

**Research Assessment
Pedagogics and Education Science 2007**

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FOREWORD

This report follows the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2003-2009 for Public Research Organisations (SEP) that was developed by VSNU, KNAW and NWO. The purpose of this report is to present a reliable picture of the results of the research sub-mitted for this review and to give feedback to the internal quality assurance of the organisation concerned.

The review covers the research in the period 2000-2005 in Pedagogics and Education Science at six universities.

The review was commissioned jointly by the Boards of the participating universities.

The review committee was supported by QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities). QANU aims to ensure compliance with SEP in all aspects and to produce independent assessment reports with peer review committees of international experts in the academic fields involved.

QANU wishes to thank the chairperson and members of the Review Committee for their participation in this assessment and for the dedication with which they carried out this task. We also thank the staff of the units under review for their carefully prepared documentation and for their co-operation during the assessment.

Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities

Dr. Jan G.F. Veldhuis
Chairman of the Board

Mr. Chris J. Peels
Director

PREFACE

The research review committee Pedagogics and Education Science had the task to evaluate twenty research programmes and their organisational structure at six universities. This was accomplished in an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation, based on the informal consensus that exists in the international academic community about basic criteria for the quality of research.

As chairman of the review committee I wish to thank the committee members for their valuable contributions, for the time that they were willing to spend, and for the discussions in the committee that gave the added value to this team effort. Last but not least I would also like to thank Roel Bennink of QANU who supported our work with great enthusiasm and patience.

The contributions of the researchers and the staff at the institutes under review cannot be overestimated. The management processes and the dialogues at several organisational levels within the universities are the firm foundation that is needed to carry the load of a review like this.

The complexity of the review process is what makes it interesting and challenging, but also time consuming. Both the preparation stage before the site-visits and the finalisation stage after submitting the draft report took longer than expected, resulting in a delay in the completion of the work. This was in part due to professional circumstances on the part of the committee, such as unforeseen work-overload with regular academic tasks at the home institutions. When the delay became apparent, we considered including the year 2006 to the review period, but for the sake of equal conditions and in line with our terms of reference decided against it (although in some cases information about the output of that year was provided).

The nation-wide evaluation exercise in the Netherlands certainly is crucial for the high and growing international reputation of Dutch researchers in the field of Pedagogics and Education Science, and the overall quality of the research programmes seen impressed all involved in the review process.

The committee hopes and trusts that the faculties, the institutes and the programmes know how to use the feedback that this report is intended to provide in their continuous efforts for transparency, accountability and improvement.

Prof. Dr. Rainer K. Silbereisen
chairman of the review committee

PART I: GENERAL PART

1. The review committee and the review procedures

Scope of the assessment and structure of this report

The Review Committee was asked to perform an assessment of the research institutes and research programmes in the domain of Pedagogics and Education Science. This assessment covers the research in the period 2000-2005. Lists of the publications in the year 2006 were provided, but these were formally not subject of this review.

The Committee's tasks were to assess the quality of the institutes and their research programmes on the basis of the information provided by the institute and through interviews with the management and the research leaders, and to advise how this quality might be improved.

Part I, chapter 1 describes the composition of the Committee, its activities and the procedures followed by the Committee.

Part I, chapter 2 contains general remarks about the state of the art in the domain of Pedagogics and Education Science.

Part II, Chapter 1-6 contains the assessment of the institutes and programmes.

Composition of the Committee

The composition of the Committee was as follows:

- Prof. dr. Rainer Silbereisen, University of Jena, chairman of the committee
- Prof. dr. David Carr, University of Edinburgh
- Prof. dr. Seamus Hegarty, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
- Prof. dr. Jan Van Damme, Catholic University Leuven
- Prof. dr. Detlev Leutner, University of Duisburg-Essen.

A short curriculum vitae of the Committee members is included in Appendix A.

Roel Bennink of the Bureau of QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities) was appointed secretary to the Committee.

Independence

All members of the Committee signed a statement of independence to safeguard that they would assess the quality of the Institutes and research programmes in an unbiased and independent way. Any existing personal or professional relationships between Committee members and programmes under review were reported and discussed in the committee meeting. The Committee concluded that there were no close relations or dependencies and that there was no risk in terms of bias or undue influence.

Data provided to the Committee

The Committee has received detailed documentation consisting of the following parts:

1. Self evaluations of the institutes and programmes, including all the information required by the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP).
2. Copies of three key publications per programme.

Lists of the publications in the year 2006 were provided, but these were formally not subject of this review. In some cases, overviews were provided of the impact factors of the journals in which the articles in the publication lists were published. This is very helpful for the Committee.

Remarks about the data provided

The committee has the impression that the SEP-guidelines for the self-evaluation reports do not yet play a sufficiently prominent role in the internal quality assurance systems of the research institutes and faculties. Distinctions between internal and external authors, between refereed and non-refereed journals, and between high and low impact journals should be sorted out in the normal day-to-day activity of storing and analysing data for internal quality assurance at the faculties. An external review committee should not be confronted with a lack of clarity or consensus on these matters.

The lists of publications per programme not only included publications from researchers in the programme, but sometimes also from external (co)authors. The fact that no distinction was made between internal and external authors, made it difficult for the committee to interpret the publication lists. The committee recommends making at least a typographical distinction in the future.

Procedures followed by the Committee

The Committee proceeded according to the SEP. Prior to the Committee meeting, each programme was assigned to a first and a second reviewer, who formulated a preliminary assessment. The final assessments are based on the documentation provided by the Institutes, the key publications and the interviews with the management and with the leaders of the programmes. The interviews took place on March 7-8 and May 10-12 (see the schedule in Appendix C). Site visits were not conducted. All interviews were held in a central meeting place.

Preceding the interviews, the Committee was briefed by QANU about research assessment according to SEP. On the same day, the Committee discussed the preliminary assessments. For each programme a number of comments and questions were decided upon. The Committee also agreed upon procedural matters and aspects of the assessment. After the interviews the Committee discussed the scores and comments and made draft texts. The texts were finalised through email exchanges. The final version was presented to the Faculties. The comments of the Faculties were discussed in the Committee and led to changes in the report on a number of points. The final report was presented to the Boards of the participating universities and was printed after their formal acceptance of the report.

The Committee used the rating system of the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP). The meaning of the scores is described in Appendix B.

2. General remarks

The Committee had the task to evaluate the research programmes submitted by a number of universities involved in this exercise. The programme reports submitted to the Committee gave information deemed important by the institutions. The Committee also had the opportunity to meet programme leaders, management teams where appropriate, as well as the leadership of the Faculties involved, that is, the Deans and their teams. All meetings were well prepared, the presentations were stimulating, and the ensuing discussions were frank, often going into complex detail. Members of the Committee were able to draw on their own experiences as researchers and academic administrators, gained in various countries and over a long period of time.

Procedure

The Committee took its observations and evaluations of the particular research programmes to be the core of the evaluation document. As a basic model for each programme, the Committee looked at what happened during the reporting period and at research outcomes, taking into consideration any constraints of the programme. The larger picture was also borne in mind in terms of institutional support and guidance at Faculty level. Once the research programmes had been carefully perused, some issues appeared to be common to several of the units studied. Without wanting to tone down concerns or make a success even more impressive, the Committee thought some of these across-unit observations should be shared with the universities. For this reason, the Committee took a deliberate decision not to identify specific cases to which a characteristic refers. Such information can be found in the reports on the individual research programmes (see Part II). In addition, this section of the report is more about general questions arising from the evaluation process than judgments about issues relating to singular cases.

Frameworks

The Committee discussed whether to give an overview of the state-of-the-art in the respective subfields of educational science. At first glance it seemed that such an overview would provide a good backdrop for the report, and would help to put the suggestions into perspective. An overview also seemed appropriate given that most of the reports by the research programmes referred to their (meta-) theoretical background, and also offered opinions on the relevance of their topics to the scientific debate and progress in their particular field. After some thoughts, however, the Committee decided against this plan. Beyond the obvious question of whether the Committee would be qualified to undertake such a task, pragmatic reasons dominated. The research programmes are quite diverse, and even in their entirety they probably do not cover the discipline in any representative fashion. This is not surprising given the principles behind their foundation. In contrast to a training curriculum and the faculty required to deliver it, a research programme is dictated by the likelihood of success in terms of visibility and impact within science and its relevance for society at large.

For these reasons the Committee refrained from writing a review piece, but decided at least to share the view that the programmes taken together seem to reflect the leading biopsychosocial models of human development and education. The core elements are that genetic and cultural factors interact, that individuals play an active role in the negotiation of the issues of development, and that this mutuality refers to all levels of the processes involved, from the molecular level of biological processes to the molar level of behaviour-in-context. The latter itself ranges from the individuals' immediate environment to the larger societal belief systems and institutions. Analyses matched to this complexity require a broad spectrum of methodologies and technologies. Although innovations at the biological end enable remarkable new research

insights, the Committee wants to underscore that analogous innovations are possible, even mandatory, concerning the cultural end, such as multilevel growth curve modelling, CATI-based diary methods, or computerized observation methods

Scope of the programmes

The overall impression was that, in the majority of cases, the reports and presentations of the current evaluation revealed serious attempts to implement the outcomes of the last evaluation. We saw this evinced by many steps taken to overhaul or re-focus existing programmes, and by the introduction of new elements or entire programmes. In particular, the Committee was impressed by the often very smart moves to increase the attractiveness of research programmes by hiring new personnel, and through successful guidelines on how to improve the visibility and impact of the research. This at least implies that the last round of evaluations resulted in suggestions that could be translated into action by the university authorities and the researchers themselves. However, it is also fair to add that there was a high level of variance in the degree and speed with which such changes had been undertaken.

In our view many institutions chose to re-design their organizational structure towards a still clearer distinction between the academic responsibilities within the teaching programmes, and the responsibilities within the research programmes proper. Given the fact that the Committee has members from various countries and with other divisions between teaching and research, a few observations need to be shared. The research programmes are positioned strategically, such that existing (or newly hired) personnel on all levels of seniority and supervisory duties find a good match between research foci likely to receive funding, and qualifications that are required for the teaching part of their position. The Committee often considered whether the research portfolio of the various programmes within an institution was broad enough to represent the disciplines involved, not to speak of the representativeness for the curriculum in the teaching programmes. To give a hypothetical example, early childhood education requires more than just research on attachment development.

More generally speaking, the Committee was concerned that 'education' often had to accept a substantive downsizing in exchange for more 'psychology'-oriented research programmes, probably a reaction to research in the latter field being seen as more empirically-oriented, better organized within competitive research communities, and more visible due to the higher impact of its publication outlets. This may be an exaggeration, but obviously education as a research field in its own right and with its own methodological approaches (hermeneutic and qualitative, including the philosophical, cultural and historical settings) is not always as well served by the research programmes as might be expected. We should add that sometimes a research programme, as such, looked rather narrow compared to its likely competitors. Many branches of the behavioural sciences are currently undergoing transformations towards a more interdisciplinary perspective, particularly concerning neuroscience in general, and various combinations of new methodological approaches (such as FMRA, genetic testing for alleles) with standard psychological assessments and specific topics. Against this backdrop the Committee sometimes found such plans posted in the reports but did not see the necessary resources and collaborations available to make them happen. The eagerness for organizational reform, new position openings, and success-oriented steering of the research programmes sometimes had a somewhat unexpected consequence – the programmes were actually too new to evaluate them properly, and/or those that had been phased out had covered the better part of the reporting period. However, all such newcomer cases were excellent in scope and vision, and therefore deserved the benefit of the doubt anyway.

Management

In order to guarantee the necessary alignment among the programmes of an institution, a clear management structure is needed. In some cases, however, the Committee had the impression that planning and coordination happened in a way that could perhaps be called 'collegial' or, more realistically, no focused management at all. Certainly there are advantages of low key management, especially if participants have known one another for a long period of time, and if the overlap and mutual dependence between the research programmes is limited. In most other instances, however, efficient management requires a clearer structure and in particular a division of roles with regard to the planning, coordination, and evaluation of research topics and concerning how personal and financial resources are to be used. Here again the Committee saw different models, especially concerning how scientific collaborations and PhD students were being allocated to research topics. One example of organisation that particularly impressed the Committee was the so called matrix organization model. Here, a pool of scientists is allocated and re-allocated pending the progress with regard to a (small) number of research foci, with partial overlapping of duties deliberately established so as to improve collaboration and knowledge transfer within the institution. Unfortunately, this is not possible with a larger and more substantively varied number of research foci that have less overlap and synergy.

It is fair to say that in many instances the administrative load seemed to be quite high, especially in cases where there are a small number of distinct research programmes, and each, or almost each, is organized around a central figure that is in charge for most of the writing of research proposals and funding requests. Beyond such perhaps unique cases, however, comments were often made that the administration of the units above the research programme proper could be streamlined and more professionally handled.

Some of the recent programmes had a longer history of transformation towards a true research-oriented endeavour, and in part this also meant the need for the staff to be further qualified. This limited opportunities for new position openings, to the disadvantage of the age structure. This issue actually relates to the bigger picture of generational shift and replacement. An optimal age structure is characterized by excellent personnel at all levels of an academic career, including post-docs and young faculty. This was not always the case.

The relationship between direct funding (first flow) and indirect research funding varied across the universities involved in the evaluation and seemed to be in a state of flux. This raised the question of whether a rate of, for instance, 60:40 or 50:50 should be seen as an adequate guideline, and of how higher stability could be achieved.

PhD training

The Committee observed various models of how PhD students were trained. In part the programmes' membership of the National Research Schools was taken as the guidepost; in part the university had preferred a local solution. The rationale behind taking the latter decision was not clear to the Committee. The Dutch Research Schools represent a measure to improve quality and to guarantee a high level of training relatively independent of the local situation, and as such seems to be successful when compared with the less advantaged situation in other countries. It was also not clear whether the distinction between internal and external PhD students had implications for the nature of the training. In addition, there were quite remarkable differences in the actual length of PhD training.

The number and quality of PhD students also seems to be related to whether the programme and its personnel were involved in a research master curriculum. The Committee did not see a rationale governing such decisions, but want to share the view that the fruition of a research programme is a function of its attraction for students on all levels.

