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“USING ELECTRONIC FACILITIES FOR POLICE TRAINING”

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INTRODUCTION

In the Netherlands police vocational training is currently undergoing fundamental innovation. This process is necessary if the conditions for equipping police officers better for their duties in an increasingly complex society are to be realised.

First of all, I will make some observations about important developments in our society, relevant to the role and position of the police and the response given by the Dutch police.

Secondly, I will make some general remarks on the need to professionalise and to bridge the gap between police education and professional practice.

After the introductory paragraphs, I will describe the main outlines of the new concept of Dutch police training and the use of electronic facilities.

Context of social and environmental developments

The context of police work and the situations which occur within it are continually changing, and also with increasing speed. The various respects in which Dutch society is changing are by no means unique: similar changes are also occurring in other European countries. The social changes to which I am referring here concern, for example,

- a) the increasing part played by the 'knowledge economy', including the accompanying ICT revolution;
- b) the role of the government - which is losing some of its exclusive decision-making power and has to share the stage more and more with other actors in the social field of influence - in the so-called network society;
- c) the increasing multi-culturality and the processes of migration, as a result of which societies will become more and more pluriform in character;
- d) globalisation and increases in scale and, on the other hand, many people who are looking for their own scale of identification.

Police function is more complicated

All of these developments have either a direct or an indirect impact on how the police have to function and constantly have to find new answers to the questions they raise. The increasing complexity and confusion of social issues concerning safety and liveability mean that the police function is becoming more complicated and fragile.

By way of illustration, a few aspects of public safety are listed:

- the public domain as meeting place for conflicting interests in cities. Social conflicts will more and more be related with major infra-structural operations and global decision-making processes;
- the emergence of new forms of crime and terrorism, especially in an international perspective;
- the question of liveability, “people in a fix”; the tension between “having to go along with” all kinds of developments and the possibilities to do so.

Trends among the Dutch police

The community as a whole - and each individual citizen within it - judges the police on the way it deals with problem situations. On a daily basis, the police are expected to find appropriate, and at the same time legitimate, answers to the wide range of social issues and criminality as mentioned above.

Within the Dutch police organisation, a number of developments have occurred in recent decades:

- 1) from a classical, more or less exclusive police role to a network approach and partnership;
- 2) from large-scale, more or less anonymous operations to small-scale: operational staff knowing and being known;
- 3) at the same time, an increasing need to tackle (international) forms of crime, terrorism and attacks on social integrity with new in-depth specialisations and technology;
- 4) from a more or less action-oriented approach to a systematic development linking up with the Total Quality Management-model.

The starting points of the Dutch Police Training

In recent years, a lot has already been published on the term 'the learning organisation'. The basic idea here is that the current social developments, which are referred to collectively as the knowledge society, demand of an organisation that it consciously focuses on linking the learning and learning capacity of individuals, groups and the organisation as a whole in such a way that there is continuous change, at all three levels, in the direction of the organisation's output as desired by society and desirable.

Organisations that add knowledge, with a view to their own quality and continuity development, to enable them to respond adequately to social change and to keep coming up with new creative and intelligent solutions. Existing knowledge quickly becomes out of date and lots of classical knowledge and skills are bound very much to time and place. Knowledge is increasingly becoming the key source and the capacity to generate knowledge the key capacity.

This also applies indisputably to the police.

After all, the police is a prime example of a knowledge-intensive organisation whose effectiveness and legitimacy in society are largely determined by its capacity to find and apply concrete and effective solutions to continually new and often unpredictable problems.

The current modernisation of police vocational training supports and facilitates this learning process.

It links up with the principles of the learning organisation, in which every member of staff is involved in an ongoing learning process. People cannot 'not learn'. Learning is automatic, as it were. An area in which something *can* be done is the effectiveness and efficiency of learning. Whilst working and learning are still completely separated in many situations, in this new concept they are related and interwoven more and more with each other. The learning process and application of knowledge will increasingly become one of the organisation's primary processes. Learning as such will become a competency for staff and the organisation as a whole, to an increasing extent. In this way, learning will become a shared responsibility.

This can also be identified in the design of new-style police education.

