VirtualDutch: Open Educational Resources and Distance Learning in a Lesser Taught Language Community

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LLAS e-learning symposium 2010
Some facts about Dutch

• A medium-sized European language
• Spoken by >23 million speakers as native language
• The language of two neighbouring countries of the UK
• One of the official languages in Suriname
• The closest related language to English
Dutch Provision in UK Higher Education

• Four universities that teach Dutch to degree level
• one Dutch department, three programmes in departments of Germanic or modern languages,
• before 2005 also U of Hull
• growing interest outside of universities
‘VirtualDutch’ – Aims and Objectives

• Inter-institutional collaborative teaching and learning programme
• Creating shared teaching and learning resources
• Collaboration in teaching and learning
• Facilitated by technology
• Community of Practice
• Started in 2001
Declining interest in modern languages in the UK
Particularly affecting the lesser taught languages
Diminishing Resources and threats of discontinuation of language programmes
Both need and opportunity to develop ICT-based teaching and learning resources
Pooling of resources and expertise
Sponsors switching to project funding
And last but certainly not least: Student benefits
Virtual Department of Dutch: Subprojects

- Dutch Multimedia Study Packs
- Inter-institutional Collaborative Teaching Projects using VLEs and videoconferencing
- Online Language Courses Lagelands & Hogelands
- Learner’s Grammars for Beginners & Intermediates
- Open Learning Community Portal
Dutch Study Packs

- Some 30 interactive multimedia study packs,
- on aspects of Dutch and Flemish language, literature, history and society,
- for self-study, classroom use and remedial learning,
- catering for various levels of competence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In English</th>
<th>Beginners</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Concrete Poetry</td>
<td>Louis Couperus</td>
<td>Emblems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Dutch Language Taster</td>
<td>Introduction to Dutch Linguistics</td>
<td>P. C. Hooft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Dutch Revolt I</td>
<td>Dutch Revolt II</td>
<td>Batavian Myth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Amsterdam Represented</td>
<td>Buoyant Brussels</td>
<td>Flemish Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Multicultural Netherlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Virtual Dutch is an inter-university teaching and learning initiative in Dutch Studies, involving four British universities: University College London (UCL), the University of Sheffield, the University of Cambridge and the University of Nottingham. Our aim is the advancement of Dutch Studies in the English-speaking world, especially through online learning and collaborative teaching. Most of our online learning materials are freely available. Just click on the links in the menu on the left.
Collaborative Teaching:
Advanced Translation & Cultural Studies

- Writer in Residence
- Communication via Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle)
- and Video Conferences (AccessGrid)
Open Learning Environment in Early Modern Low Countries history (OER Dutch history)

A VirtualDutch Open Educational Resource funded by JISC and the HE Academy

The project will

- turn a comprehensive survey course in early modern Low Countries history into a multimedia and Web 2.0 enriched Open Educational Resource (OER).
- specifically focus on relations between the Low Countries and the Anglophone world.
- will use freely available Web 2.0 tools and services and be based on open and transferable standards (e.g. SCORM) which can be delivered by a variety of platforms and Virtual Learning Environments
- combine a series of multimedia teaching and learning objects like the interactive multimedia timeline in an integrated resource-rich but directed open learning environment.
UKOER pilot programme (2009/10)

**support function** – covering technical, legal, strategic advice, workshops, support for deposit and aggregation of materials, communities of practice.
Based around existing JISC services & OU “SCORE” project.

**OER infokit** – a “how to” guide for future work

**evaluation & synthesis function**

one year programme – HEFCE-funded; managed by JISC & the Higher Education Academy.
A transferable learning package (in SCORM format) based on the teaching and learning materials of a face-to-face course on Low Countries history,
an interactive and illustrated multimedial timeline on Anglo-Dutch relations from antiquity to 1830 using MIT’s Simile technology (Web 2.0),
technologically updated versions of existing self-directed study packs (including revision of structure and contents for the purpose of the integrated Open Learning environment),
a reading skills course in 17th century Dutch,
an open learning environment on the basis of the VLE Moodle, integrating all deliverables.
Timeline of Cross-Channel Interactions

50 BC – 1830

- Based on a comprehensive manuscript by Jaap Harskamp
- Comprises more than 800 extensively annotated entries on Anglo-Dutch exchanges
- Illustrated (IPR permitting)
- Using MIT's Simile timeline technology (Web 2.0)
Welcome! This interactive module for learning Dutch offers a series of resources and help files on the topic. Each topic is highlighted, with further explanations of the terms. The study pack aims to be as interesting as possible. You can find the text you need. If you are interested in the next sections.