A minor issue seems to be whether cumulative publication-based dissertations should be the rule or not. In the Committee's view, publication-based theses will turn out to be a direct effect of the push for refereed, international publications. The earlier students (and advisors) learn to practice this behaviour the better.

University level strategy

When looking across the research programmes under review, some additional issues of strategy arose in the Committee's discussions. One was whether there is a formal way of harmonizing the various programme priorities among the universities involved. There was a case where a programme had to be terminated because the faculty left for another university and started a similar programme there. Such a result of competition is fine, but when looking at the breadth and depth of the programmes offered in their entirety, it has to be considered whether this reflects the major trends in the international educational sciences, or whether it is more a result of relatively isolated attempts for excellence. Is there a clearing house that would help to identify what might be left out or what needs more investment? The Committee believes in the value of competition, but also wondered about the larger picture.

Another issue refers to the rules according to which the evaluation reports were prepared. In spite of the fact that the issues dealt with were standardized, the information given and in particular its data support differed quite a lot. A case in point is the research infrastructure and technical facilities that were most often mentioned in passing without any detail as to standard or use. Other instances where remarkable differences were seen are related to information on the management processes, and in particular on the issue of the distribution of work and responsibility. To learn that somebody from the faculty spent a minute amount of time within a particular research programme is only acceptable if the organization enables such miniscule contributions to be productive, which is rarely the case. We were concerned that sometimes programmes revealed very many players but that many of these players seemed to lack consistency in their contributions.

The programmes often have advisory boards of their own, and obviously there has been a fruitful collaboration with the researchers. However, the Committee wondered about the optimal scheduling of such board meetings and about the evaluation as performed by this Committee. It might also be asked whether external advisory boards should be mandatory.

In some cases it was felt that programmes were left alone for too long by their university leadership, even in a situation of pressing needs for replacements or enlarged support. The reasons given naturally referred to financial setbacks or to larger organizational restructuring, but nevertheless the time-scale was not really acceptable. If the better part of a reporting period of several years was characterized by uncertainties about the priorities and the larger picture, this is a clear disadvantage.

Conclusion

All of the above observations should be taken as just that – the overall impression of the energy, talent, and vision in these programmes is very positive, in some cases even enthusiastic. If one

takes research output and the publication impact as general indicator of the programmes' excellence, in most cases the Committee was impressed by the amount and level of improvement over the reporting period. This good result occurred in spite of the fact that increasing competition made it more challenging to receive funds proper (second flow) and to maintain funding over longer periods of time. One should also bear in mind that at least the beginning of the reporting period was still characterized by financial problems among higher education institutions. The Committee identified a number of problems at the programme level and concerning their coordination, but we did not see a systemic failure at the higher level, if one disregards the occasional long periods waiting for structural reforms.

PART II: ASSESSMENTS PER INSTITUTE AND PER PROGRAMME

1. University of Amsterdam, SCO-Kohnstamm Institute

1.1. Assessments per institute

Mission & Goals

The mission of the Division for Fundamental Research of the SCO-Kohnstamm Institute is to carry out high quality research in Pedagogy and Education. More specifically, the aim is to analyse and change effects of child rearing, education and child care on normative and atypical psychosocial development of children and youth. Against the backdrop of internationally visible research, the SCO wants to disseminate cutting-edge knowledge with an impact on policy-makers, professionals, and the society at large. The research programs involved address the general mission in an exemplary theory-driven way in a number of fields, and produce the stimulating research environment for its members and the PhD students in particular.

Strategy & Policy

The study of the role of child rearing, education, and child care in psychosocial development of children and youth is accomplished against the backdrop of an integrative bio-ecological meta-model that brings together biological (e.g. genetic endowments) and ecological (e.g. changing institutional settings) conditions in a multi-level fashion. Given the current societal change that affects traditional settings of education and development, such as the emergence of new family forms or the growing share of migrant families of non-western background, a systematic comparative perspective characterizes much of the research. The investigation of the developmental processes is accomplished by various designs (experimental, prospective-longitudinal etc.) and various assessment methods (from brain mapping to psychometric tests). The research is obviously not only descriptive, prognosis-related and explanatory, but also addresses the change of sub-optimal developmental pathways via intervention, thereby providing particularly policy-relevant information and causal evidence for basic research questions.

In order to optimize the international visibility and viability, high standards have been established in the hiring of professors (they all need to fulfil the productivity criteria of Dutch National Research Schools in their field) and a wide range of opportunities for international exchange is provided (e.g. sabbaticals for international research professors). The productivity is regularly assessed, in general following criteria similar to the Standard Evaluation Protocol of the current evaluation. As a consequence, the research staff became more homogenous in terms of quality and thus collaboration across the four research fields improved.

The last assessment before the current one resulted in an average score of 4 (maximum score 5) for the research programs addressed.

Leadership

The SCO is part of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences and headed by a Director who is advised by the Steering Committee comprised of the four research program Heads and the Head of the Department. Each research program consists in principle of a full professor, an associate professor, one or two assistant professors, and four to six non-tenured staff (post-docs, PhDs). There are several Chairs who also contribute to the groups.

During the reporting period the SCO Division of Basic Research could count on between 21

and 27 fte, among them between about 4 and 7 fte tenured staff. Concerning tenured staff, a clear declining trend can be observed, particularly on the full professor level.

The leadership style is open and clearly structured by the aims, be it on the strategic level for the entire SCO or on the level of the research programs and PhD theses. Evaluations take place against the achievement of plans decided upon conjointly. Teamwork is strongly encouraged, and concerning PhD theses co-supervision is a must.

Resources, Funding Policy & Facilities

Concerning research, noteworthy assets are a well-maintained computer network with access to statistical software, online literature search, and important data bases. Further, there is a video lab available run by experts in the electronic analysis of interaction data. Both main supports offer training for students. Further facilities are accessible on a cooperative basis, such as labs for brain activity research.

The funding for fundamental research totals about 1.9 million Euro in 2005 (lowest 1.4 in 2000 and highest 2.1 in 2003), of which about 80% represent direct funding from the university budget (first flow). In 2005 16% originated in research grants from institutions such as NWO (second flow). There was an increase over the years concerning this type of funding. Contract research played a minimal role (third flow). The contributions of the research programs are rather equally distributed.

Academic Reputation

The SCO aims at publishing in refereed international journals whose impact factor reflects the best standards in the respective disciplines. Over the reporting period the number of publications showed a slightly improved upward trend with 34 English language international journal publications in 2005. The overall publication productivity declined however. In the same period about 40 PhD theses were finished with a clear upward trend over the years.

Societal Relevance

The aims and topics of the SCO are of high societal relevance by their very nature, and obviously this is not only restricted to the Basic Research Division. All senior staff members have held positions in national and international advisory boards to policy makers, and they also produced large numbers of handbooks, professional publications and products.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses

The strengths concern the first-rate research in a field of high theoretical and practical relevance, well-managed by the administrative team, and advanced in assessment and statistical methodology. This was accompanied by weaknesses mainly related to budget cuts and a loss of expertise to other universities. Counter offers were not possible financially, and also the academic job market did not allow filling of vacancies with the kind of person sought.

The financial situation should improve in the coming years, particularly due to a change in the allocation model of direct funding that to the advantage of SCO would reflect the growing number of students in the Education Institute and the success in research grants. On the

other hand, this would put higher expectations on ‘grantmanship’¹ and against this backdrop the small size of tenured staff seems to be a problem (in the future 50% is the maximum for direct funding, down from 80% now).

1.2. Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programmes:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
UvA 1: Early childhood education and family support	3.5	2	3	3
UvA 2: Developmental difficulties, child-rearing problems, and integrative childcare	3,5	4	4	3,5
UvA 3: Basic skill acquisition and social-emotional functioning: specific problems and adaptation of instruction	4	3,5	3,5	3
UvA 4: Governance, leadership and schools: relationships and effects	3	3,5	4	3

¹ Grantmanship is the art of acquiring peer-reviewed research funding.

Programme UvA 1, Early childhood education and family support

Programme director	Prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom (till 1-9-2001); interim programme director: dr. F. van Balen
Research staff 2005	0.90 tenured, 5.64 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Good to Very Good
	Productivity: Satisfactory
	Relevance: Good
	Viability: Good

The purpose of the programme is basic research on childrearing, childhood education, and child development, with an emphasis on contributing to the formulation of theories or models on processes involved in childrearing. This is a very broad objective. The framework is developmental-contextualist, and the research projects aim at the study of the person-context interplay. The leadership of the programme was unstable, and currently a senior researcher acts as interim leader. Of the reporting period covered, more than half of the time was characterized by a vacancy due to the promotion to Dean of the past programme leader. From an external perspective, such a long period without a replacement is difficult to understand.

Quality

There are three major research topics. The first refers to child development and childrearing in traditional and non-traditional families. The comparative perspective chosen concerns sibling differences, children conceived by reproductive technologies, ethnic differences, children adopted by gay/lesbian parents, patchwork versus biological families, and the like. This is a large list of topics, and a common denominator in terms of theory is not obvious. The second and third research topics the group is interested in are the effectiveness of family support programmes, and the quality of day care. Again, it is not very clear why these particular topics were chosen. One may ask whether the group also develops family support programmes, and whether the research on day care quality is informed by the huge studies that have been undertaken abroad.

In order not to be misunderstood – this is an impressive list, but it looks as if there is no theoretical rationale behind the exact compilation of research themes. Nevertheless, the group found research grants for work on these topics that all relate to prevalent and pressing societal issues.

Productivity

The share of research grants was on average 21%, and that of contracts 11%, revealing a big variation but no particular trend across time. Direct funding was 67% on average during the reporting period. Given the unsteadiness in leadership this result is actually a positive surprise.

Concerning publications, the share of English language refereed journal articles was about one third on average, corresponding to about 1.5 such articles annually per FTE (full time equivalent). There were only four PhD theses over the reporting period, with one each in 2004 and 2005. These figures reveal an unfavourable contrast to the many research activities and the positions available for PhD students. Presumably there is a problem of guidance.

The members of the group are well reputed in their respective fields, have a publication record in relevant journal outlets, and are often contacted by stakeholders in their field of research.

Nevertheless, when comparing research activities with output, the lack of a critical mass and coherence is prominent.

Relevance

There is no question that the role of the “new demographics” is of great scientific and practical interest. Systematic comparisons of family constellations and care arrangements help to optimize the chances for children’s healthy development, and possibly provide equal opportunities in the long run. All studies and topics qualify as such. What one misses is the theoretical framework that provides more cohesion and thereby a bigger impact.

Viability

The societal problems addressed by the programme will not disappear and new scientific insights are necessary, particularly concerning the growing ethnic diversity in the Netherlands. The main problem for this group that needs an urgent solution is the interim situation concerning leadership. The current leader is a gifted researcher, but the management situation must be overwhelming for one person. When thinking about a solution one should also bear in mind the cohesion of the programme. Some focussing is required and in particular the meta-theoretical orientation needs to be replaced by a sound, empirically testable common model of childrearing processes in diverse contexts.

Summary

The programme faces management problems but nevertheless the output was remarkable against the odds of a difficult situation. Once the leadership issue is resolved a clear focus on the research activities seems necessary.

Programme UvA 2, Developmental difficulties, child-rearing problems, parenting and integrative childcare

Programme director	Prof. dr. M. Deković (till 1-2-2004); Prof. dr. S. Bögels (from 1-2-2006).
Research staff 2005	1.49 tenured, 3.22 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Good to Very good
	Productivity: Very good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Good to Very good

The programme has an exceedingly broad mission: its declared goals cover developmental difficulties, child-rearing problems, parenting and the methodology of data collection in developmental psychopathology. The programme as actualised ranges even more widely, covering topics such as epilepsy, youth crime and sleep patterns, with publication in medical, neurology and criminology journals as well as in education and psychology journals.

The team's defence of their wide portfolio of research is that the problems they study have similar aetiologies and that this allows for both a substantive and a methodological coherence across the diversity of topics. This is persuasive in part only, not least given the relatively small size of the team.

Quality

This programme comprises a strong body of work that covers methodological as well as substantive topics. A number of the papers constitute important contributions to the literature. The programme does lack coherence and seems to travel in quite diverse directions in response to individuals' research interests.

Productivity

There is an impressive, albeit declining, volume of publications, even when account is taken of the fact that UvA staff are minor authors in a number of the publications cited. (There is also the issue that a number of publications are cited whose UvA authors have a very modest engagement with the programme. This would suggest that the programme's productivity is somewhat enhanced by the input of staff time which is external to the programme.)

Relevance

The various strands of this programme have high relevance theoretically, methodologically and practically. It addresses problems of key substantive interest and has a strong focus on methodological and statistical developments. As noted, it is rather diverse, and it is likely that the programme would have enhanced relevance if it were more focussed.

Viability

Programme staffing, research funding and output have been declining over the period under review. The last PhD start was in 2003 (1 candidate) and before that in 1999-2001 (4 candidates). There is considerable strength still in the programme and a new programme director has been appointed. There is also a new infant laboratory which should enhance data collection possibilities. Building up the programme will be a considerable challenge.

Conclusion

This is an ambitious but very diverse programme. It has a good record of achievement but it has contracted on key indicators over the review period. The challenge now is to concentrate on core areas where it can realistically aspire to build up a critical mass of leading-edge research.

Programme UvA 3, Basic skill acquisition and social-emotional functioning: specific problems and adaptation of instruction

Programme director	Prof. dr. A. van der Leij
Research staff 2005	0.85 tenured, 6.9 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good
	Productivity: Good to Very good
	Relevance: Good to Very good
	Viability: Good

This programme is concerned with orthopedagogical science, which overlaps in part with special education as understood in international discourse. It declares two principal foci: the behavioural domains of basic skill acquisition and social-emotional functioning; and instructional modification in favour of students with special educational needs. These are broadly realised in the programme, with a particular emphasis on dyslexia. There is also a strand on instrumentation, encompassing the development and modification of checklists and other measurement tools.

Quality

The programme offers a strong and coherent conceptual base. It is located firmly within the tradition of orthopedagogical science, which has limited currency internationally. It contains much careful and meticulous work, some of it based on longitudinal datasets. This adds to our understanding of the in-child factors that inhibit progress in reading and arithmetic and is to be welcomed on that score. There is also a useful body of work in relation to social-emotional functioning.