Innovation in police training is built on two pillars;

- first of all the development of police science, a codification and validation of the profession itself, to make explicit the content of the police profession, consisting of the core activities: providing surveillance, maintaining public order, investigating crime and providing services to the public;
- in the second place, a new concept of police vocational education and training itself, related with the police-science process mentioned above.

Founding and permanent actualisation of police training

For the first time in Dutch Police history, police training will be based on unambiguous *job profiles*, defined in terms of competencies.

Job profiles are the description of the context of the profession and the competencies necessary for the duties, professional activities and solving dilemmas of the daily practice.

Until now, 5 levels of police profession, have been determined according to the structure of educational levels which link up with national and European standards so that they give rise to police training which ties in with further education or competencies acquired previously.

The 5 levels are:

- assistant police-officer;
- police-officer;
- all-round police-officer;
- police scientist (bachelor's degree);
- police scientist (master's degree).

Job-profile police-officer level 5 (bachelor)

The police officer level 5 is a professional practitioner capable of mobilising, organising and operationally directing relevant actors in the environment (outside world) with a view of creating safety arrangements, whereby he/she also performs an operational role. This involves managing the context, in other words, creating sustainable conditions for an effective approach to issues. This will be geographically oriented, but can just as easily have a functional orientation too. He or she works on the basis of a thorough analysis of the situation, whereby existing knowledge of the specialised field of police sciences is looked up, applied and evaluated.

Job-profile assistant police-officer level 2

This professional practitioner performs work of a simple nature, under supervision. This work includes that of: the patrolman who focuses primarily on surveillance work; the detention officer who guards and also keeps an eye on the mental and physical well-being of detainees; the radar operator who supervises traffic; the traffic warden who not only performs a repressive task but is also aware of his/her role in the endeavour towards a safe residential and living climate; the neighbourhood secretary who plays an intake and supportive role in neighbourhood teams. The assistant police officer doesn't carry a firearm.

The next step was the formulation of so-called core tasks on each of these levels. Core tasks are those problems, duties and dilemmas, which are at the heart of the professional practice and are representing 80% of everyday professional practice.

The job profiles and the core tasks were developed, validated and authorised by people from police services.

The Board of Police Chief Constables, among others, plays an important role here, but the LSOP also provides a link with the forces lower in the organisation via all kinds of formalised and non-formalised channels.

The core tasks are linked with the Dutch model of police performances, consisting of four areas of external results, e.g. public safety, liveability, societal integrity and public services.

Core task: action involving violent crimes (all-round police officer)
Features: always criminal offence; violent emotions; always victims; always investigation.
Working pattern: observation; initial measures at scene of crime (assistance for victim; cordoning off scene of crime); caring for victim; gathering facts and circumstances; establishing contact with parties involved; taking witness statements; taking down report of crime; examination of clothing; confiscation; recognising and securing clues; arrest and arraignment; interrogation of suspect; reporting the offence.
Result: offence is stopped; offence is reported; victim has been cared for; building blocks for possible necessary problem-oriented approach have been supplied.
Linked to this are the necessary competencies (= capacities) to execute these professional actions adequately. (not an exhaustive summary).
Professionally: ability to observe and maintain an overview; ability to interrogate; ability to apply interview techniques.
Administrative-organisational: to provide justification; to discover whether or not there is a pattern to the crime; the ability to build networks and to work within them.
Social-communicative: to make agreements with others and comply with them; to treat people with different proclivities and from different backgrounds with respect; to cope with own and other people's emotions.
Learning and education: to give and receive feedback; to evaluate one's own action and modify it.

Core task: to provide surveillance during events with the threat of escalation (Police Bachelor).
Features: great flood of people; frightening atmosphere; movement of groups of people; traffic diversions; a plan is used.
Working pattern: evaluate existing scenario; make risk analysis; design police plan of approach; make scenario more concrete; prepare briefing; maintain surveillance; maintain active and visible uniformed presence in public domain; be focused on the environment; be approachable; provide information and advice; observe people's behaviour; interpret people's behaviour; establish contacts; spot irregularities; decide on intervention; estimate the risk of escalation; regulate possible conflicts between people; intervene if conflicts arise.
Result: risk analysis; external partners involved and informed; colleagues informed; no uncontrollable situation has arisen; evaluation and recommendations.
Linked to this are the following competencies (= capacities). (Not an exhaustive summary).
Professional: design tactical approach based on police theory; ability to develop new

creative working methods; dealing flexibly with new information; ability to present and conduct oneself correctly in uniform; ability to concentrate on the environment and observe it; insight into the surrounding situation and risk factors; an open mind towards the public, the ability to empathise with their needs and circumstances; ability to sense people's motivations or intentions; ability to deal with conflicts.

