

Project title: Professional development of teachers in the technical domain: a content based approach in the lessons of senior secondary vocational education teachers
Researcher: Drs. E. Wildeman
Period: 2014 – 2018
PhD Research: ESoE
Promotor: Prof. dr. D. Beijaard
Co-promotor: Dr. M. Koopman

This PhD-project is about how teachers in the technical domain of senior secondary vocational education can be trained to use a language integrated approach of teaching. Currently, language learning is stressed in senior secondary vocational education in the Netherlands (for example due to the implementation of language reference levels). Often language education mainly focusses on preparing students for their Central Exam which is about their general language proficiency.

Common language skills, used in daily situations, are not sufficient for students to be successful at school. Each subject has its own specific language functions and structures. It is important that students develop complex subject-specific language skills, because they need to be able to think and communicate professionally in their own future profession. Therefore, teachers in the technical domain need to be aware of the language specific elements of the subject matter they teach and integrate these elements in their lessons.

With this research, we investigate the effects of an intervention consisting of a content and language integrated approach to improve senior secondary vocational teachers' interaction skills and use of complex learning tasks during their teaching of technical subjects. Teachers' language awareness will be measured with interviews before their participation in the PDP. Teachers' classroom behaviour will be measured by means of a pre-test and post-test, using the lesson objectives the teachers formulated, classroom observations of teacher-student interactions and video-stimulated interviews as data sources. Analyses of these data will provide insight into whether and how the teachers develop a language integrated approach as a result of participating in the PDP.