Productivity

There have been a good number of publications over the period under review, though UvA authors have a minor role in a substantial number of the publications cited. (There is also the issue that a number of publications are cited whose UvA authors are assigned to the programme for a very small number of days. This would suggest that the programme's productivity is somewhat enhanced by the input of staff time which is external to the programme.) The publication profile is somewhat uneven with the majority of them occurring in two of the six years under review. The publications are generally competent and are workmanlike contributions to the literature. There is a strong PhD programme, with 10 completions over the period.

Relevance

The programme's output contributes well to building up understanding of basic skill acquisition, dyslexia and, though to a lesser extent, social-emotional functioning. Such detailed work is necessary and to be welcomed.

Viability

This is a long running programme but it does face significant threats. Tenured staff input over the period 2002-05 has been less than 1 fte, and it is heavily dependent on doctoral students. The ongoing longitudinal data collection is a valuable resource and should give significant opportunities for the future.

Summary

This is a well established programme with a particular approach to pupils' difficulties in learning and adjustment at school. It faces three significant challenges/opportunities: first, it needs to increase senior staff input so as to provide stronger leadership for the programme and reduce the dependence on doctoral students; secondly, it should balance its portfolio of projects on pupil characteristics with a broader focus on the familial, school-based and other environmental determinants of learning difficulty; this would serve to bring the programme more strongly into the mainstream of research in special educational needs. Thirdly, it must ensure that it maintains its longitudinal data collection and capitalise to the full on the research and analysis opportunities it presents.

Programme UvA 4, Governance, leadership and schools: relationships and effects

Programme director	Prof. dr. P. Sleegers (from 1-4-2004)
Research staff 2005	0.94 tenured, 6.17 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Good
	Productivity: Good to Very Good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Good

This research programme is focused on the impact of governance structures, leadership practices and school conditions on the quality of teaching and student learning. On the one hand, it is a new programme which started in 2004. On the other hand it is a continuation of a programme on educational policy and administration and – to a lesser extent – also of a programme on accessibility, differentiation and effectiveness.

Quality

In a difficult institutional context, the new director was clearly capable to develop a mission and a strategy for an ambitious new programme, focusing on a theoretically fruitful combination of research into administration and leadership on the one hand and research into teaching and learning on the other hand. As for administration and leadership, the capacity of the programme seems to be all right. But as for teaching and student learning, the situation is less clear. Much is expected from a better future integration of a number of affiliate researchers who work – at a high level of quality – on a rather heterogeneous set of topics.

Without clarity on that aspect of the strategy, the argument for more integration of the previous evaluation commission seems to a certain extent still to be valid.

Productivity

Considering the reduction in permanent staff, the productivity is at a good level. As a consequence of a change in the structure of the programme(s) and the management and thanks to the links with a strong Division for Applied Research, many good publications on very different topics have been produced. The number of PhD students and also the number of PhD's has declined temporarily but the level was very good at the end of the evaluation period.

Relevance

Undoubtedly, the work on governance and leadership is important in the international scientific community and relevant for policy and educational practice within the Netherlands. That is also the case for much of the other work which has been done in the different programmes. The relevance could even be higher in case the plan to really combine the research at the policy and the school level with the research at the class level could be realized.

Viability

The reduction of the permanent staff has been substantial. Although the combination of policy/practice/consulting and research can be fruitful, considering the leadership of a research programme as a part-time job can also involve some risks. The increase of research funds and numbers of post-docs and PhD's, and also the endowed chairs which are vacant and/or announced are positive indications for the future. The viability of the ambitious programme will nevertheless only be guaranteed when an investment in research on micro processes will be realized. Of course, making the programme less ambitious is a (less attractive) alternative.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one can say that major steps in a process of change have successfully been taken, but the process has not yet been finalized.

2. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Faculty of Psychology and Education

2.1. Assessments per institute

Mission & Goals

The aim is to achieve extensive knowledge for dissemination and application in the area of Pedagogics and Special Education. More specifically, research is concentrated on normal and atypical development of children and adolescents, and on major institutions involved, such as the family and the school. Its conduct and results should live-up to highest international standards, thereby providing the best possible training for PhD students.

Strategy & Policy

Various instruments are used to accomplish the mission. The main steering instrument is the Faculty and Research Plan. During the reporting period, a major aim was to maintain the strength of the best-rated Department of Philosophy and History of Education and to develop related research programmes. Towards this aim, national and international collaborations were maintained and developed, for example, relationships with the Amsterdam Centre for Child Studies, and with an organization for Child Mental Health. A good deal of collaboration also took place through visiting scholarships abroad.

Most staff members are participants in National Research Schools, and many receive extra benefits from the University for collaborating across Faculties in core areas.

Other instruments for planning and control are the Annual Research Report and a more specific Output Monitor. The expectation (with some exceptions) is that each FTE should produce at least three peer reviewed papers annually, and that these should be published in journals with an impact higher than 0.3. Not to succeed in this regard results in a slight reduction of direct funds. Departments receive a financial bonus for successful grant applications.

Leadership

The Faculty of Psychology and Education comprises four departments, three of which are subject to the current evaluation: Education and Curriculum, Philosophy and History of Education (now one department), and Special Education. Although, in principle, departments can have more than one research programme, one each is presented for the current evaluation. The Heads of Departments also are Directors of research programmes, and it is through the Heads and their full financial and managerial responsibility that first flow direct funding is mainly allocated. The Directors are also responsible for scientific, programme, and academic development.

During the reporting period the three programmes together had between 11 and 15 FTE research staff. Tenured staff was always between 5 and 6 FTEs. The total staff FTEs increased slightly over the years.

Resources, Funding Policy, Facilities

Assets for research concern the usual hardware and software for information retrieval and statistical analyses. An annual subsidy is available from the Central University, usable for new apparatus or to buy time on equipment, such as brain mapping facilities.

Over the years between 73% and 87% of the funding was direct, with no clear trend. Research funds (second flow) amounted to between 2% and 22% with an upward trend. Contracts and other sources made up the rest, revealing a declining trend. The total sum of funding increased from 1.6 to 2.0 million Euro of which 94% went into personal costs.

Each department receives 2 FTEs fixed annually for research, plus a share (based on success in grantmanship) of 3 FTEs, plus support for one PhD annually. Lack of success over a period of several years may reduce the fixed level of FTEs by 10%.

Academic Reputation

The publishing record in refereed journals (though at a discipline-typical low impact of 0.3) was about constant with between 24 and 38 publications per year, without a clear trend. Publications in other journals and book chapters stayed steady and made up more than 60% of the academic publications (the particular role of the Department of Philosophy and History of Education and its typical publications outlets needs to be recognized).

The number of PhD theses per year was between one and five in the reporting period, with a clear upward trend. This corresponds to between two and seven PhD positions, revealing the same trend.

Societal Relevance

The programme participants appear in the media, are members of advisory boards to the government concerning e.g. Child Abuse or Family Counselling, or authored psychometric tests.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses

The three research programmes match well with areas of special emphasis in the university planning and thus enjoyed attention and support. The managerial structure seems to be clear and streamlined, external funding has been achieved with growing success.

This positive view is diminished by the relatively narrow scope of the research programmes that also seem not to produce much synergy. An improvement is expected from the newly founded Amsterdam Graduate School of Psychology and Education. The time needed for finishing a PhD is rather long, and about every fifth does not finish at all. A closer monitoring was begun in 2002 but results will take some time.

The Faculty sees two related threats – a growing pressure for interdisciplinary research that may risk the particular identity of educational research, and the growing competition for external funding of the second flow of money. An in-house measure against these threats would be to broaden the scope of the programmes in education (one on dyslexia is already in the formation phase), and to work on the generational replacement of academic staff. Currently nine of eleven full professors and four of six associate professors are 55+ years old. Likewise, only four

of the seventeen full and associate professors are female (although eight of the ten current PhD students are).

2.2. Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programmes:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
VU 1: Challenges to childrearing relationships: Contributions to developmental psychopathology	3	3	4	4
VU 2: Education, Morality and Religion	4,5	4	5	4
VU 3: Strategic Learning in the Curriculum	4	3	4	3

Programme VU 1: Challenges to childrearing relationships: contributions to developmental psychopathology

Programme director	Prof. dr. C. Schuengel
Research staff 2005	2.53 tenured, 7.07 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Good
	Productivity: Good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Very good

The declared mission of the programme is to contribute to developmental psychopathology by studying caregiving and attachment under conditions of stress, disorder and disability. Attachment theory is declared to be the principal theoretical tool which informs and integrates the different research studies carried out. Three topics have been put forward to illustrate the programme in the period under review: attachment to non-parental caregivers; disorder attachment; and the risk and protective function of attachment quality and care-giving practices.

Quality

The programme offers a strong conceptual base, in principle, but the implementation is somewhat diffuse. Many of the publications cited appear to owe little, if anything, to attachment theory; many more, e.g. those concerned with bullying, sexual abuse and prenatal sex hormones, need to draw on a diversity of other theoretical inputs. Furthermore, the claim to bring a powerful tool – attachment theory – to bear on understanding educational processes is only partially realised, and many of the publications are of primary interest to academic psychologists as opposed to educationalists.

Productivity

Other than in Dutch non-refereed publications, output is modest, particularly so if the focus is on international publications. If editorial pieces and short notes are excluded, there have been 35 such publications in the period under review – ostensibly, about one per fte research staff member. In a considerable number of such publications, the VU author has a minor role; thus, one of the key publications submitted has three authors from British universities and one VU author who is not the principal author. There were four PhD theses completed during the period.

Relevance

Attachment theory has the potential to advance understanding of highly problematic processes within education. This programme is making some contribution, e.g. in relation to non-traditional caregiving and some aspects of disability.

Viability

The programme appears to be on an upward trajectory, with increased staff numbers, some external funding and good relationships with key field partners. The team claims to have a good deal of research data which has not yet been mined for publication and which should yield research papers in the coming years.

Conclusion

This programme has a clear strength in relation to the use of attachment theory to increase understanding of behavioural maladaptation. Published output is relatively modest, albeit of good quality. The team's orientation appears to be toward clinical and developmental psychology, with less evident interest in educational processes.

Programme VU 2: Education, Morality and Religion

Programme director	Prof. dr. S. Miedema, Prof. dr. D.J. de Ruyter
Research staff 2005	2.53 tenured, 7.07 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good to Excellent
	Productivity: Very good
	Relevance: Excellent
	Viability: Very good

There are two broad, albeit connected, parts to the VU programme 'Education, Morality and Religion': the first is concerned with the theory and practice of moral education in general and – more particularly and currently – with issues regarding sexual ethics, the educational significance of ideals and of notions of human flourishing and juvenile delinquency: the second is generally addressed to religious education and more particularly to the (formation of) religious identity and the contemporary social significance of religious commitment. Although this is a primarily philosophical programme concerned with the conceptual clarification of these and other issues, it clearly aspires to wider social and practical relevance and to theoretical engagement with social scientific (particularly psychological research).

Quality

First, in so far as this programme is squarely addressing conceptual and normative educational questions that nevertheless have clear contemporary social and cultural relevance, it can be seen to occupy a unique place in the educational academy of the Netherlands – and is on these grounds alone to be commended. From this viewpoint, the research is clearly in a position of national leadership and much of it is also internationally competitive. In the period under review, however, it appears that members of this programme have further enhanced their high already high international profile and connections, and that some of the work here – particularly that on the implications of sexual ethics for education – is in a position of international leadership.

Productivity

With regard to publication, research productivity seems to have been maintained at a consistently impressive level with commendable representation in international as well as national books and journals and in other output. Many publications – including those here selected as key – have appeared in the most reputable journals of the relevant professional fields. Many programme members have also been clearly taken an active role in a wide range of funded and other developments and initiatives of national and international value and significance. On the other hand, PhD turnover is presently rather less impressive and indicates some need to seek ways of attracting and funding young new researchers in this field.

Relevance

While the kind of conceptual work that forms the core of this programme is sometimes criticized for its practical irrelevance, the focus here on issues of current moral, social and political significance and the attempt to relate philosophical and ethical to various forms of social scientific and empirical enquiry is clearly a great strength of this programme. Indeed, the grant awarded in 2005 within the EU Programme Framework for the project Religion in Education: A contribution to dialogue or a factor in conflict in transforming societies in of European countries, as the very best of 37 research proposals (95 points out of 100), is a clear sign of academic excellence and social relevance of the work in this programme. Clearly this programme is attempting real engagement with issues of pressing social and practical concern – both nationally and internationally – and is also to that extent to be commended.

Viability

This is a well-established, conceptually coherent, interesting and wide ranging programme that continues – despite key recent changes in leadership – to be well conceived, organised and managed. The work is of a high – generally internationally competitive – standard, and may be expected to continue if not increase in quality and productivity. However, given that key leaders of the programme have recently retired or not too far off retirement, there is clearly some need to ensure a new generation of researchers in these fields through greater PhD recruitment and increased international publication of younger staff.

Conclusion

The VU programme on Education, Morality and Religion is clearly of a generally high, internationally respected, standard. In terms of quality, the work is operating at a widely recognised national and international level – and, at times, at a level of some international leadership. Productivity is also generally impressive, although there is a clear need to boost PhD recruitment. In this connection if (as suggested) the problem here is not primarily a dearth of potentially able candidates, there may be some need to review institutional policies and resources for the financial assistance of up-and-coming talent. The programme is also aspiring to great social and cultural relevance – particularly in the Dutch context – and, with proper attention to the ‘new blood issue’, it would seem to have a promising future.

Programme VU 3: Strategic Learning in the Curriculum

Programme director	Prof. dr. H.J.M. van Oers
Research staff 2005	0.96 tenured, 3.24 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good
	Productivity: Good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Good

This programme aims at contributing to a sociocultural theory of human learning and development through the study of conditions and processes of classroom learning that promote development of pupils, as well as innovation of classroom and curricular practices. In the tradition of Vygotsky and modern socioconstructivistic approaches, the appropriation of cultural tools and the characteristics of communities of learners are studied, in the perspective of strategic learning by students.

Quality

The rather small research group works coherently at the development of the chosen theoretical approach and divides its attention between conceptual, empirical and practical contributions. Internally the group seems to work rather well and externally there is cooperation with several research centres working within the same approach, nationally and internationally.

