

hours (until the age of ten, many pupils only attend school in the morning), while Scottish teachers are struggling to cope with a 35-hour school week that offers little time to engage in serious curriculum development. Lithuania employs the services of professional artists to teach music and visual arts. “But tragically, this means that no attention can be paid to drama and dance,” Ruta Pileckaite told the workshop. She was pleased to hear about the Finnish example of making dance part of physical education.



The participants came up with a minimum package for generalists: basic theoretical knowledge, knowledge of the artistic development of children, basic technical skills, self-reflection and, perhaps most importantly, a positive attitude towards arts and culture. Teachers do not have to be artists in their own right; the pedagogical connection is more important. “Communicating a passion for the arts is the most important thing,” said Tomás Boros (University of Bratislava). “That can only

happen if you are open minded and show pupils what you are passionate about yourself.”

The conclusion on both Thursday and Friday was that generalists form the foundation of arts and cultural education in primary schools, with specialists (artists) as an important and necessary addition. “The generalist can learn from the specialist,” argued Jan Jaap Knol of the Cultural Participation Fund, “so the deployment of specialists is a form of professionalisation.” It is therefore sensible to make this happen at school level and to ensure that there is a diverse and talented team, instead of asking the impossible of individual teachers.

YouTube tip: [itsmyfuture](#) (video produced by Education Scotland)

A song written and performed by children and young people from across Scotland about their hopes and expectations for the future, and what they want from education to help them achieve these goals.

# Workshop 4 Cooperation between teachers and cultural providers

## Introduction: an example from Boston



How can cultural providers and schools work together to improve the quality of arts education in primary schools? In her introduction, Dennie Palmer Wolf presented an inspiring example from the United States: Collaborative Action Research on Quality in the city of Boston. In this network, schools and cultural providers develop tools, analyse the resulting data and raise issues for improving the practice of arts education inside and outside schools. The participants in the network are teachers,

teaching artists from cultural providers, researchers and administrators.

A major part of the research takes the form of school visits by teams of representatives from the partners. At each visit two dimensions of quality are assessed: (1) school infrastructure (e.g. facilities and budget, exhibitions and performance) and (2) teaching and learning (e.g. peer-to-peer collaboration and assessment/guidance). The visits are designed to capture as many aspects of arts learning as possible, for example by observing classroom interactions, looking at pupils' work and holding interviews with the school principal. Prior to the visits, teams are trained in observational skills. Based on the observations made and a data summary, the teams search for patterns, raise issues and make recommendations for improving practice at the level of the individual teacher, the school, the district and the cultural institutions.

This project diminishes the separation between arts educators and cultural partners in work at schools. "Teachers and cultural partners have developed a common language for quality," Palmer Wolf explained. Other results are a professional network within each arts discipline and a system for professional development, both of which now include cultural partners.

## Discussion: conditions for a robust partnership

Most of the participants were inspired by the Boston case, due to its sense of joint ownership and its strong connection with educational practice. They recognised the importance of a common language, a common ground, which schools and partners in Boston developed by formulating the dimensions of quality.

According to the majority of participants, a common language is an important condition for good partnerships. Without it cultural institutions will be something of an alien force in schools. Willem Smit (Muziekschool Amsterdam) feels that "The development of this common language should start as early as possible, if it is to become a natural language." In the Netherlands and Germany, future artists and teachers are trained together. They develop an openness in their communication which can prove very useful for the future.

Clear and shared goals are also very important for a robust partnership. As a school or a cultural provider, what do you want to contribute to the development of children and how do you plan



to do it? Rolf Witte noted that the Cultural Competency Record developed by the BKJ (Germany) could be a helpful instrument. Other conditions mentioned included equality, interdependence, trust, time, money and focus. Ways in which to build and maintain partnerships (sustainability) were also a major focus for discussion. Cultural providers should ask themselves what they want a school to be like once they have made their contribution. Schools should think about the nature of cul-

tural experiences and how they fit in with school policy. Adri de Vugt (the Netherlands) recommended that “Trainers of future teachers and artists should be aware of the kind of teachers they want to educate. Otherwise it will be ‘art for the artists sake’.” In addition, teachers should be ready to take action, have courage and be willing to develop, although arts education is not always the first area that principals think about in terms of staff development (language and maths are much more important it seems).

