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Teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest

A perspective from continental European pedagogy

Carlos van Kan

Teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest

A perspective from continental European pedagogy

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Education (….) is where we decide whether we love our children enough
not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices,
nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new,
something unforeseen by us (….).

Hannah Arendt (1961, p. 196)

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General introduction

Chapter 1
General introduction

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> *'In all aspects of the education system, consideration of the child's best interests must be a primary consideration'*
> **(The Convention on the Rights of the Child and education, Unesco/ Unicef, 2007, p. 118)**

1.1 Positioning

This thesis reports on an interpretative research project about teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. The thesis comprises four closely related studies. A total of thirty-seven teachers working at elementary or secondary schools in both regular and special education participated in the research project.

The research project is connected to the research of Ponte (e.g. 2003, 2009), in which the complexity of interactions between teachers and their pupils and the social context in which these interactions take place formed one of the central lines of research. Ponte (2009, p. 13) argues that:

> ...education is an open process, where outcomes cannot be predicted with any certainty. For this reason I believe that research should not be directed at assessing educational relationships or pupil-teacher interactions in terms of good or bad, but at obtaining insight into their complexity.

An important aspect of this complexity, which lies at the heart of the present thesis, is the inherent moral significance that is ascribed to teacher-pupil interactions by teachers. Inherent, here, signifies that every classroom interaction, regardless of its quality or implications, conveys mores (Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993; Buzelli & Johnston, 2002; Ax & Ponte, 2010). In other words, every classroom interaction, whether intended or unintended, can be interpreted in terms of its moral impact. More specifically for the purposes of this thesis, teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions are connected to debates concerning the question: 'What serves the pupils' best interest and why is that the case?'

In this thesis the inherent moral significance of teacher-pupil interactions is related to (1) debates in continental European pedagogy[1] about 'what is' and 'what

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Continental European pedagogy refers not so much to a geographical demarcation as to a particular tradition of educational theorising, which originated in continental Europe. Scholars from other parts of the world like John Dewey, Paulo Freire and Max van Manen are also renowned representatives of this tradition.

ought to be', and (2) a value-based understanding of teachers' professionalism. It has been argued in the tradition of continental European pedagogy that the interactions between teachers and their pupils are of a teleological kind, i.e. always oriented towards a particular aim (Van Manen, 1994; Biesta, 2007; Ruyter & Kole, 2010). Following this line of reasoning implies that teachers should not only be concerned with the instrumental aspects of their classroom interactions, but also with the desirability of what their actions bring about. Consequently, teachers are not just considered operators but professionals that have moral ideas about the means they can use in education to try to achieve certain desirable outcomes. Biesta (2010a, p. 501) argues that: 'The means we use in education – our teaching styles, the ways in which we try to promote certain ways of doing and being – are not neutral with regard to the ends but potentially also teach something to students.' This particular outlook on teachers' professional practice is what constitutes a value-based model of teachers' professionalism.

This line of argumentation implies that, whether consciously or unconsciously, teachers will have moral ideas about what they consider educationally desirable for their pupils. These ideas may be consistent or inconsistent and well or crudely articulated. It seems plausible when teachers are being asked to interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest they will draw upon educational values and ideals. This research project focused on eliciting the educational values and ideals that guide teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of what they consider to be most desirable for their pupils.

Several studies on teachers' ideals have shown that deep-seated values inform and inspire their conduct in the classroom (e.g. Husu & Tirri, 2007; Biesta, 2009). By referring to studies by Ben-Peretz (1995), Foster (1997), Hansen (1995), and Johnson (1990), Hansen (2000, p.45) concludes: '…that many teachers have ideals and that they take them seriously as sources of moral and intellectual guidance.' Although a lot has been written about the moral qualities of teachers in general (e.g. Campbell, 2008a), the actual substance of teachers' educational ideals is for a great part left unattended (Ruyter & Kole, 2010). To put this conclusion into perspective, Ruyter & Kole argue that it is possible that authors implicitly refer to the concept of ideals, without using the word itself. Hansen (2001), for instance, lists the following concepts used by other authors, which he considers bear a family resemblance to the concept of ideals: student teachers' passionate creeds (LaBoskey, 1994), teachers' visions (Hammerness, 1999) and teacher's images (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Clandinin, 1986; Elbaz, 1983; Joseph & Burnaford, 1994; Koerner, 1989). Apart from the question of whether one holds a rather loose or strict conception of teachers' ideals, two observations can be made on these examples from the literature. The first is that a great part of this literature has a focus that stems from sources external to the practice of teaching, such as moral philosophy and social and political ideology, instead of from teaching itself (cf. Hansen, 1998). The second observation is that a great part of literature that involves teachers' ideals is exhortatory in nature and not based on comprehensive empirical accounts of classroom practices (cf. Lingard, 2009). In other words, this literature has a strongly prescriptive character. In this regard Campbell (2008a) suggests that there should be more empirical studies devoted to exemplifying the

moral and ethical realities of teaching. The present research project sets out to give a comprehensive empirical account of teachers' educational values and ideals when interpreting their pupil's best interest.