Several indications of international recognition from researchers working within the same framework are available. Perhaps continuity is stressed more than innovation.

Productivity

When including the cooperation with 'hogescholen' and schools the productivity is (considering the small number of people and the rather limited research funds) acceptable, but as for the more academic output the productivity is not high. The number of finished PhD's is rather small and also the number of top level publications is not high. The increase of the amount of research funds in the second half of the evaluation period has not led to more publications in refereed journals.

Considering the focus of the programme on its relevance to educational practice, the number of professional publications and products is of a modest size.

Relevance

For researchers sharing the same paradigm and for schools also working in the perspective of 'Developmental Education', the relevance of the programme is rather high. But one can have the impression that for the scientific community at large and for the society at large the relevance is less high.

Viability

The programme has a new director since the beginning of 2006. In 2008 the programme will form one of the three research lines in the new institute AZIRE and the Faculty is confident that the strong characteristics of the current programme (sharing a paradigm, working as a coherent group) will not be lost. On the other hand, attracting many good young researchers and more research funds without broadening the scope of the work may not be easy. For that reason, the choice between becoming too small (to be viable) and becoming too big (to keep the coherence) will be a difficult one.

3. Utrecht University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Langeveld Institute

3.1. Assessments per institute

Mission & Goals

The mission is to conduct high-level research and training in the field of Pedagogics and Education Science and to contribute to solutions for societal problems by providing expertise and train academics with scientific skills and professional competencies. The fields covered are Orthopedagogics, Education, and Family and Youth Studies.

Strategy & Policy

The four research programs submitted for evaluation maintained the disciplinary orientation over the years, but have undergone leadership changes, sometimes repeatedly, in three of the programmes. The new replacements were accomplished with a clear vision of international visibility and success in extramural funding.

The programmes take part in two National Research Schools, and consequently the standards for all academic staff are high.

Given the quite extensive resources, special efforts have been undertaken to strengthen synergies between the programmes. The focal theme of Dynamics and Diversity of Life-courses allows theoretical and methodological cooperation among the programs, and helps to team-up with other programs outside the Langeveld Institute, such as Developmental Psychology, Health Psychology or Sociology.

In order to have better access to young scholars, the university recently started two research master programs that will feed into the PhD training of the four research programs.

As direct funding from the central University level sets limits to growth in a program, a deliberate move to increase the share of second flow money was implemented.

Leadership

The current (since 2006) institutional structure comprises three levels. The research programs on the lowest level are organized by departments (Langeveld Institute) on the middle level, and several of these (for example Psychology) form the Faculty of Social Sciences on the highest level. The main strategic decisions are made on this level by the Board of Research (chaired by the Dean). The allocation of budgets to the research programs is accomplished by the Department's Management Team, and finally the decisions concerning research are made by the Director/Chair of a particular research program.

The Langeveld Institute in total could count on between about 20 and 28 fte's in the reporting period. Tenured staff amounted to between about 10 and 13 fte's with a declining trend over the years. In partial compensation for this, the share of non-tenured and PhD fte's increased, based on external funding.

The policy concerning personnel and PhD development is meant to improve the quality of research and training. Recruitment of PhD students, their training and supervision is facilitated by external reviews of proposals, advising by two supervisors minimum, and annual evaluations of the progress. Similar evaluations of results and future developments are conducted with staff members by the program chairs.

Resources, Funding Policy, Facilities

In the past only few research facilities were available. Now steps have been undertaken to invest in EMG facial feedback research and computer assisted video analyses.

The overall absolute funding amounted to between 2.9 and 4.7 million Euro at the institutional level, revealing a clear upward trend. The share of the various flows of money showed an interesting pattern. Direct funding declined from 71% to 69%, research funds increased from 10% to 20% (in 2005), and contracts were between 10% and 18% (down to 11% in 2005). This pattern resulted in 75% expenditure for personnel in 2005 (down from highest 91%), and 25% other costs (up from 9% lowest), that mainly refer to research expenditures.

Academic Reputation

The Langeveld Institute was very successful in the repeated accreditation to National Research Schools it contributes to, and also received a large number of NWO research grants. Most impressively two large special grants for young researchers (VIDI, VENI) were received with substantial university matching.

Concerning publications, English language impact-strong papers increased during the reporting period from 39 to 83, leading this type of publication to about 70% of all academic publications. This reveals a remarkable upward trend. During the same period between 5 and 14 dissertations were finished per year, with no clear trend over time. Nearly all PhD projects were finished successfully.

Societal Relevance

“Translational” research attracted increasing interest in the reporting period, particularly concerning on developmental and behavioural disorders, anxiety, learning disabilities, and language problems. This resulted in attention from government bodies, health care organizations and private companies.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses

The strengths refer to the success in extramural funding, the growing output of young research talents, the remarkable publication record, growing interdisciplinary collaborations, and the shared acceptance of high standards as demonstrated by the participation in National Research Schools. The dissemination of research results to science and policy makers should be mentioned explicitly.

Weaknesses refer to the quite dramatic change in the research staff over the reporting period (more to come as result of necessary generational replacements) and the meagre laboratory facilities.

The Faculty sees some explicit threats from the strains related to the decline of indirect funding, and in the heavy workload related to the submission of research grants. It requires a lot of tactical cooperation (with medicine e.g.), and puts the continuity of research programs at risk.

From the evaluation point of view, however, a few of the threats are well balanced by the flexibility of the research organization within the Langeveld Institute, and by its own management capabilities.

3.2. Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programmes:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
UU 1: Development of psychosocial problems in context	4	4	4	4
UU 2: Interactivity and learning in interaction	3	3	4	4
UU 3: Early development and education of motor, cognitive and language skills	4	4	4	4
UU 4: Adolescent development: Determinants and characteristics	4	4	5	4

Programme UU 1: Development and treatment of psychosocial problems in context: family dynamics, peers and culture

Programme director	Prof. dr. M. Deković
Research staff 2005	1.98 tenured, 4.42 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good
	Productivity: Very good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Very good

This programme is concerned with psychosocial development, in particular, with the aetiology and treatment of psychosocial problems in children and young people. Because of personnel changes, there has been a new team in place since 2004. The programme developed by this team is conceived along two research lines: basic research that seeks to understand psychosocial problems within family and peer contexts; and intervention studies that seek both to evaluate interventions and to contribute to theoretical understanding. There is a focus on transitional phenomena, both within-child and externally driven. The team maintains or is involved in several longitudinal studies.

Quality

The programme comprises a strong body of work with a good mix of large-scale, longitudinal studies and micro-analyses of particular situations. It is well founded on relevant theoretical positions. The orientation toward integrating theoretical and evaluation studies is a strength. The programme holds promise of significant contributions to our understanding of the psychosocial development of children and young people and to devising effective interventions as required.

Productivity

There are a good many publications, particularly over the later years of the programme, and it is to be hoped that this trend will continue. The limited involvement of Utrecht staff in some publications must be noted, however. It was surprising that this applied also to the key publications selected for the Committee's attention.

Relevance

The work of this programme has high relevance both theoretically and practically. The contexts within which children and young people grow up increase in complexity, in the Netherlands as elsewhere. Understanding these contexts well, particularly where challenging behaviour is present, is singularly important. It is doubly beneficial if such understanding is closely integrated with the evaluation of interventions.

Viability

Following several years of turbulence, the programme now has a stable team and leadership. Its research mission is critical to contemporary social policy, and its output is well placed to be relevant to academics, policy makers and practitioners. Funding and staffing appear to be stable, and the programme has a sense of dynamism that augurs well for the future.

Conclusion

The programme has survived an extended period of turbulence and appears to be on an upward trajectory. The rapidity with which the new team have established a coherent research strategy while building on the work of the previous team and implemented it in practice is noteworthy.

The team's mission is well founded theoretically and is relevant to contemporary social policy. The programme has a promising future.

Programme UU 2: Interactivity and learning in interaction

Programme director Prof. dr. G. Kanselaar, Prof. dr. P. Kirschner

Research staff 2005 3.57 tenured, 10.50 total fte

Assessments: Quality: Good
Productivity: Good
Relevance: Very good
Viability: Very good

The mission of the programme is to contribute to an integrated theory of interactivity in learning and education on a socio-cognitive foundation. The programme underwent major changes in the evaluation period. From 2000 to 2005, when G. Kanselaar was chair until retirement, the programme's focus was on the interaction of learners with their learning environment and its agents. In 2005, when P. Kirschner took over, the programme's scope was broadened from an intra-individual, mainly cognitive, to an inter-individual socio-cognitive perspective and questions of collaborative learning.

Quality

The program took good development following the previous evaluation. The scientific output of the program, in terms of publications, can be characterized by a considerable, increasing number of international refereed journal papers, but there are still far more contributions to books, especially in the professional field. The strong emphasis on applied research is also expressed in the development of the percentage of research funds and research contracts; the latter, however, is slightly decreasing whereas the former is slightly increasing over time. With its new chair, the program seems to be on a good way to strengthen its national role in the field of research on learning and instruction and to reach increased international reputation.

Productivity

The program is productive in terms of publications, yet with a strong emphasis on the professional side. However, although the tenured staff decreased by about 1 fte the number of papers in international refereed journals has increased with a strong peak in 2005, when P. Kirschner joined the group: For example, whereas there were 1.3 international journal papers per 1 tenure fte in 2000, this figure increased to 2.6 in 2004 and even 7.3 in 2005. The number of PhD theses is considerable, and the contract projects are expected to lead, in the future, not only to professional but also to academic publications. Thus, the program seems to have set the course to improve its productivity.

Relevance

In times of increasing interest in the accountability of learning outcomes, the research topics addressed by the programme are highly important, both concerning academic as well as applied perspectives. Expanding the initial cognitive research focus to a more socio-cognitive one, including questions of "computer-supported collaborative learning", moves the program into a new domain with a lot of international research activities and high potential for practical applications. The large number of professional publications can be taken as evidence for the practical relevance of the programme's research. However, the programme's goal to reach an "integrated theory" of interactivity and learning in education seems to be rather challenging.

Viability

The programme has successfully adapted to requirements of the previous evaluation. It has got a somewhat reduced team and a new leadership with highly reasonable visions of future devel-

opment. Very plausible decisions have been made to improve the output of the programme in terms of academic publications based on both basic as well as applied research projects. Thus, the programme has reached a new level of dynamics so that highly improved results may be expected for the future.

Conclusion

The programme has a long history back to the mid 1990ies, and it has successfully adapted to both changes in the general conditions of research at university level and historical changes concerning foci of research on learning and instruction. With its new chair the programme is on a good way to a promising near future.

Programme UU 3: Early development and education of motor, cognitive and language skills

Programme director	Prof. dr. P. Leseman, Prof. dr. W. Jongmans
Research staff 2005	2.22 tenured, 5.86 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good
	Productivity: Very good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Very good

This programme aims at research on atypical and typical trajectories of fundamental motor, cognitive, and language skills from infancy to childhood. More specifically the influence of individual, family, and cultural differences is at stake. The individual antecedents include genetic, physiological, and neurobiological factors. The applications refer to learning disabilities, mental retardation, and physical disabilities. The programme in its current form has been in effect since 2003, and is led by two Chairs.

Quality

There are three interrelated research themes in the study. First, domain-general cognitive and executive functions in infancy have been investigated, comparing at-risk children with normal controls (e.g. premature birth) prospectively concerning the interplay of individual and child rearing characteristics. The second research theme is on domain-specific skills concerning language, literacy, and numeracy, again conducted in a comparative and prospective fashion and with emphasis on individual-context interplay. In the third, comparative analyses of the effectiveness of various preventive means are carried out concerning select domain-general and domain-specific skills and competencies.

Behind the research programme are a number of theoretical guidelines, mainly the contextualist and transactional meta-models by Bronfenbrenner and Sameroff, and the neuro-constructivist approach after Karmiloff-Smith. The basic notion here is that the beginning of developmental disorders is marked by diffuse disruptions of the early functional and structural brain development caused by, for example, early genetic liabilities that subsequently lead to maladjusted trajectories given child rearing and educational deficits. The active role of the infant or child is important, and in particular his/her engaging with objects, spaces, and symbols.

The view of the canalising role of the environment, vis-à-vis an agentic child, provides coherence to the entire research programme and reflects the state-of-the-art in the field. A planned joint prospective longitudinal study will allow the particular role of movement through space to be tested. The clear theoretical underpinning guarantees a prominent place in research on developmental psychopathology, a field with enormous potential for prevention. The quality of research is also indicated by many national and international collaborating groups, including relevant research programmes in medicine, psychology and sociology by renowned scientists.

Productivity

During the reporting period, the average share of the direct funding was almost 80%, but over the last few years it declined to reach 67% in 2005. Research grants proper amounted to 20% on average, 29% in 2005. Contracts never played a big role.

The international refereed journal articles show an increasing tendency since the beginning of the current programme. In 2005 sixteen such articles appeared, corresponding to almost three annually per FTE. This is remarkable, although this figure still needs sustainability.

The group had nine internal (and five external) PhD theses finished since 2000, and the figures seem to stabilise between two and one in each category annually.

The members of the group are well connected and their advice is sought by many research institutions and foundations in Europe and beyond. Another manifestation of reputation is the visiting positions the Chairs hold abroad.

Relevance

The research and its paradigm are highly relevant given the prevalence of the impairments and disorders studied, and due to the fact that the field made a major leap forward related to new insights into brain-behaviour interrelations. The group provides validated assessment tools, implements prevention and intervention programmes, and is involved in advising on policy.

Viability

The programme is relatively new, but the results thus far are very promising. The academic staff needs some amendments in order to be really competitive in the longitudinal research planned (e.g. neuropsychology). There also needs to be more PhD research. In addition, it is not clear whether the current research facilities are really adequate (an observation lab was recently established, but what about the brain-related assessments?). The publication output is likely to grow and to maintain a high level.

Conclusion

This is a theoretically and practically well situated new programme with a very good perspective for further growth. Hopefully the longitudinal study planned will be funded by NWO-type-grants, and a still broader disciplinary coverage of the highly competitive research programme and theoretical rationale will be forthcoming.