A major condition for sustainability is evaluation by all partners: teachers, artists, children and, not to be forgotten, parents.

It is important to keep in mind that the perfect partnership does not exist. Everything depends on local structures, situations and individuals. For policymakers, the challenge is to find ways to support and develop potential growth.

# Keynote by Ernst Wagner

## Seven claims about quality



In Thursday's second keynote speech, Ernst Wagner\* elaborated on the concept of education. He summarised his conclusions in seven claims.

His first claim was that the presence of cultural education in the school curriculum is an indicator of educational quality. It means that education is not merely cognitive: "The balance of approaches realised in schools is an indicator of quality of the system." Good education includes the following four learning dimensions: cognitive-instrumental (e.g.

physics and mathematics), ethical-evaluative (e.g. history and economics), aesthetic-expressive (arts subjects) and constitutive-religious (ethics, philosophy).

In his second claim, Wagner pointed out that language shapes how we think about quality. For example, the German term *Bildung* seems more comprehensive than the Dutch term *onderwijs*. This brings us to Wagner's third claim: it is a good thing that every country has its own curriculum. "As in the EU, we are united in diversity."

## Definitions

Among researchers, there is a consensus about which factors are essential to quality: the quality of resources, management and teachers feature in everyone's top three. Quality of education can be read at three levels: input (aims & resources), the educational process (teaching & learning) and output (results & feedback). "We are seeing an increasing emphasis on output," Wagner noted, citing the importance attached to PISA. However, he went on to emphasize that there are several types of quality (Claim 4).

In any case, there is no such thing as an absolute definition of quality. In formulating his fifth claim, he stated that such a definition "relies on political goals and is necessarily the result of ongoing negotiations". To illustrate his point, he showed images of a room full of Korean children taking an obvious delight in imitating the movements of children on stage. "In Europe, everyone would turn up their noses at this: imitation is not art. But in Korea, it corresponds exactly with expectations about arts education as a gateway to participation." In addition to this Korean socio-political approach to arts education, it is also possible to opt for an educational approach in which personal development is central, or to take an economic approach along the lines of the OECD (arts education as a means of innovation). "Each approach is valuable in its own right, because different circumstances require different answers." As long as, and here comes Wagner's sixth claim, there is transparency on this matter: "Transparency, especially in respect to the overarching goals, is an important quality factor for all educational processes."

## Standards

What exactly is the specific significance of the quality of arts and cultural education? It is clearly a different kind of education to numeracy and literacy. Wagner illustrates this distinction with photographs of children who are dancing, acting and engaged in spatial design. It is all about education in which there are no right or wrong answers, in which children learn through their

senses, in which a balance is struck between form and content, between process and product and between distance and identification.

The European Network Visual Literacy (ENVil) is working on a framework for a curriculum with corresponding standards. Wagner was quick to reassure his audience. “They are not out to create a flavourless hybrid. In developing standards, it is about quality, not uniformity.” This formed the introduction to his seventh claim: “Quality criteria must be translated into good quality standards. They allow you to measure quality as well as just talking about it.”

\* Dr Ernst Wagner works for the UNESCO Chair in Arts and Culture in Education at the Friedrich Alexander Universität in Erlangen-Nuremberg. He also works at the State Institute for School Quality in Munich.

# Presentation by Carolien Gehrels

## Amsterdam: city of culture for every child

*The Allegory of Good and Bad Government* by Lorenzetti. It's one of the favourite paintings of Carolien Gehrels, executive councillor for the City of Amsterdam. As far back as the fourteenth century, Lorenzetti demonstrated that the good governor provides scope for culture. At that time, Amsterdam was little more than a marshy outpost, but diligent collaboration turned it into a beautiful city, one which nowadays generously invests in developing the talent of all its children. In this school year, a Basic Package of Arts and Cultural Education has been introduced so that every child in Amsterdam can receive three hours of cultural education a week throughout their time at primary school: one hour of music, one hour of visual arts or cultural heritage, and one hour that is left up to the choice of school. Carolien Gehrels explains why Amsterdam has made this undertaking: "Cultural education is good not only for the personal development of the child, but it also serves the cohesion in the city."