Administrative-organisational: to provide justification; ability to work with others and mobilise partners; to recognise patterns.

Social-communicative: ability to deal flexibly with modified information; ability to present and defend own standpoint; to display tenacity; to treat people with different proclivities and from different backgrounds with respect; to cope with emotions.

Learning and education: keep up professional knowledge and skills; give and receive feedback; evaluate own action and modify it on the basis of insights acquired.

Following determination of the job profiles and the core tasks based on these, the curricula of the courses will then be developed. The key here is that every part in the curriculum is geared towards the acquisition of the competencies matching the core tasks. This means that an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach is involved, based on the relevant areas of knowledge, e.g. the legal, socio-psychological, sociological, criminological, communicative perspective. The education is therefore no longer disciplinary (i.e. offered within the framework of an academic discipline).

Every core-task is concluded at least once with a so-called proficiency test, whereby the student has to prove, in terms of concrete behaviour, that he/she possesses the required competencies.

This design of curricula has been realised until now. Therefore, at each level, development groups have been set up; teachers of the LSOP, education scientists and representatives of the police services and public education are members of these groups.

The current process of change means an ongoing co-ordination and interaction with the working area: the Services. There must also be a guarantee that police training will remain attuned to actual police practice, in other words, that a gap will not re-develop.

To this end, the LSOP created a number of permanent (advisory) bodies in which representatives of the Services take part and have a direct channel for any signals on the quality and contemporary relevance of police training. At the top of these advisory councils, the National Council of Police Education and Training has been established, a formal and independent advisory body of the government.

These formal advisory bodies are, of course, not the only instruments for ensuring that new police training remains permanently up to date.

It is, therefore, also of great importance that the majority of LSOP trainers have recently had professional practical experience and that the various trainers have enough informal contacts in the Forces to spot relevant developments in professional practice.

At the same time, last year a process has been started to professionalise the teacher by following a trainer course in regular education based on specific competence profiles and a training course 'didactic digital driving license'.

The key elements of the concept

a) *from business training to fully-fledged vocational education;*

In essence, the current education resembles a business course, it only provides a qualification for a direct position. The new education is a fully-fledged professional education as exists throughout society for all professional groups, and is designed in conformity with the Dutch educational laws. It focuses on a professional level. This means, among other things, that a cultural-social qualification (= the equipment as 'citizen') and an ongoing-education qualification (= the horizontal, vertical and diagonal link with regular vocational education) are realised in addition to the professional qualification (= the equipment for professional practice).

b) *from knowing to competencies;*

The current training is geared primarily towards cognition and partly towards skills. In the new training, the term competency is used. These *competencies* of policemen/women are a key concept here. A competency is the capacity to adequately solve questions in professional practice. This term therefore focuses on concrete, observable behaviour among professionals. That is to say, the integrated approach of knowing and applying.

In this way, all elements relevant to how someone functions are brought together in such a way that a student is competent to practise his/her profession.

The term competencies covers knowledge, insight, experience, attitude, skills and personal characteristics such as motivation etc.

Competency-oriented training means a shift of accent from the *training offered* to the *demand for learning*, from the *transfer* to the *acquisition* of knowledge. In this way, one makes the student responsible, to a significant degree, for his own learning process. You do not only measure competencies by adding up formally acquired diplomas, but also by considering what has been learnt informally in practice, or in some other way.

c) *from institutional education to dual learning;*

The current training mainly takes place within a training institute; work experience only occurs on a limited scale. This has the well-known disadvantage that the link between training and professional practice. Another well-known fact in the theory of education is that the acquisition of competencies is more effective if approached from authentic issues rather than via the traditional model of learning and reproducing knowledge (based on the theory of constructivism).