Programme UU 4: Adolescent development: Determinants and characteristics

Programme director	Prof. dr. W. Meeus
Research staff 2005	2.86 tenured, 7.13 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good
	Productivity: Very good
	Relevance: Excellent
	Viability: Very good

The programme covers research on selected issues of adolescent biopsychosocial development between the ages of 12 and 25 years. The theoretical background is characterized by an epigenetic-contextualist framework, and three issues were primarily addressed during the reporting period: development of identity and personality, relationships with parents and peers including enabling socio-cognitive processes, and problem behaviour of the internalizing and externalizing type. Development is viewed in an educational context, but the latter is not explicitly addressed. The research is typically organized around a large longitudinal study on the aspects of development mentioned. The topics reflect the emphasis in the international research literature. The programme and the leader have been in place for more than a decade.

Quality

The current core longitudinal study is innovative in a number of aspects. It accomplishes many assessments over a large period of time, includes various relationships and reference individuals of the target group, uses multi-trait-multi-actor measurements, includes survey and observational data, covers all relevant topics, and targets several age cohorts prospectively. This is state-of-the-art in the field and, due to collaboration with many other research groups, the work will in all likelihood result in ground-breaking insights. Following a new interest in causal analysis, a combination of field and laboratory study is accomplished. The fact that the research group is well connected is illuminated by national and international collaboration with other renowned groups. Without exaggeration one can claim that all major players in the field from various disciplines are involved. The structural elements of the educational context are somewhat mute in the research, but they are indirectly involved via the types of relationships investigated. The standards of the procedures applied are excellent.

Productivity

On average, since 2000, 25% of the funding was from research grants proper and 9% from contracts. In 2005, however, the figures were even more impressive with 35% second stream of funding. Overall the figures demonstrate a decline in direct funding from 72% in 2000 to 51% in 2005.

Concerning publications English refereed journals represent the major category, reflecting a publication rate of about 3.5 annually per FTE – a remarkable figure indeed. In addition there were also a respectable number of other publications, such as Dutch refereed journal articles and professional publications. The most important publications appeared in the best outlets of the field worldwide.

Beyond the usual indicators of outreach, such as advisory roles and high-calibre invitations for visits and talks, a number of prestigious career awards were given to two younger members of the group. This particularly illuminates the general activity of the research and the programme leader.

The group had finished work on twelve theses during the reported period – actually a figure smaller than one would have expected from such a strong research environment.

Relevance

This is a programme that undertakes research with a strong emphasis on basic insights into adolescent development. It provides expert knowledge of the highest quality and consequently its relevance beyond the scientific discourse is guaranteed. Policy-relevance is a function of excellent insights and efficient communication, and in both regards the programme is excellent, as illustrated by invitations to institutions abroad and the remarkable media presence in the Netherlands.

Viability

In contrast to other programmes a major part of the success in this case probably rests on the initiative and energy of the only full professor. In order to maintain the level of grantmanship, a large load of additional work beyond research and teaching is required, and here one sees structural limits. If the university deems the research spectrum and its emphasis relevant, as obviously the Committee does, then the academic staff needs to be reinforced. The topics studied are of perennial interest and the new topics envisioned by the programme leader for the years to come will be of even greater relevance – major issues will be social relationships in general and the basic cognitive and affective processes involved. This would suggest the need for a strengthening of the research concerning basic biological processes and social interventions.

Conclusion

This is a highly productive research group, oriented towards basic bio-psycho-social issues with an applied perspective on adolescence and emerging adulthood. The generation of insights and talent alike is remarkable. The heavy workload requires a reinforcement of the academic staff if the activities should be maintained at the current level. The group represents strengths in research that are quite unique.

4. Open University of the Netherlands, Educational Technology Expertise Centre (OTEC)

4.1. Assessments per institute

Mission & Goals

The Educational Technology Expertise Centre (OTEC) represents a Faculty within the Open University of the Netherlands, and understands itself as a major player and actually a pioneer in an alliance of similar institutions in Educational Technology worldwide. The mission is to develop, provide, and promote the quality of higher distance education. More specifically, it undertakes research and development in instructional design (Research Programme) and in advanced learning technologies (Technology Development Programme). Part of its mission is to implement the insights from the research and technology development programme into real practice through an implementation programme. Furthermore an MSc Programme on Active Learning is part of OTEC (as there is no Research Master - recruitment problems for scientific staff play a role).

Strategy & Policy

The Open University of the Netherlands was established to promote higher education for those in the population that, in spite of the necessary skills, had no chance or means, for whatever reason, to attend university previously. Study organization is extremely flexible, through the use of modularisation, distance learning, and varying time frames.

Among other tasks, the role of OTEC is to promote the reputation of the University by being a leader in instructional design and learning technologies, by developing solutions for the use and acceptance of new educational technologies in highly societally-relevant fields, such as lifelong learning or the assessment of skills and the support in upgrading competencies by distance learning. Finally, OTEC carries out a PhD programme for the educational sciences.

All supervisors and PhD students are members of one of two National Research Schools and have to fulfil their high standards of productivity.

In order to increase international collaboration a fellowship programme for visiting professors is available, and agreements exist with similar leading institutions worldwide, including collaboration on internationally funded research projects.

Leadership

OTEC comprises four units and is headed by a General Director (equivalent to a Dean). Besides the two research units that are subject to the current evaluation, there is an Implementation and an Educational Programme unit. The General Director is supported by Officers for Human Resources and Operations. All staff, however financed, represent a resource group from which all units draw (a so-called matrix organization). As a rule, unless financed by extramural funds, staff members have to serve in two units, with the aim of increasing synergies and enlarging competencies. A typical constellation for a scientist working in a research programme would be a combination with work in the implementation unit, for a fixed period of time (usually one year) based on the rationale and pragmatics of the particular research topic.

The performance of all staff is appraised once a year by the programme leader, and on the occasion of promotion, of whatever kind, a formal evaluation takes place. This provides plenty of opportunities for improving competencies.

During the reporting period OTEC did not receive any bonus for PhD theses finished or for extramural funding received. This rule applies university-wide and is in sharp contrast to all other Dutch universities, but this will soon change.

The total research staff FTEs for the two research programmes combined amounted to between ten and 23 during the reporting period, revealing a clear upward trend, more noticeable in the Technology Development Programme.

Tenured staff covered between about 3 and 10 of the FTEs, with the same trend, so that the overall increase was mainly due to an increase in the tenured faculty and a parallel increase in PhD students.

Resources, Funding Policy, Facilities

Information resources, such as literature or data archives, are accessible online at each workstation. OTEC maintains a multimedia laboratory used for conducting research and testing learning technologies, divided into participant and observer areas separated by a one-way mirror. Computer facilities for the observers and video equipment for the observation are interconnected and can be utilized in a multiplicity of ways. An advanced computer-aided observation technology is available as well as electronic eye-tracking devices.

During the reporting period, between 0.6 and 2.0 million Euro in funds were received, of which up to 14% were due to research funds (second flow), and between 8% and 24% were contracts (third flow). All trends are upward, thus reducing the share of direct funds (first flow) from 92% in 2000 to 69% in 2005.

Academic Reputation

The multimedia products have received prestigious awards, and the research and development results are highly valued.

Concerning publications, there was an increase in refereed international journal articles from ten to seventy (in 2005). The latter figure represents about 50% of all publications (due to the implementation aspect of the mission a lot of book chapters were also written). This remarkable upward trend is also mirrored in the increase over the reporting period of professional products and publications from 33 to 314 (in 2005). If one takes 2005 as the reference year, then the approximately 20 FTE research staff produced 150 academic publications, among them seventy refereed journal articles, that is, more than three per FTE, not to speak of all the other outlets.

In 2005, eleven PhD students were enrolled, an increase from seven in 2000.

Societal Relevance

Lifelong learning for instance is a must due to technological and demographic change, and OTEC is a major international player. Via its implementation unit, research and development results are used for consultancy, in-company training and workshops, and for innovation in higher and vocational education. It is therefore not surprising that OTEC plays a prime role in innovation of practically all sectors of post-secondary education in the Netherlands, something which is also revealed in many invited contributions to professional organisations.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses

OTEC sees its strengths particularly in the leading role as theoretical (e.g. Cognitive Load Theory) and technological pivot in the international field of instructional design and learning technologies. This is an integral part of the worldwide discussion of topics such as lifelong learning or the knowledge society.

This success has been achieved in spite of inherent weaknesses, mainly related to the fact that before 2000 the institute was mainly service-oriented rather than research-oriented. The matrix organisation of the current research groups was successful in overcoming this situation, but it is still difficult to fill vacancies with qualified senior staff (the lack of a research master programme needs mentioning here).

The university has begun to reinvent itself by concentrating on the issue of lifelong learning, and by strengthening the incentives for strong and innovative research. This provides enormous new opportunities for a central role in large international research programmes.

A threat lies in the expectation that the “applied” work can provide funding opportunities that may compromise the purely scientific research. This would also make it more difficult to attract the right kind of scholars to the institute.

4.2. Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programmes:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
OUNL 1: Instructional Design for Open Tasks, Environments and Communities	5	4	4	5
OUNL 2: Learning Networks for Lifelong Competence Development	4	4	4	4

Programme OUNL 1: Instructional Design for Open Tasks, Environments and Communities

Programme director	Prof. dr. J. J. G. van Merriënboer
Research staff 2005	5.0 tenured, 14.17 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Excellent
	Productivity: Very good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Excellent

The mission of the programme, having started in 1999, is to promote lifelong learning through developing a comprehensive theory of instructional design, especially for open learning tasks, open learning environments, and open learning communities in higher distance education. The research is oriented towards conceptions of use-inspired basic research, focusing on domain-specific development of expertise, learner guidance, and assessment of complex performances.

Quality

In a previous midterm evaluation in 2003, the programme and its researchers were commended for having achieved an excellent international reputation within a short space of time. The Committee agrees with this. The output of the programme shows an increasing number of international refereed journal papers with high impact, the researchers are highly visible on international conferences and are involved in many academic editorial services. Concerning funding it can be observed that the percentage of research funds has strongly increased whereas the percentage of contracts has been stable at a reasonable low rate of about 7-8%. Nevertheless, besides all the academic publishing, the programme is highly successful in publishing professional materials as well. The success of the programme represents a productive combination of a thorough theoretical orientation on modern cognitive theory, rigorous experimental research in applied settings, and effective international networking. The key publications submitted for evaluation received more than 100 ISI-citations which indicates that the programme is highly recognized in the scientific community and that the researchers are international players in the field of instructional design. They are well prepared to take over the role of international leaders in that field in the future.

Productivity

The programme is highly productive both in terms of academic and professional publications. In 2000 the programme produced about 2.1 papers in international refereed journals per 1 tenured fte; in 2005 this figure was 6.6 representing a trend of success. With 16, the number of PhD theses in the evaluation period is substantial.

Relevance

The programme has a strong focus on higher education with a specific emphasis on distance education. Higher distance education represents a growing field with increasing relevance for all topics of lifelong learning and effective instructional designs are a major prerequisite for success in this field. However, instructional designs are often based more on intuition than on comprehensive instructional theory and empirical evidence. The programme effectively fills in this gap in conducting research that is highly relevant in terms of improving theories of learning and instruction as well as improving instructional practices.

Viability

The programme is driven by a rigorous sense of quality improvement in all areas. The management followed highly successfully a threefold strategy: motivating people, hiring excellent new staff, training young talent. A major challenge for the near future is to find a successor for the programme director.

Conclusion

The programme is a valuable mix of theory- and applications-oriented research and represents an excellent success story on all criteria. It provides an impressive model of steering the whole research process. The model might seem a bit rigid for some, but it is highly effective. Van Merriënboer (as well as Koper) has made the OUNL much more research oriented, which is an important achievement.

Programme OUNL 2: Learning Networks for Lifelong Competence Development

Programme director	Prof. dr. E. J. R. Koper
Research staff 2005	4.72 tenured, 20.74 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good
	Productivity: Very good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Very good

This programme is an educational technology research programme that mainly aims at developing theoretically sound models and tools to support the activities of various stakeholders of lifelong learning (learners, designers, developers, administrators). Within the programme a number of themes have been identified. Each of them represents a core issue for (the delivery of) lifelong learning: retrieving learning opportunities; designing learning environments; supporting collaborative work, and assessment. An integration of the models, tools and/or software is aimed at by applying the results generated in each of the themes to particular cases in the 'Learning Networks Integrated'-theme.

The programme is a technological programme in a general sense as it aims at applying theoretical insights to generic problems. It does so mainly by using technological means. The programme is highly valued internationally and links up with the most advanced developments in the field. Two indicators of its success are the impressive group of internationally recognized scientific committee members and the high success rate (and high appraisal) with regard to projects funded by the European Commission.

Quality

O TEC has strongly contributed to the educational technological field. The standardized EML version developed and further elaborated in the programme is widely recognized by international consortia and organizations (such as IEEE). This work on the EML-version has been done and could only get done in close collaboration with other eminent research centres and with organizations and institutions responsible for standards and norms in technological applications. This intensive international collaboration is one of the strengths of the programme. The programme leader has tremendously contributed to the success of the programme. Other members have been less visible.

The programme has generated high quality output. This has been especially the case for more technological contributions: software models and tools, contributions to technologically oriented conferences. It has been less the case for scientific outputs in a more strict sense. The programme is to a large extent externally funded. This shows the success of the programme but may in the future also threaten its coherence when priorities of funding bodies are no longer in line with the priorities of the programme.

Productivity

The programme is highly productive in terms of technological contributions, meetings, conferences, etc. In technologically oriented research programmes such as this one, software products (as contributions to conferences) are regarded to be important and highly valued outcomes. In terms of scientific publications *strictu sensu*, productivity is growing. The number of PhD theses is low at this stage but it may be expected that the new policy of the OUNL will help the programme to increase this number in an efficient way. The "TENCompetence" project has contributed to the evaluation of the importance of educational-technology journals. The

programme seems to have implemented a good strategy to strengthen the quality of its scientific publications and to publish in important educational-technology journals.

Relevance

The programme and the changes to it show how sensible the programme is to produce relevant products. The programme is closely aligned with the mission of OUNL, and this will be further strengthened with the establishment of the Netherlands Laboratory for Lifelong Learning (NeLLL). The programme invests heavily in knowledge production (under the form of tools and models) and is very active with respect to dissemination. While the group admits that they have not yet reached the stage of full implementation, the long list of organizations and companies already engaged or willing to be in close contact shows great opportunities for implementation.