"That's quite ambitious," comes a comment from the audience. How do you make it happen? According to Gehrels, it's a matter of finding the right focal points. The keys to her approach are commitment, cooperation and taking a bottom-up approach. The Basic Package involves not only the municipality and 250 primary schools (including special needs schools) but also teacher training programmes, cultural institutions and Mocca, the institute that offers schools implementation support. Together they are responsible for the creation of a continuous learning pathway in arts and cultural education.

"What is the role of the general class teacher?" asks a member of the audience. That depends on the school itself, explains Peggy Brandon, the head of Mocca. "But in music our aim is to empower the class teacher. In other disciplines, we are not yet sure what approach we should take."

Paul Collard from the UK, who helped the City of Amsterdam by acting as a visionary arts advisor for innovation in 2011, describes the Amsterdam initiative as a "world class": "No other city in the world has implemented this approach on a similar scale." Gehrels smiles. But she is especially keen not to discourage other cities, especially those with smaller budgets or fewer cultural facilities. "You have to start somewhere. There is always a library, a talented teacher or a music school. Start, think and just do it!"



# Opening on Friday

## How to win over the education sector?

“You've got to start somewhere,” said Jan Jaap Knol on Friday morning, quoting the words of Carolien Gehrels. As the director of the Cultural Participation Fund (FCP), he endeavours to convince as many schools as possible of the importance of arts and cultural education. In tackling this challenge, he sometimes finds it difficult that the FCP, like the National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA), operates from the cultural side of the Dutch Ministry of Education and Culture: “Culture is a push factor, we need more of a pull factor from the Education side of things. We have to convince schools that they need culture in order to give their children a good education,” Knol asserted. LKCA Director Ocker van Munster phrases it a little differently: “In an overloaded curriculum, it is difficult to win a good and permanent place. Although arts subjects are compulsory in primary schools, we need to provide clear answers to



the questions what, how and who? That sounds simple, but if we are in pursuit of quality, these are questions that must be answered.”

Where Van Munster is concerned, greater emphasis should be placed on art and culture as a means of socialisation. In that respect, the new EU working group on Cultural Awareness is a significant development.

Knol had a word of advice for those on the Education side of government: have faith in the professionals in the classrooms.

# Keynote by Marc Vermeulen

## Triangles of quality

In the third and final keynote speech, Marc Vermeulen\* set out to capture the complexities of educational quality in a series of clearly defined triangles. His first proposition was that schools create public value. This makes schools part of a political context that centres on questions about (1) substantial logic (why?), (2) licence (why you?) and (3) operating capacity (how are you going to do it?).

To address the 'why' question, he conjured up a new triangle with possible answers:

due to (1) return on investment, (2) citizenship, or (3) *Bildung*. The answers will vary according to the timing and the national context but Vermeulen is currently observing a shift towards the first position. That shift is roughly keeping pace with another: the shift from (1) civic society as a producer of education through (2) the state towards (3) the market (privatisation).



## The teacher

In this changing context, the teacher is also subject to change. While they used to be seen as believers, people with a vocation, nowadays teachers are increasingly becoming civil servants, people who observe legal rights and obligations. The newest trend is the teacher as "intrapreneur". Vermeulen explains the term: "The civil servant does nothing unless the state forces him to, while the intrapreneur does everything unless the state forbids him to."

The way in which a school or teacher functions is not only linked to government policy, but also to players in the direct vicinity such as fellow professionals, students and parents. Vermeulen argued that teachers should reflect on their professional identity. "Are you primarily a teacher or artist? Do you feel part of the teaching community or the arts community? This has implications for how you think about education and quality."