These two considerations are reasons for designing the new education via the dual model, that is to say alternating learning in professional practice and at the training institute. In this way, both objections are met and, furthermore, so is a condition for encouraging a more 'learning' culture in the forces themselves. In our specific situation, three partners, namely the force, regular education and the LSOP, flesh out the dual system.

Students will remain alternately at school for a period of 10-12 weeks and a same period of time at the working-place in the Force.

In this way, learning at the institute is more likely to be interchanged with learning at the workplace.

d) *from diplomas to a qualification structure;*

The current system trains students for a one-off diploma which qualifies them to practice their profession for the rest of their career. The rapid developments in society call for the continuous updating and renewal of competencies. That can happen via a coherent system of initial and post-initial education based on a qualification structure. The different levels are structured in such a way that they can be easily distinguished from one another in terms of both working processes and competencies.

In concrete terms, new police training links up with the qualification structure according to the European SEDOC-classification and the so-called Declaration of Bologna.

e) *from a closed culture to socialisation;*

An important ambition in the process of change is the *socialisation* of police training. Here, socialisation means the connection and co-operation with regular vocational training.

f) *from only one to several learning environments;*

The last main theme on which the change focuses is the modernisation of the education in terms of the didactic working forms. In addition to class teaching, many other forms will be applied, such as group assignments, individual assignments, self study, research and especially the further introduction of information and communication technology of several different didactic working forms, and the use of ICT in particular while learning, is a result of the shift of accent from the general *availability of education* to the individual *demand for learning*. The student is partly responsible for his own learning process, in the same way as things are expected of him when performing his work. The consequence of this starting point for the form of education is that learning will occur more independently of time and place.

E-learning environment

Information and communication technology (ICT) enables students to learn independently, at the speed they wish and at a place they themselves choose, at school, at the workplace and at home.

Furthermore, ICT shapes learning on the basis of actual issues from professional practice, and therefore the development of problem-solving skills. According to expectations, it will be possible to provide education more efficiently and more effectively.

For this, the LSOP is setting up an 'e-learning' environment, in addition to the existing physical information and communication environment in which the actors (students, teaching staff and force-route supervisors) all make a contribution. A learning environment on the Internet; the Internet, and therefore the computer, as a possible way of contextualising the education and of constructing interactive learning communities within police vocational training.

This 'LSOP e-campus', consists of three related applications, i.e.:

- a digital learning and communication environment
- an education planning environment and
- a 'police science' knowledge bank.

This e-campus is facilitated in the form of a number of interrelated technological facilities. These are an e-learning platform (Blackboard), a new LSOP education planning system (OPS) and facilities as the Police Knowledge Net, the Police Discussion net and the Police Study net. By means of these facilities, the new vocational education based on the key assignments is designed, monitored and supervised. Teaching staff can give study assignments, staff and students can communicate with each other about these, students can communicate with each other in 'working groups' or study communities can communicate on how to tackle study assignments. Students can also determine their own learning speed. Students and police-officers of the forces can make use of distance learning programmes.

It is also of vital importance that students have access to this e-campus to retrieve all relevant databases, i.e. use the many opportunities offered by Internet to trace relevant information.

More particularly, this e-campus can also be used as much as possible for context-bound learning processes. This means that the (digital) availability of 'police science' information is a prerequisite for the new-style police vocational training and the vision on which it is founded.

Files containing this information, collected, arranged and validated by the police itself, are an important criterion for the effectiveness and context of the education, because students can make use of the direct, practice-related knowledge and cases when constructing their learning routes around the various key assignments.

In the new-style education, for instance, the relationship between education and practice is reinforced via two paths, through a) the dual form whereby students spend half of their training period in the force-working situation and b) there is the opportunity to learn in a context-bound manner via e-campus and using the digital 'police science' databases.

In this context, education will become, much more than now, a question of learning at the workplace, with use being made of information available as the product of a system of knowledge management.

In the learning organisation, 5 learning elements are relevant: collecting information, distributing and sharing information, interpretation and the validation system, the collective memory of the organisation, the availability of information, on the one hand, and the context-bound and competence-oriented education, on the other.

PKN and the Police Knowledge Model used provide a foundation for this and the necessary facility that emphasises the technological and logical aspects in particular. The cultural dimension is based on the concept of dual education.

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