Viability

Overall the programme seems to have a bright future. Positive elements certainly are the establishment of NeLLL), the international collaboration, the alignment (and flexibility) in the programme to international developments (e.g., open source, creative commons, tools used to support collaboration in the programme), and the new policy with respect to PhD theses of OUNL. The programme might experience some difficulties to attract good people. This situation may be worsened by the new position (OTEC General Director) recently assumed to be taken over by the programme leader.

Conclusion

The programme on 'Learning Networks for Lifelong Competence Development' has been a very successful programme with great merits in the domain of educational technology. Continued European funding, good embedding in NeLLL and an appropriate HR-policy may ensure the further success of the programme.

5. University of Twente, Institute for Behavioural Research

5.1. Assessments per institute

Mission & Goals

The Institute for Behavioural Research (IBR) aims at the development of theories and models of human development that can be utilized to design and evaluate measures to improve human functioning in educational and labour settings. The research concentrates on education and training. The approach is fundamental and applied; the latter has a particular emphasis on the development of products (software, multimedia) that relate to behavioural aspects of information and communication technology in a more general sense.

Strategy & Policy

The aims are pursued by looking for synergies between theories from educational science, communication science and psychology. Although how this is achieved is not very clear and a common theoretical thread is not obvious.

The Institute collaborates at the national and international level with reputable organizations for curriculum development and educational measurement.

In the most recent research evaluation the average score was 4 (maximum 5) and, except for one, all of the previously programmes were submitted for the current evaluation.

Leadership

The IBR, headed by a Scientific Director, is the common research unit of the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences. The four research programmes in education are part of the Institute (although, in principle, collaboration across Faculties is possible). The Director is responsible for the development and implementation of the entire research programme, and can utilize special funds to foster this. An interdisciplinary Advisory Board supports strategic decisions. The current structure has existed since the beginning of 2004. Before that time the programmes worked independently.

During the reporting period, a total of between 32 and 29 FTE research staff were available, with almost no change over time. The same applies to the tenured staff, which amounted to about 8 FTEs throughout.

The majority of PhD students enrolled in national research schools and, consequently, their advisors have to comply with the standards of these schools.

Resources, Funding Policy, Facilities

No information was provided concerning joint facilities for research. This probably indicates a relative independence of the programmes.

Funding during the reporting period varied between 3.7 and 4.8 million Euros, not revealing any clear trend across time. The share of direct funding ranged between 43% and 56%, also showing no particular change pattern. Research funds (second flow) varied between 18% and

28%, with an upward tendency, and contracts (third flow) amounted to between 18% and 35%, with a downward tendency. In other words, the relation between second and third flow funding seems to change slightly in favour of second flow research grants.

Academic Reputation

One of the programmes has received the European Award for Excellency in Software Development, and two faculty members received career awards.

Publications in refereed journals varied between 42 and 53 per year, with no clear trend during the reporting period. About the same number applied to book chapters, but here a steady trend could be seen. The Institute also produced professional products and publications of a similar order of magnitude. In other words, in 2005, a total research staff of 29 FTEs published 52 international refereed publications, which is close to two publications per year and per full-time researcher. No publications in other types of journals were listed. This would seem to be a strategic decision, although no information was provided on the publication strategy.

During the reporting period the number of PhD theses completed varied between two and fourteen, showing an increase during the later years.

Societal Relevance

The University as a whole sees itself as an entrepreneurial research university, focusing on technological development in the knowledge society. The IBR collaborates closely with other bodies to achieve these aims, as exemplified by their cooperation with a university Centre for Information Technology.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses

The report is basically mute concerning these issues. It seems clear, however, that a substantive theoretical link between the programmes is not given, and thus potential synergies among the programmes need attention. Further, the strong orientation towards technology and its application reveals a heavy dependency on contract funds. In general, judging from the report, the role of the Scientific Director and the instruments used for planning were not transparent. Finally, future developments at the institute level were not spelled out (perhaps it is unfortunate that the Institute Plan spans the years 2005 to 2010, whereas the evaluation covers 2000 to 2005). Nevertheless, the report did not use the opportunity to be more specific in this regard.

5.2. Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programmes:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
UT 1: Cognitive Tools for Problem-Based Learning Environments	4,5	4	4	4
UT 2: Computerized Testing of Knowledge and Skills	5	5	5	4
UT 3: Effectiveness of School and Training Organizations	4	4	4,5	4
UT 4: Curriculum Design and Implementation	3	3	3	3

Programme UT 1: Inquiry learning in powerful learning environments

Programme director	Prof. dr. A.J.M. de Jong
Research staff 2005	2.17 tenured, 11.20 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good to Excellent
	Productivity: Very good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Very good

The mission of the programme is to conduct research on theory of human learning and principles of instructional design for powerful (inquiry-based) learning environments, following cognitive theories of learning, including collaborative learning, and instruction. The programme is strongly involved in research & development programmes as well as “networks of excellence” of the European Union.

Quality

The achievements of the programme are highly recognizable in terms of contributions to the international literature in its field of research and the major role it plays in research programmes of the EU. Furthermore, concerning funding, the programme remarkably increased its percentage of research funds during the evaluation period. This success story is mirrored by the academic reputation of individual members of the programmes in terms of national and international academic services, appointments, and awards. Notably, the programme does not only have academic publications as output but also software products (e.g. SimQuest, an authoring tool for generating simulation-based learning environments) that are highly appreciated in professional fields. Thus, the programme is highly recognized, on a national as well international level, and it has produced major contribution to the field of technology-based inquiry learning.

Productivity

The academic publications as well as the percentage of research funds display a curvilinear trend, starting at a medium to high level in 2001, decreasing in the following year(s), and increasing up to a rather high level in 2005. Compared to other programs, the amount of tenured stuff is comparably small (2.2 fte in 2005). Taking this into account, the relative number of papers in international refereed journals per 1 tenured-stuff fte is quite large (five papers in 2000 and six in 2005), indicating high productivity of the programme. With eleven, the number of PhD theses in the evaluation period is substantial. Besides this academic productivity the programme is also highly productive in terms of producing software products for professional fields.

Relevance

Inquiry-based learning with computer- and simulation-based learning environments plays an increasing role in many professional fields of learning in instruction. The programme is in a very good position to promote the scientific understanding of this specific kind of learning and to provide guidelines for theory- as well as evidence-based instructional design. Thus, the programme has considerable theoretical and practical relevance.

Viability

The programme is rooted in a very successful research programme on “cognitive tools for problem-based learning environments”. Thus, when T. de Jong took over the role of the programme leader of the present program in 2000, he happened to be very effective in continuing

the high-quality research conducted before and moving it onto a highly recognized international level.

Conclusion

The programme performs, on an international level, highly visible research in a defined, but nevertheless highly relevant field of learning and instruction. A major challenge of the near future is to obtain an even higher level of academic output on the one hand and to effectively extend, at the same time, the leading role in highly visible research & development projects of the EU on the other hand. The programme seems to have great potential to meet this challenge and a major EU grant has recently been acquired.

Programme UT 2: Computerized Testing of Knowledge and Skills

Programme director Prof. dr. C.A.W. Glas, Prof. dr. W.J. van der Linden

Research staff 2005 2.5 tenured, 5.12 total fte

Assessments: Quality: Excellent

Productivity: Excellent

Relevance: Excellent

Viability: Very good

The mission of the programme, having started as early as 1989, is to solve problems in educational measurement and educational research methodology from the perspective of modern test theory. With “educational measurement” the research focus is broader than indicated by the programme’s title “computerized testing of knowledge and skills”, ranging from computerized adaptive testing to applications of modern test theory to large-scale educational progress and school-effectiveness research.

Quality

The programme performs at an extraordinary high level and is internationally highly recognized. The research output is published in the internationally leading journals of the field, and the members of the program possess, on the international level, high reputation in terms of membership on editorial and advisory boards as well as professional appointments. The programme’s high quality seems to be stable over time; it received also excellent ratings in the previous evaluation.

Productivity

The programme is highly productive in terms of academic publications. In 2000 the programme produced about 6.3 papers in international refereed journals per 1 tenured fte; in 2005 this figure was 4.4 with an average of 6 over the six years. With fifteen the number of PhD theses in the evaluation period is substantial.

Relevance

Having its roots in modern item response theory, the programme attends to a number of main problems of assessment and educational measurement both on the individual and the large-scale level. The results are not only academically interesting and able to move the international field of modern test theory; the results are also practically highly relevant for planning and conducting, for example, international large-scale assessment studies like the International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Viability

The programme is performing on a high and highly stable level. The projects are run in a professional way, and the focus of the research is reasonably adapted to new theoretical and practical advances in the field of modern test theory and its applications, including, in terms of future perspectives, new forms of assessment like simulation environments and statistical methods like multilevel item-response theory.

Conclusion

The programme represents an impressive model of stable success. Future challenges are to re-establish the special chair funded by the Dutch testing organisation CITO until 2000, to improve its position to attract interested students and, concerning funding, to continue the trend of increasing the percentage of research funds.

Programme UT 3: Effectiveness of School and Training Organizations

Programme director	Prof. dr. J. Scheerens
Research staff 2005	1.44 tenured, 10.22 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very Good
	Productivity: Very good
	Relevance: Very good to Excellent
	Viability: Very good

This programme has focused for more than 15 years on the characteristics of schools and training organisations which are indicative of high productivity and effectiveness and on the models and theories which can explain the operation of these conditions. Although continuity is a major characteristic of the programme, there have been gradual shifts towards more attention for vocational education and for training and human research development in corporate settings.

Quality

The significance of the programme for the development of the international scientific work in the field is without any doubt very high. Especially the fundamental studies, the review studies and the analyses of international data are important. The research is based on major research questions and the results are integrated in a framework of reflections on the theoretical background which is mostly lacking in the field of educational effectiveness.

As for the coherence of the programme one can have the impression that several senior researchers have their own research programme. The work on HRM and vocational education seems to be loosely coupled to the major research topics.

The quality of the programme leader is excellent but the management of the programme seems to be less process oriented.

Productivity

The output appears to be very good as for the number of Ph. D's. Very valuable reports are published for the OECD and for the national Inspectorate, and the results of that work are presented in many invited addresses. The number of publications in refereed international journals, however, is more restricted.

Relevance

The major reviews and meta-analyses are important for the scientific advancement, as is the focus on the underlying theories. The reintroduction of regression discontinuity has also to be evaluated positively. Perhaps approaching the data of the international databases as longitudinal data at the country level could even increase the relevance of the programme.

The great relevance of the programme for policy making organisations as the OECD and the Inspectorate is indubitable. The cooperation with research institutes in Germany and Italy is also an indication that the programme is considered as highly relevant.

Viability

The increase of contract research is one of the many signs of the vitality of the programme. The age of the programme leader and the rather loose coupling of the senior researchers make clear that in the coming years important decisions at the level of the institute have to be taken to guarantee the future of the programme.

Conclusion

Our general conclusion is: a great programme where important research questions are tackled in a fundamental and methodologically sound way, with some concern about the coherence of the research group as a whole.

Programme UT 4: Curriculum Design and Implementation

Programme director	Prof. dr. J.J.H. van den Akker
Research staff 2005	1.7 tenured, 2.5 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Good
	Productivity: Good
	Relevance: Good
	Viability: Good

This programme appears to have developed from a rather more comprehensive curricular package which commenced in the 1980's. While the programme rationale appreciates the broad range of curriculum concerns with the content, processes and social context of education, the current programme focuses mainly on three main lines of enquiry: (i) the place of the professional development of teachers in 'appropriate classroom implementation'; (ii) the interactions of 'policy contexts and school factors as a prerequisite for sustainable (curriculum) improvement'; and (iii) the use of IT in curricula and curriculum developments. The research is described as 'design orientated' and said to aim at the 'articulation of principles and methods of design research'.

Quality

While a programme directly addressed to curriculum concerns is greatly to be welcomed in the Dutch educational research context, and despite the programme rationale's acknowledgement of the broad range of theoretical interest in the curriculum, this programme itself appears to have tended towards an increasingly narrow focus. Indeed, despite the purported focus on curriculum design issues, the programme seems to have to come to focus (apparently due at least partly to the hiving off of some past areas of enquiry to other programmes or departments) much more on processes of curriculum implementation. In so far as this is so, its identity as a curriculum programme – and the grounds of its clear distinction from other programmes are not entirely clear.

Productivity

While the programme's own self-evaluation admits to some decrease of research input, it also points to a rise in productivity with regard to PhD's and publications. However, despite the annual average of PhD's claimed, there is indication of a decreasing trend in this respect – and, as already noticed, the general drift of publications is more towards narrower curriculum implementation and process concerns than broader questions of curriculum theory and policy. One consequence of this is that such product is less likely to connect with wider international curriculum policy debates. At all events, while many of the publications seem to be making a significant national and international contribution, it seems less clear that they are internationally competitive.

Relevance

Again while much of the work on this programme is focused on useful issues and questions concerning the classroom implementation of curriculum models and initiatives, it does not seem to engage well – either by way of theoretical critique or empirical enquiry – with the larger issues of curriculum policy and practice that are currently of great concern in the Netherlands and many other parts of the world. From this viewpoint, while one reason given for the evident decline in second flow funding was that funding agencies are not much interested in curriculum issues, it might be asked whether the problem lies with would-be funding agencies or with the rather restricted concerns of much of this programme.

Viability

Although it should be admitted that this programme has produced much educationally useful work and is clearly pursuing some worthwhile lines of enquiry, it has clearly been subject to some attrition during the period since the last review. The programme has clearly suffered serious diminution of funding and other research capacity and some downsizing of earlier broader theoretical aspirations to a generally narrower set of technical and other practical educational concerns that also give rise to some doubts about its distinctive academic identity and substantial contribution to mainstream curriculum theorising.

