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АВТОБИОГРАФИЧЕСКИЙ ОЧЕРК НЕПРЕРЫВНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

Аннотация: статья представляет собой описание образовательного опыта обычного человека, жителя Нидерландов. Автор делает акцент на последовательных этапах своего личного и профессионального становления, связанных с необходимостью индивидуального выбора путей продолжения образования. При этом он рассматривает неоднократные смены одной формы обучения (самообразования) другой как проявление непрерывности образования. Вспоминая обстоятельства перехода от одного вида обучения к другому, автор дает ретроспективную эмоциональную оценку внешним и внутренним причинам, основным мотивам и последствиям своего выбора, а также качеству полученного обучения. Представленный в форме автобиографического эссе фактический материал персонализирован, реален и интересен своей обыденностью, за которой просматривается осознание конкретным человеком объективной необходимости в продолжении образования в любом возрасте. Накопление и систематизация подобных гуманитарных описаний могут составить базу для дальнейших научных обобщений в сфере изучения феномена непрерывности образования. Предлагаемая автором информация также позволяет составить представление об исторически сложившейся вариативности форм получения основного и профессионального образования в Голландии¹.

Ключевые слова: автобиографический метод, непрерывное образование, опыт обучения.

MEIJLINK Willem

LIFELONG LEARNING AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Abstract: the article presents the description of educational experience of an ordinary person, the Netherlands citizen. The author lays emphasis on the successive stages of his personal and professional development, related to the necessity of making the individual choice of the ways to continue his education. In this connection the author considers the multiple changes of one form of learning (self study) by another as the manifestation of educational continuity. Traveling down the memory line the author traces the circumstances of transition from one type of learning to another and gives the retrospective emotional evaluation of external and internal causes, principal motives and consequences of his choices, and the quality of acquired education. Presented in the form of autobiographical essay the factual material is personalized, real and interesting by its commonness, behind which one may see a concrete person realization of the objective need for the continuation of education at any age. The accumulation and systematization of similar humanitarian descriptions might serve as a basis for further scientific generalizations in the sphere of studying the phenomenon of educational continuity. The information offered by the author allows getting an idea about historically developed variability of the forms of main and professional education in Holland.

Key words: autobiographical method, lifelong learning, educational experience.

They can take away everything, but not what you
have learned...

Dutch saying

I'd like to preface my story and to warn my readers that I am not a specialist in pedagogy. I just want to share my biography **in the context of lifelong learning** and

¹ Оригинал статьи представлен в журнале на английском языке. См. URL: http://lll21.petrus.ru/index_en.php (Access 28.05.16).

maybe to express some ideas that come to my head as a result of my long experience. Again, I have to give my readers a second warning – English is not my native language as I was born and raised in the Netherlands, the city of Leiden. I was born in a family of an educator – my father was a chemistry and physics teacher at Higher Technical School (HTS) in Rotterdam. He went there every morning and came back home every night.

When I was 5 years old I went to primary school. It was one of the best schools in Leiden. It was called the Leiden Opleidings School. Opleiding means education. In general, the goal of primary school is to get pupils ready for middle school and to give them the basics. I studied there writing, reading, simple mathematics, what is called now three Rs. Also we learned about geographic and history of Holland. I liked it there and still have **good memories about my first teachers.**

The learning days were from Monday through Saturday, and we stayed at school about 8 hours per day. The attendance was mandatory. I don't remember it for sure, but I think that my parents didn't pay just by themselves; the school had been partially paid on a national level.

For evaluation we had a special book, the so called school diary (rapport in Dutch) and every three month parents got a report from the teacher in the school diary with marks, and they had to sign it. If the marks were not good enough, parents might be called to a parent conference with the teacher.

Then, when I turned 11 years old, I went to HBS Leiden School. HBS stands for Hogere Burger School and means high citizen's school. The goal of HBS is to choose your future – you may go straight to work or study more. In HBS pupils had two options – either study for four years, and then it was sort of linguistic classes, or five years, and then the emphasis fall on mathematics. I had been studying for 5 years because **I was fond of Math.** Other subjects that we studied there were natural sciences such as chemistry, physics, biology, languages – Dutch, English, French, German, then there were also such disciplines as geography, drawing, physical training.