## Messy reality

Vermeulen was quick to admit: triangles are beautifully geometric but reality is messy. And in future, things are only going to become even less clear. Vermeulen identified uncertainty and complexity as important meta trends. The developments that schools are being compelled to deal with include hedonism (the notion that school should be fun), parents who are more highly educated than the teachers (meritocracy), and transparency. Transparency has a positive ring to it, but as Vermeulen sees it, teachers are increasingly being forced to live in a panopticon. "And if you are a teacher and your every move is being watched, you stop moving." In that sense, transparency can clash with trust building.

However, Vermeulen also warned that the debate about the nature of good teaching goes on forever: "It's a never ending story." Personally, he advises not aiming for effectiveness and effi-

ciency – which he describes as “dead end streets” – but on efficacy, “a concept based around flow and practical wisdom”. He called for the return of the educational craftsman: “The hallmark of a craftsman is that he tries to make each artefact better than the last and that he takes pride in his work. Can we be proud to be a teacher? Yes, we can!”

On the matter of how we can make sure that our ambitions develop in line with reality, Vermeulen gave three tips: “Don’t be naive. Whether you like it or not, you are working in a political reality. Claim your position, don’t leave it to managers. And don’t be shy.”

A delegate from Denmark was keen to know what Vermeulen thought about the evidence-based approach. Vermeulen revealed that he wasn’t exactly enamoured of what he liked to call “the evidence beast”. “It’s a top-down approach and a sign of mistrust. It suggests that it’s the academics who know how things works, and that it’s up to teachers to follow their lead. I’d like to go back to a practice-based society, where value is placed on craftsmanship.”

\* Professor Marc Vermeulen is the Academic Director of the Strategy, Innovation and Governance programme, and the Programme for Management in Education at Tilburg University’s Tias-Nimbas Business School.

# About the conference

In a tradition of European conferences on arts and cultural education, Quality Now! Arts and cultural education to the next level was organised by four Dutch partners: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Cultural Participation Fund, City of Amsterdam, National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts.

Quality Now! Arts and cultural education to the next level

12-14 February 2014

De Bazel Conference Centre, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

[www.qualitynow.eu](http://www.qualitynow.eu)

## Steering Committee

Joost Kuggeleijn (The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)

Fenna van Hout (City of Amsterdam)

Jan Jaap Knol (The Cultural Participation Fund (FCP))

Ocker van Munster (National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA) )

## Project team LKCA

Back row: Michiel de Wit, Marie-José Kommers, Marlies Tal (vice-chair), Piet Hagenaars (chair)

Front row: Marjo van Hoorn, Sanne van den Hoek, Ocker van Munster (director), Désirée de Kreuk

Not in photo: Miriam Schout, Heleen de Groot, Ralf Steenbeek, Kirsten Vogd, Joanet van Hulzen, Vera Meewis



## Conference report

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The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science works to create a smart, skilled and creative environment in the Netherlands. Its mission is to ensure that everyone gets a good education and is prepared for responsibility and independence. The Ministry also wants people to enjoy the arts, and aims to create the right conditions for teachers, artists and researchers to do their work.



Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

The National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA) collects, develops and circulates knowledge on arts and cultural education and amateur arts. This knowledge is shared through numerous forums such as websites, newsletters, publications, knowledge communities, presentations and meetings. The LKCA works jointly or for policy makers, board members and directors, researchers, professionals and volunteers in arts and cultural education and participation.



The Cultural Participation Fund (FCP) aims to promote participation in the arts and culture by encouraging people to take an active part in artistic and cultural activities. In achieving this, we work closely with governments, (private) funds, private partners and research institutions. We provide funding to institutions, stimulate debate, initiate research, and facilitate knowledge-sharing in the field of cultural education, the amateur arts, and popular culture.



Amsterdam is an international city of culture, offering a diverse selection of arts. The covenant of the Standard Package for Art and Cultural Education in primary and special education is considered to be unique to Amsterdam's cultural life. It is a joint long-term investment (10 years) by the central municipality, the city districts and almost every school board. It is designed to invest in good quality cultural education; its goal is to provide up to three hours cultural education per week at every school. With the covenant Amsterdam is focusing on a diverse audience and artists of tomorrow, and aiming for a world standard in cultural education.



Gemeente Amsterdam