Conclusion

Despite successes, the UT programme on 'Curriculum Design and Implementation' has, during the period under present review, exhibited some symptoms of decline. It cannot be overstated that there should indeed be a place for a substantial programme of curriculum theory and research in the educational academy of the Netherlands. However, it may also be that it is not possible to address some of the more evident aspects of recent decline (such as decreasing second and third stream funding and PhD recruitment) without some more fundamental reflection on the identity and direction of this particular curriculum offering— not least perhaps with a view to a clearer reconnection of the main aims of programme with wider political and normative concerns of curriculum policy makers in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

6. University of Groningen, Nieuwenhuis Institute for Educational Research

6.1. Assessment of the institute

Mission & Goals

Educational research is concentrated in the Nieuwenhuis Institute. Its mission is to increase the knowledge base concerning education and to contribute to solutions concerning issues of educational practice. Towards this aim two strains of research have been conducted, namely, theory-related, and practice- and policy-related research. The three research programmes involved in this evaluation differ in their relative emphasis on these two strains of research.

The research programmes cover only parts of the Institute's general mission, namely, the cultural context of education, educational effectiveness, and the assessment of and intervention against disorders in education and care. A fourth research programme on teaching and teacher education was not submitted for the current assessment.

Strategy & Policy

As a research organization, the Nieuwenhuis Institute's task is to improve the quality of research. This is accomplished by various means. Most prominent are attempts to increase collaboration among the four programmes, to increase participation in Research Schools (national and local), and in this regard also to increase the number of PhD students, thereby enlarging the research staff. Finally, the strategy is to increase the quality and quantity of research output.

It is noteworthy that the training of PhD students plays a central role in this strategy. Since 2004, the Research School standards are used to define the actual percentage of research for a staff member, with a maximum of 40%. The Institute provides funds for travel and there are also some small intramural seed funds available for research.

In order to provide opportunities for a joint discussion on research, a lecture series is organized biannually.

The research programmes are involved in different Research Schools. Among them is the Groningen Research School for the Study of the Humanities, the National Research School for Educational Research, and the National Institute for the Study of Education and Human Development. In spite of this variability on the level of the Institute, only one staff member is in charge of career counselling and monitoring progress, supported by an annual questionnaire filled in by the PhD students. The reason for this is that the progress of the PhD students is also monitored by the Research Schools, and for career issues the PhD students also have access to the HRD-department.

Resulting from a relatively weak evaluation in the last period, various reorganisations have taken place. The Educational Effectiveness Programme had received a high score of 4 ("Good" in 2001, maximum 5).

Leadership

The Institute is part of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences and represents one of three research institutes. A joint endeavour is a research master Human Behaviour in Social Contexts, and 2005 saw the start of the Groningen Graduate School for the Behavioural Social Sciences, which represents the organizational structure for all PhD students.

The Institute is headed by a Director appointed by the Faculty Board (who is also Leader of a research programme). The work is supported by Officers for Human Resource Development and Financial Affairs of the Faculty. The Advisory Board consists basically of the Leaders of the research groups.

A particular emphasis is given to the promotion of female academics to Associate Professors, and to the promotion of Associate Professors to extraordinary Full Professors. In both cases in-house funds were matched by funds from scientific organizations.

During the reporting period, the total research staff varied between about 22 and 24 FTEs, with no obvious trend across time. Tenured staff showed a slight increase from about 11 to 13 (in 2005) FTEs.

Resources, Funding Policy, Facilities

No particular research laboratories or other facilities were reported.

Concerning the funding situation, the total varied between 2.4 and 4.2 million Euros. However, except for an extraordinarily high sum in 2000, contract funds were actually rather stable, showing no particular trend over the reporting period. The share of direct funds varied between 31% and 57%. Research funds proper (second flow) ranged between 20% and 32%, contracts (third flow) between 49% and 19% (in 2005). The lion's share of resources went into two of the three programmes (the Educational Effectiveness Programme always received about 50% or more). Due to a mismatch between direct funds and expenditure for tenured staff (meanwhile resolved by some retirements) only since 2003 were financial allocations possible for post docs.

Academic Reputation

The members of the research programmes are members of national and international Advisory Boards, have been busy with conferences, also under national and international auspices, and hold key positions in the research schools mentioned.

Publications in international refereed journals varied between 16 and 32 annually during the reporting period, revealing an upward trend. In 2005 this amounted to about 50% of the output (except Monographs and PhD theses). An average output of 1.3 publications per year and per full-time research position was accomplished. It is fair to say that the Institute also produced a large number (twice as high as refereed international publications) of professional publications and products.

The number of PhD students varied between about eight and nine during the reporting period. The number of theses finished (internally) varied between one and six, however, indicating a trend towards an increase of the success rate.

Societal Relevance

Concerning the Institute as a whole, no specific information was provided, but it is obvious that, for example, the Educational Effectiveness Programme, through its policy-oriented research and contract research, exercises considerable influence regarding school reform, on issues such as integrating students with special needs or from disadvantaged groups, or reforms concerning primary schools in general.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses

The Institute sees its strengths revealed particularly in a growing number of finished PhD theses and in its success in securing funds of all categories. Concerning the publication output, a break with the too low standards of the past is necessary in order to overcome a particular weakness. This is not made easier by the fact that the standards of the research schools themselves differ somewhat. As a matter of fact, guidelines for productivity are still lacking, and only one of the programmes currently contributes to the Research Master (eligible because of its excellent ranking in the previous evaluation).

That a new team is in charge for the “Assessment of and Intervention against Disorders” programme is seen as an opportunity for higher productivity and visibility due to the fact that the Leaders meet the criteria of a relevant National Research School. Such improvements in the academic reputation should also enable the Institute to compete successfully for even more extramural funding (to compensate for the expected decline in direct funding in the years to come). Minimum standards are set, such as one new PhD position per full professor every two years and an average of one international academic publication per year per research staff member, but the Faculty has a tenure track policy and expects the staff to do more than just the minimum. Various activities at Institute level that will provide incentives for productivity for all categories of academic staff are planned and should help them to cope with the challenges ahead.

6.2. Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programmes:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
RUG 1: Education in culture (Program Director: Prof. dr. J.J.H. Dekker)	4	3	4	3
RUG 2: Research and evaluation of educational effectiveness (Program Directors: Prof. dr. R.J. Bosker, Prof. dr. M.P.C. van der Werf)	4	4	4	4
RUG 3: Developmental and behavioural disorders in education and care (Program Directors: Prof. dr. E.J. Knorth, Prof. dr. A.E.M.G. Minnaert, Prof. dr. A.J.J.M. Ruijssenaars).	4	3	4	4

Programme RUG 1: Education in culture

Programme director	Prof. dr. J.J.H. Dekker
Research staff 2005	3.07 tenured, 4.33 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good
	Productivity: Good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Good

The programme is embedded in the Groningen Research School for the Study of the Humanities and undertakes research into the role and impact of various aspects of culture on educational and other development of children and young people. It appears to adopt a multi-disciplinary or methodologically diverse approach to research and enquiry which draws as much on history and philosophy as upon sociology and other social sciences. The programme is constructed around four main areas of research identified under the headings: (i) Childhood and the family; (ii) School and education; (iii) Educational Publishing Houses; (iv) Children at Risk. Together and separately these four programme components set out to address a wide range of aspects of cultural influence on educational and other human development relating to gender, ethnicity, disability, religion and class.

Quality

In a general climate of educational research (in the Netherlands and elsewhere) in which empirical if not empiricist approaches appear to predominate, the emphasis of this particular Groningen programme on research into the wider cultural and normative dimensions of education is salutary and to be welcomed. On the evidence of the key publications, the programme has also produced work of considerable value and interest that has also opened up some distinctive lines of enquiry. In this regard, while it seems that the programme has encouraged the development of some very individual research interests – which is not to be discouraged – there may be some case for slightly more focus and less diversity in the interests of more overall programme coherence. Still, there is clearly work here of local and international interest and significance

Productivity

Although the research produced by this programme is of an academically respectable and often exemplary, standard, it appears that it has been rather less successful in meeting the Institute's productivity requirements for publication and doctoral supervision, and that there has also been a steady decline in research funding (notwithstanding some increase in contract funding) over the period under review. From this viewpoint, there would seem to be a case for some review of present research policies and strategies with a view to both increased publication (especially of internationally recognised work) and attracting the funding necessary for increased PhD recruitment.

Relevance

As already noted, this programme is exploring academically respectable lines of research that are both distinctive and original within the educational research context of the Netherlands. To be sure, one might not expect interest in some of this work (on, for example, educational publishing houses) to be widely shared in the larger educational research community, but this is no to deny its relevance or importance. Indeed, it is our view that it should be encouraged. There also cannot be any doubt that much work here, on the educational and developmental implications of different cultural conceptions of gender, ethnicity and faith has clear practical significance and relevance to wider (national and international) issues and problems.

Viability

Further to observations already aired, the main problem with this programme relates to its future prospects in the light of some difficulty in meeting institutional targets for publication and PhD recruitment in the face of declining research funding. While it could be that some of these problems are not unrelated to the fact that this kind of conceptual work does not so readily attract external funding as other more pragmatic educational research – so that the field on which this programme is playing with others is not entirely level – these issues clearly need pressing attention at both institutional and programme levels in the interests of the future viability of this programme.

Conclusion

The reviewers of 'Education in Culture' are generally agreed that this programme is opening up very interesting and often original lines of educational enquiry (that give it a fairly unique position in the Netherlands context of educational research) and that it has also proved itself to be capable of nationally and internationally competitive work. From this viewpoint, it is clearly a programme that deserves support and encouragement. At the same time, it is clearly facing problems of research productivity, PhD recruitment and external funding that render its future somewhat uncertain. Clearly, some of these problems might be helpfully addressed by internal review of the research policies and strategies of the programme (perhaps via attention to considerations of greater programme coherence or funding attractiveness), but there may also be a need to address these issues from a wider institutional or more collegial perspective.

Programme RUG 2: Research and evaluation of educational effectiveness

Programme directors Prof. dr. R.J. Bosker, Prof. dr. M.P.C. van der Werf

Research staff 2005 4.53 tenured, 7.89 total fte

Assessments: Quality: Very good

Productivity: Very good

Relevance: Very good

Viability: Very good

The programme focuses on ‘what works why in education’ and considers the effects of factors at several levels (student, class, teacher, school and/or system level) on the school success of students. The studies undertaken comprise four main domains: precursors of school success (SES, gender, IQ, personality traits,...), learning environments, educational management and programme evaluation, and the institutional context of education. Cohort studies and large scale evaluations of innovation in education are core business for that programme.

Quality

The research programme is impressive, with a broad range of topics and research designs and methods. Sometimes one has the impression that the diversity of the topics of the contract research or individual preferences could be a danger for the coherence of the programme; the relatively low number of projects and publications with a focus on theory development could have the same effect.

The programme is well organised and well managed, and the combination of continuity and innovation in the management of the programme and in its content is positive.

The members of the programme are active and important in the international scientific community. A great scientific impact seems not to exclude an impact on the educational policy within the Netherlands.

Productivity

The programme does a lot of contract research and linked to that, produces a lot of research reports and professional publications. Neither the quantity of PhD theses nor the number of international publications resulting from PhD's is very high. In general the number of international publications in refereed journals and in books, however, is all right and the quality of the publications is in general very good.

Relevance

The relevance of the research programme for the international scientific community is great. After contributing to the shaping of the field by focusing on the class level, the programme has further worked in that perspective, but has also broadened the scope. The programme is in charge of the major international journal in the field. The increasing level of the quantity of the contract research is also an indication of the perceived relevance of the programme within the Netherlands, scientifically and for educational policy.

Viability

The programme combines continuity and innovation. That is revealed in, amongst other things, the new leadership of the programme, the involvement in the new national cohort study and the broad scope of the programme in relation to the research topics and the research methods.

Conclusion

Concluding we can say that, although a more explicitly theory driven focus could add to the coherence of the programme, we expect that the programme will remain one of the important research programmes in the field, also internationally.

Programme RUG 3: Developmental and behavioural disorders in education and care

Programme directors	Prof. dr. E.J. Knorth, Prof. dr. A.E.M.G. Minnaert, Prof. dr. A.J.J.M. Ruijsenaars
Research staff 2005	5.44 tenured, 10.64 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: Very good
	Productivity: Good
	Relevance: Very good
	Viability: Very good

The programme has been concentrating since 2004 on three topics: learning problems and disabilities, profound disabilities, and behavioural disorders. The current profile is the result of an interim evaluation and the subsequent appointment of three new programme leaders. Concerning all topics, the empirical research covers the causes of such behaviours, the design of diagnostic tools, and the development of intervention programmes with the aim of integrating people with disorders in appropriate contexts. The re-shaping was mainly based on international visibility and productivity. The decision to concentrate on the most serious and complex forms of disorders was made in response to developments in the field.

Quality

All research projects are theory-driven and have a clear problem orientation. The emphasis is on a better understanding of antecedents of disorders and problem behaviours and allows for more differentiated diagnoses, thus providing the ground for real-life interventions. (The approach utilizes various approaches that fit a bio-ecological orientation, but one wonders whether research into related brain processes will also become part of the research.) Interventions follow the model of evidence-based practice and are aimed at social integration and inclusive education. Consequently, contextual conditions on all levels (government, schools, etc.) are also under scrutiny. Rather than relying on a classical treatment-control approach alone, in some studies a systematic comparison of various programmes is conducted. Meta-analytical evaluations are also undertaken. Taken together the programme addresses a number of important research themes as prototypes for the three topics and overall represents a fair coverage of a broader theme of disorders related to education and care.

Productivity

As far as funding is concerned, the share of research grants amounts to only 8% on average over the reporting period, whereas contracts amount to 44%. These figures underscore the practical relevance of the programme, but the low presence of research grants proper is of serious concern – more so as there seems to be no clear upward trend. Basically, the same applies to publications. Although international refereed publications increased over the last year (in 2005, 12 of the 55 total publications were in this category). The overall picture is dominated by chapters, monographs, and professional publications (the latter also increasing, perhaps a reflection of the contract research). Over the reporting period there were fifteen PhD theses in all, but only seven conducted internally, and only in 2005 was it more than one. Certainly the academic staff has visibility in international bodies and is engaged in reviewing and advising, but research output is rather limited as far as international journal publications are concerned. This is not meant to belittle the influence the programme and its leaders exert via various professional projects concerning assessment and intervention.