Section I. Introduction to the Document: Plakkaat
In this first session, you will find the Plakkaat van Vergeltije (1543), the original edition of the document that is highlighted, with further explanations of the terms. The study pack aims to be as interesting as possible. You can find the text you need. If you are interested in the next sections.

Open Learning Environment for Early Modern Low Countries History
A Virtual Dutch Open Educational Resource funded by JISC and the Higher Education Academy

Home Project News

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dutch/OER/
The next step: distance programme

- UCL programme, with teaching input from Sheffield
  - Envisaged to become a fully inter-institutional degree programme
- Using *VirtualDutch* Open Educational Resources,
- Institutional Virtual Learning Environment,
- Desktop Videoconferencing.
- Fully tutor-supported.
Distance programme (since 2009/10)

• Short courses
  – Beginners Dutch ‘Lagelands’ (started Sept 2009)
  – Advanced Dutch ‘Hogelands’ (started Sept 2009)
  – Early Modern Dutch (starts Sept 2010)
  – Business Dutch (starts Sept 2010)

• PgCert / PgDipl / MA Dutch Cultural Studies
  – Postgraduate Certificate (started Sept 2009)
  – Postgraduate Diploma (starts Sept 2010)
  – MA Dutch Cultural Studies (starts Sept 2011)
Short Courses: e.g. Beginners Dutch

• ‘Lagelands’: Beginners Dutch
  – provides learners with the skills they need to speak, write and understand simple Dutch in a range of everyday contexts,
  – requires no prior knowledge of the language,
  – outcome of a level comparable to A2 as defined by the Council of Europe,
  – runs twice per year, taught over a 16 weeks period,
  – the language of instruction is English.
PgCert / PgDipl / MA
Dutch Cultural Studies (by distance learning)

- Opportunity to study the modern society of the Netherlands and Flanders,
- teaching staff are drawn from UCL and Sheffield,
- taught in English; available to students without previous knowledge of Dutch as well as to those already proficient in the language,
- learning Dutch, or improving one’s command of it, part of the programme.
- Students take a core course on the contemporary society and culture of the Low Countries, and either one or two optional courses,
- all courses are fully tutor-supported,
- some scholarships available,
- leads to a fully recognized qualification from UCL.
Some Screenshots

DUTGD01 Certificate in Dutch Cultural Studies (block 2)

Gender and new belongings in the Netherlands

Jane Fenouilhe
(j.fenouilhe@ucl.ac.uk)

4. Gender and new belongings 1970-present

In the second half of this block we will look at the new ways in which different groups are able to participate in Dutch society.

- While Dutch and Flemish women have more of a say in the family and begin to participate in public life, some aspects of their lives are slow to change.
- There is growing acceptance of homosexual men and women and their lifestyles. Same-sex marriage becomes legal.
- Cultural clashes focus on the treatment of women in Islam; the concept of new cultural citizens offers a way forward.

Resources

- The personal and the political - Fenouilhe on the second wave of feminism
- Link to Amsterdam 'Homonument' website
- Poems by Elly de Waard
- 'Submission' - film by Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Theo van Gogh
- Sahella Najand, 'New cultural citizens'

Online webinar via DimDim, 19/11/09, 11:00 BST

You can join the webinar by clicking on the link in the invitation e-mail or by entering 'virtual dutch' into the meeting room field on http://www.dimdim.com.

Watch the recording of this session
Some concluding remarks

- In 2009/10 twelve students followed the postgraduate certificate, about 20 the short courses
- Short courses can be accredited towards the degree programme
- Feedback overwhelmingly positive
- Majority of learning resources openly available
- Community aspects: staff/students
- Collaboration way forward for LWT languages?
Thank you very much!

- VirtualDutch  
  <http://www.ducth.ac.uk/>

- Open Learning Environment Early Modern Low Countries history (OER Dutch history)  
  <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dutch/OER/>

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