The time of study in HBS lasts for 5 years, so at the end of that time pupils fall in the category of teenagers, and we all know that this really a difficult age. For instance, I was prone to various pranks (practical jokes), and my behavior left much to be desired, and my parents were often called to school to talk with the teachers. For me personally, **this time was not the time of my life, as I considered the learning process rather dull and too mandatory.** But thanks to this school and my parents **I got a good command of Math which was very helpful for me in my future life.** I had an inner motivation to finish this school and to study exact sciences well. The result was that I got a diploma with good marks.

But what to do now? I was 17 years old and I had to make a decision whether to go to work or study in a technical school. Please, mind that at that time the age of seventeen was not the same as now. What I mean, the teenagers were more infantile and it was difficult for them to make the right choice. However I was already more mature at that time and my wild hairs were a bit away. So after discussion with my parents I decided to go to a technical school for further education. Probably **the main reason was that I did not want to work** which was normal after education at the

HBS. I could have entered the university without any problem but I did not want to go there because **my idea was that the study there will be similar with that of HBS**, and as **I have already mentioned I thought that it was rather boring**. Also, one of the reasons was that I wanted to make it clear for myself what I want, so I went to the UTS (Uitgebreid Technische School) – advanced technical school as it was called instead of entering the university. UTS had two types of education – mechanical and electronics. The whole structure was new, it was started only 2 years before I went there. At first, the school was planned to teach only mechanics, but a year later they opened an electronics division. I chose the direction called «electronics». This type of school was quite new, that's why we had a very small class, only 7 boys the first year and 5 the second year (2 boys quit). **The good thing was that the education was bright and almost individual**. We got in that school mathematics, geography, a little English and Dutch but mainly we studied mathematics algebra and how to make design of electrical circuitries and we also got sort of labor education as there was a lot of practice in mechanics and electronics. **I was more and more eager to learn about electronics**. I made electronic schemes myself and I assembled radio amplifiers. I graduated without any problem and my lowest mark was 7 (on the scale of 10). **It was my first meaningful achievement**, and my parents were very proud of me. My father invited me to be his assistant at school (in that time called MTS), and offered a possibility to study there. **I had a strong wish to be absolutely independent**, so I decided not to do that. Instead I went to MTS – Middle Technical School in Haarlem. I did it on purpose because **I did not want to be under my father wings** although he meant well. I still think what I chose in that time was the best for me.

At MTS you learned mainly electronics very diverse in different parts as weakcurrent/hightensioncurrent/transmission/electronics/electrical power. Besides this technical designing, a load of mathematics, physics, chemistry and a little bit Dutch, English and German. The school hours were from Monday until Saturday 8 hours a day except Wednesdays afternoon and Saturdays afternoon when the hours ended earlier.

At the HTS the third year included a course of labor education – that is envisioned compulsory work in four different factories. That meant that I had to work for me three months at the machine factory, three months at the Navy electronic laboratory and three months at a factory (AEG – Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft) in Germany and four months at the television tube factory (PYE Ltd) in England. The last two were most important personally for me because of **the language study since the school didn't provide with adequate linguistic education and I wanted to go abroad for my internship**. But the school had to give permission to go. Every two weeks you had to make a report about your contribution in the work of the whole factory. I graduate after 4 years in electronics. My marks were good and I graduated cum laude.

Upon graduation from MTS I had to be recruited in the Army. This was a must for boys when they reach the age of 18. My military service lasted for 2 years. I served in Germany, I was stationed as electronics engineer and I'd been trained as an electronics specialist for the first three month of my service in the army. The name of

the unit was «verbindingsdienst» what meant connection service My service in the army was two years instead of 18 month but that was because I was a specialist. In the beginning **it was very boring and I did not like the system at all** but don't forget I went in the army in 1960 and was already older than most of the boys (21years old, and most of the boys were 18). **Besides in general I am against the army and its purpose.** After my training (3 month) I went to Germany to be in active army divisions (paraat) because I served at the times of «cold war» and I was stationed in Celle near the East Germany border. To my mind, on the whole the military system is huge and dumb. I was able to come home almost every weekend and officially you were allowed to be home only every 4 weeks. To tell you the truth, I learned to be a genius in being invisible given my frequent trips home. Conclusion for me was that **the two years in the army were lost years and later I found out how difficult it was to start studying again.**