Relevance

The research obviously is of high relevance. One needs evidence-based, scientifically inspired recommendations for practical means of integrating people with the kind of disorders studied. Many of the products are in the news nationwide and guarantee an influence on policy-making.

Viability

Productivity is of concern due to the small share of research funds proper and the small number of PhD students currently in training. It is also not quite clear how the collaboration between the three research topics or groups takes place or whether there are synergies one would still like to improve. The participation in research schools is probably not enough to harmonise the quality expectations, and one also wants to see cutting-edge research questions addressed concerning the aetiology of the problems addressed (the relative importance is not clear, interventions seem to be the main theme). Future plans concerning publications appear ambitious seen against the backdrop of past achievements.

Conclusion

Obviously this is a newly composed programme that will hopefully be more coherent than its predecessors. Necessary changes in the research staff beyond the leadership could not be accomplished due to recent budget problems that will soon be overcome. A major challenge for the future will be to increase the second flow of research grants and thus strengthen the participation in the international research community.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Curricula Vitae of the committee members

Rainer Silbereisen

Rainer K. Silbereisen is currently Professor and Head of the Department of Developmental Psychology at the University of Jena (Germany), Adjunct Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at the Pennsylvania State University (USA), and Director of the Center for Applied Developmental Science. He is Fellow of the American Psychological Association and Member of the European Academy of Sciences (London). He was Editor of the *International Journal of Behavioral Development* and is Editor of the *Journal European Psychologist*. He was Chair of the Board of the German Social Science Infrastructure Services (Gesis), is a former President of the German Psychological Society and until recently was President of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development. Currently he is a member of the Executive Committee of the International Union of Psychological Science. A psychologist by training, he has been involved in interdisciplinary large scale research on the role of social change in positive and maladaptive human development, utilizing a cross-cultural and biopsychosocial format. With the help of private foundations, he has established training programs for young investigators from developing countries. He has edited about 20 books and published more than 250 scholarly research articles.

David Carr

David Carr is Professor of Philosophy of Education in the University of Edinburgh. He is author of *Educating the Virtues* (1991), *Professionalism and Ethics in Teaching* (2000) and *Making Sense of Education*, as well as of many articles in such leading philosophical and educational journals as *Mind*, *Analysis*, *Philosophy*, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *Oxford Review of Education*, *British Journal of Education* and *Journal of Moral Education*. He is also editor of *Education, Knowledge and Truth* (1998), co-editor (with Jan Steutel) of *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education* (1999), and (with John Haldane) of *Spirituality, Philosophy and Education* (2003). Professor Carr has been a Fellow of the St Andrews Centre for Philosophy of Public Affairs and a member of the Scots Philosophical Club, he is a Fellow of the North American Philosophy of Education Society and has been secretary and conference organiser of the Scottish branch of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain for the past twenty five years. He has lectured internationally and his research interests include philosophy of education (generally); ethics, virtue ethics and moral, spiritual and religious education; the nature of professionalism and professional ethics; knowledge, education and curriculum theory; aesthetics, education in the arts (especially dance, music and literature) and the education of the emotions. He is a member of several editorial boards (including *British Journal of Educational Studies* and *Theory and Research in Education*), a regular peer reviewer for these and other leading educational and philosophical journals and recent examining appointments have included six years as external examiner for the London Royal Academy of Dance.

Jan Van Damme

Jan Van Damme is professor at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium). He is head of the Department of Educational Sciences and of the Centre for Educational Effectiveness and Evaluation. This centre conducts major longitudinal studies of a cohort of students, in the perspective of studying the effects of schools, teachers and classes.

He is a member of the board of the Flemish Forum on Educational Research. He chaired the network on Educational Effectiveness and Quality Assurance of ECER/EERA and started and still coordinates the SIG Educational Effectiveness of EARLI. He is a member of the Editorial

Board of several international journals, a.o. School Effectiveness and School Improvement. In 2006 he was appointed for the Francqui Chair at the Université Catholique de Louvain.

Seamus Hegarty

Seamus Hegarty is former director of National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). NFER is the largest research organisation in the United Kingdom, comprising about 270 staff and running 70-80 research projects at any given time. He is now Chair of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. Born in Ireland, he took his first degree in Dublin and his doctorate in London. He has researched and written widely on special education, with a particular focus on inclusive education. He is founder editor of the European Journal of Special Needs Education (now in its 22nd year). He is on the editorial board of five other journals. He has acted as adviser on special needs issues to UNESCO and numerous other national and international bodies. He served as principal consultant to UNESCO in preparing the Salamanca Declaration. He has completed an independent evaluation of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education.

Detlev Leutner

Detlev Leutner is Professor of Instructional Psychology at Duisburg-Essen University (Germany). He received his master degree in psychology and his PhD in education, psychology and philosophy from Aachen University of Technology. He is an elected member of the review board "Education Sciences" of the German Research Foundation (DFG) and was member of the German PISA Consortium (2001-2005). He is editor of the "German Journal of Educational Psychology" and was editor of "Diagnostica". He chaired the EARLI-SIG "Individual Differences in Learning and Instruction" and the division "Empirical Educational Research" of the German Educational Research Association (DGfE).

Currently he is one of the speakers of the DFG Priority Program on "Models of competencies for the assessment of individual learning outcomes and the evaluation of educational processes". His main research interests are self-regulated learning, learning with multimedia, and educational measurement.

Appendix B: Overview of Scores

5 = Excellent; 4 = Very good; 3 = Good; 2 = Satisfactory; 1 = Unsatisfactory

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
UvA 1 Early childhood education and family support	3.5	2	3	3
UvA 2 Developmental difficulties, child-rearing problems, and integrative childcare	3.5	4	4	3.5
UvA 3 Basic skill acquisition and social-emotional functioning: specific problems and adaptation of instruction	4	3,5	3,5	3
UvA 4 Governance, leadership and schools: relationships and effects	3	3,5	4	3
VU 1 Challenges to childrearing relationships: Contributions to developmental psychopathology	3	3	4	4
VU 2 Education, Morality and Religion	4,5	4	5	4
VU 3 Strategic Learning in the Curriculum	4	3	4	3
UU 1 Development of psychosocial problems in context	4	4	4	4
UU 2 Interactivity and learning in interaction	3	3	4	4
UU 3 Early development and education of motor, cognitive and language skills	4	4	4	4
UU 4 Adolescent development: Determinants and characteristics	4	4	5	4
OUNL 1 Instructional Design for Open Tasks, Environments and Communities	5	4	4	5
OUNL 2 Learning Networks for Lifelong Competence Development	4	4	4	4
UT 1 Inquiry learning in powerful learning environments	4,5	4	4	4
UT 2 Computerized Testing of Knowledge and Skills	5	5	5	4
UT 3 Effectiveness of School and Training Organizations	4	4	4,5	4
UT 4 Curriculum Design and Implementation	3	3	3	3
RUG 1 Education in culture	4	3	4	3
RUG 2 Research and evaluation of educational effectiveness	4	4	4	4
RUG 3 Developmental and behavioural disorders in education and care	4	3	4	4

SEP-scale: The meaning of the scores

Work that is at the forefront internationally, and which most likely will have an important and substantial impact in the field. Institute is considered an international leader.	Excellent (5)
Work that is internationally competitive and is expected to make a significant contribution; nationally speaking at the forefront in the field. Institute is considered international player, national leader.	Very good (4)
Work that is competitive at the national level and will probably make a valuable contribution in the international field. Institute is considered internationally visible and a national player.	Good (3)
Work that is solid but not exciting, will add to our understanding and is in principle worthy of support. It is considered of less priority than work in the above categories. Institute is nationally visible.	Satisfactory (2)
Work that is neither solid nor exciting flawed in the scientific and or technical approach, repetitions of other work, etc. Work not worthy of pursuing.	Unsatisfactory (1)

Appendix C: Schedule Research Assessment P&E

Wednesday, March 7: Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA)

- 9:00 - 10 UvA Faculty dean and Institute management
- 10:15 - 11:00 **Governance, leadership and schools: relationships and effects**
(Prof. dr. P. Sleegers (from 1-4-2004)).
- 11:15 - 12:00 **Early childhood education and family support**
(Prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom (till 1-9-2001); interim-Program Director:
dr. F. van Balen).
- 12:15 - 13:00 **Developmental difficulties, child-rearing problems, and integrative
childcare**
(Prof. dr. M. Deković (till 1-2-2004); Prof. dr. S. Bögels (from 1-2-2006).
- 14:00 – 14:45 **Basic skill acquisition and social-emotional functioning: specific
problems and adaptation of instruction**
(Prof. dr. A. van der Leij).

Thursday, March 8: Vrije Universiteit (VU)

- 9:00 - 10 VU Faculty dean and Institute management
- 10:15 - 11:00 **Challenges to childrearing relationships: Contributions to
developmental psychopathology**
(Prof. dr. C. Schuengel)
- 11:15 - 12:00 **Strategic Learning in the Curriculum**
(Prof. dr. H.J.M. van Oers)
- 12:15 - 13:00 **Education, Morality and Religion**
(Prof. dr. S. Miedema, Prof. dr. D.J. de Ruyter)

Thursday, May 10: Universiteit Utrecht (UU)

- 9:15 - 10 **Interactivity and learning in interaction**
(Prof. dr. G. Kanselaar, Prof. dr. P. Kirschner).
- 10:15 - 11:00 **Early development and education of motor, cognitive and
language skills**
(Prof. dr. P. Leseman, Prof. dr. W. Jongmans)
- 11:15 - 12:00 **Development of psychosocial problems in context**
(Prof. dr. M. Deković)
- 12:15 - 13:00 **Adolescent development: Determinants and characteristics**
(Prof. Dr. W. Meeus)
- 14:00 – 14:45 UU Faculty dean (Prof. Willem Koops) and Institute management

Friday morning, May 11: Open Universiteit (OUNL)

- 9:15 - 10 **Learning Networks for Lifelong Competence Development**
(Prof. dr. E. J. R. Koper)
- 10:15 - 11:00 **Instructional Design for Open Tasks, Environments and Communities**
(Prof. dr. J. J. G. van Merriënboer).
- 11:15 - 12:00 OUNL Faculty dean and Institute management

Friday afternoon, May 11: Universiteit Twente (UT)

- 13:15 - 14:00 **Curriculum Design and Implementation**
(Prof. dr. J.J.H. van den Akker)
- 14:15 - 15:00 **Inquiry Learning in Powerful Learning Environments**
(Prof. dr. A.J.M. de Jong).
- 15:00 - 15:45 **Computerized Testing of Knowledge and Skills**
(Prof. dr. C.A.W. Glas, Prof. Dr. W.J. van der Linden)

- 16:00 - 16:45 **Effectiveness of School and Training Organizations**
(Prof. dr. J. Scheerens)
- 16:45 – 17:30 UT Faculty dean (Prof. Hubert Coonen) and Institute management
- Saturday, May 12: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG)**
- 9:00 – 9:45 **Research and evaluation of educational effectiveness**
(Prof. dr. R.J. Bosker, Prof. dr. M.P.C. van der Werf)
- 10:00 -10:45 **Education in culture**
(Prof. dr. J.J.H. Dekker)
- 11:00 - 11:45 **Developmental and behavioural disorders in education and care** (Prof. dr. E.J. Knorth, Prof. dr. A.E.M.G. Minnaert, Prof. dr. A.J.J.M. Ruijsenaars).
- 12:00 - 13:00 RUG Faculty dean (Prof. Bert Creemers) and Institute management

Appendix D: Reaction from the VU University Amsterdam

From The Executive Board of VU University Amsterdam

Subject Response to the Research Assessment Report 'Pedagogics & Education Science'

Date 14.05.2008

The Executive Board of VU University Amsterdam would like to express its appreciation for the work performed by the peer review committee Pedagogics & Education Science. Both the Executive Board and the Board of the Faculty of Psychology and Education accept the contents of the Research Assessment Report.

The Executive Board and the Faculty Board regret to the duration of the assessment process and the long period between the site visits and the presentation of the concept report. While the report covers research performed in the period 2000 – 2005, the concept report was presented in March 2008. Consequently, the report has only limited value to accommodate changes in research policy since it provides too little information on the current state of the research.

This is especially true for the VU program 'Challenges to childrearing relationships: contributions to developmental psychopathology'; a program that went through a renewal process in the period 2000 – 2005. The results of this renewal in terms of quality and productivity just became visible in 2006. Because of the late appearance of the evaluation report, the information on this program has already been outdated and gives no insight into the current state of this program.

Appendix E: Reaction from the Utrecht University

Universiteit Utrecht



Faculty of Social Sciences

Faculty Board

Heidelberglaan 1, De Uithof, Utrecht

Sender: FMT, PO box 80140, 3508 TC, Utrecht, The Netherlands

University Board
Heidelberglaan 8
3584 CS Utrecht

Date
May 16, 2008
Subject
Research assesement

Our reference
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Faxnumber
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Telephone
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j.morenc@uu.nl
Page
Page 1 of 1

Dear Board,

The Board of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences has taken notice of the Research assessment of the *Research Programmes of Pedagogics and Educational Sciences 2000-2006* and wishes to make the following observations:

- The Board regrets the serious delay in producing the final report of the assessment. The Board acknowledges the fact that the assessment was carried out in a serious and diligent manner.
- The board acknowledges that some of the 4 research programmes have witnessed fundamental changes after the former assessment. These fundamental changes relate to substantial turn over in staff, new organisational framework, formal 'reorganisation' of the Faculty.
- However, in general terms the assessment did confirm the outstanding quality of most of the research programmes in Utrecht including a '5' for relevance of the programme lead by prof. Wim Meeus.
- In general terms the assessment confirms the excellent position of the Utrecht programmes on a national scale.
- The board acknowledges the assessment of the programme "Interactivity and learning in education " which resulted in a '3' for quality and a '3' for productivity. These marks are below the level of ambition of the Faculty. The Board fully realizes that the implementation of the re-organisation and the coming of the new professor in educational sciences did improve the quality of the programme. This would – undoubtedly - have resulted in better marks in the next assessment. However, the new professor has indicated that he will to leave the Faculty for personal reasons shortly. This new situation will be discussed with the leadership of the research institute in order to ensure the enhanced quality and productivity of this research group.

With kind regards,

Prof. Willem Koops
Dean