After my military service I entered the TU (Technical University of Delft) and got two part-time jobs: both at Amsterdam Free University and in Delft as an assistant to help the students with their education as well as to study myself. I started in Amsterdam at the V.U (Free University) and at the very moment I began my working career I became aware of a major problem. **I graduated from school with the idea to know everything, but I found out that it was a total mistake.** I knew more theory than practice. **The first thing I discovered was that my education was not at all up to date.** I give you an example. For instance in my education time I learned about and got familiar with electronic valves and circuits but as soon as I went to work in Amsterdam I saw that they already used transistors there, and I did not know anything about them. **I had to study again independently through books and practice.** I think, you may call it lifelong learning. In my view lifelong learning happens when the situation or objective circumstances make you study because you don't have enough knowledge.

After 4 years I graduated from the university. The TU is situated in Delft what was close to my home city where I still lived with my parents. The level of education is very high and still is famous all over the world. For instance, solar vehicle was invented in the Delft University.

In about 4 years I relocated and started working at the University of Leiden for the Faculty of Medicine Department of Physiology as electronic engineer. I had been working there for 25 years until I was 50 years old. My job was interdisciplinary between medicine and electronics – for instance, we studied the human body functions and interpret it via electronics. After a while I got used to deal with human aspects (physiology) nerve systems biorhythms, etc.

And for the first time I had to deal with simple digital circuits. **And again I had to renew my study** to learn about logic circuits and about Boolean algebra.....until learning how to use P.C. in the process.

It was a challenge because the electronics science had been changing rapidly and **I had to do self studying again,** especially about the start of the digital electronics. Again, that what I would call lifelong learning.

When I turned 50 I had to quit because of severe budget cuts at the university. I was not asked to go, but given the financial situation it was the best time to retire. So

I stopped and got freelance work with more mechanical devices (old cars, mobile homes, and trailers), which was also was my hobby and still is.

After I got retired and choose to work in a mechanical work area I went to school again to get my exams in connection with the new job. The customers of the enterprise where I worked wanted someone who would have had an official status to do repairing. In my case I even got a license to be a official inspector in that field. This is, in my humble opinion, also a case of lifelong learning.

At present I still work and like challenging problems with mechanics or electronics. I have a small shop where I can solve difficult technical issues with cars and trailers. And, yes, I keep learning...

I can go on with this phrase but **the question is not what you learned at school but how to keep up to date with the presence.** As a matter I think that school is only a start to know basics. In the long run you have to keep on studying. Not only for the sake of the company you work for but also **what is much more important to keep your mind sharp and develop yourself.** It is a joy to do that.

Also it is stimulated by our government to participate in lifelong learning. And it is already common in Holland to follow an update course especially in the health care. As example my physiotherapist follows every half year a special course. Schoolteachers also go to courses to update their experience and knowledge regularly and it is a must to do it. In the technical branch it is the same way and even more important because of the rapid change of new information technologies, new materials, computer knowledge, etc.

Retired people may take courses to develop knowledge and keep up to date and especially get familiar with modern electronic devices, computers smart phones television, and household stuff. In my personal view it is very important to keep upgrading one's knowledge. **Lifelong learning is good for your mind and health of your body and sense¹.**

¹ I am not so familiar with the present form of education but here are the links where one can look up.

URL: <http://www.expatica.com/nl/education/Education-in-the-Netherlands>;

URL: <http://www.iamsterdam.com/en/local/move/dutch-education-system/primary-school>;

URL: <http://www.freedutch.nl/node/45> URL: <http://www.iamexpat.nl/read-and-discuss/education/articles/the-dutch-education-system-primary-secondary-education%23sthash.UkqLOEbU.dpuf>;

URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_the_Netherlands (Access 28.05.16).