The following subsections will further elaborate the theoretical underpinnings of the present study, i.e. debates in continental European pedagogy about 'what is' and 'what ought to be', and a value-based understanding of teachers' professionalism. The methodological implications of these underpinnings will also be taken into account.

1.2 A perspective from continental European pedagogy

Continental European pedagogy is the science that studies the child's upbringing in different domains, such as education, social work, child welfare and law (e.g. van Manen, 1991; Biesta, 2011a; Ponte & Ax, 2009). The focus of this thesis is on the education domain. The meaning of the word 'pedagogy' in continental European literature is different from its meaning in Anglo-American literature, in which the word 'pedagogy' merely refers to teaching strategies or methods of instruction. The word 'pedagogy' comes from the Greek words 'paidos', which means 'child', and 'ago', which means 'lead'; it literally means 'to lead the child'. Ponte & Ax (2009, p. 253) describe the research object of continental European pedagogy as follows: 'This science seeks answers to questions about what kind of human beings children are and should become and how they can be raised toward becoming such human beings, taking into account the social context in which this process of upbringing takes place'. In continental Europe, pedagogy is a separate discipline from, for example, philosophy, psychology and sociology, often located in separate departments in university faculties. This discipline is concerned with all aspects of bringing up children, specifically their emotional, intellectual, physical and moral growth.

For the present thesis it is significant that the specific relationship between the adult (e.g. the teacher) and the child (e.g. the pupil), and the social context in which this relationship takes place forms the very essence of continental European pedagogy. This relationship is characterised by a duality: teachers will always care for their pupils as they are and, at the same time, care for pupils for what they may become (Nohl, 1982; Van Manen, 1994). In other words, teacher-pupil interactions are principally concerned with the relation between the empirical question 'what is the case' and the moral question 'what ought to be the case' (Ponte, 2009). In line with a longstanding tradition in educational philosophy and theory (e.g. Carr, 1995; Mahony, 2009), several scholars within continental European pedagogy have claimed that 'what ought to be the case' cannot logically be derived from 'what is' (e.g. van Manen, 1977; Biesta, 2010b; Ponte, 2012). If, for example, teachers were to decide that it would be in their pupils' best interest to invite parents to talk about their profession in the classroom, this cannot be logically derived from the empirically established absence of these kind of parent talks. What is educationally desirable can only be established through critical deliberation (Gilabert, 2005; Ponte, 2012). In continental European pedagogy debates about what 'is' and what

'ought to be' have for the most part been played out at the level of 'grand theories' (such as the positivist, phenomenological and critical theories), which are firmly grounded in educational philosophy (cf. Miedema, 1997a).

The object of research in continental European pedagogy was just described in general terms. However, one cannot speak of continental European pedagogy as if it were one coherent meta-theory. It consists of a diversity of theoretical positions. There is no consensus about the relationship between aims, methods and justification of the upbringing process, nor is there consensus about the scientific aims and the research strategy to reach those aims (Miedema, 1997b; Ponte & Ax, 2009). Continental European pedagogy is commonly perceived as the 'land of three strands': the *geisteswissenschaftliche*, the empirical-analytical and the critical strands.

In the *geisteswissenschaftliche* strand, which originated in the nineteenth century, the child is seen as a distinct form of human existence (Langeveld, 1969) and is no longer considered to be a little adult (c.f. Langeveld, 1969; Van Manen, 1994; Imelman, 1995). Consequently, the methods of upbringing should connect to the way children experience this distinct stage of life and protect them from adult life (Aries, 1962). The goal of upbringing from a *geisteswissenschaftliche* perspective concerns the becoming of a person, which means that children will have to develop the ability to take responsibility and learn to accept that they can be held accountable for their actions (Beugelsdijk, Souverein & Levering, 1997). The scientific aim is to understand the normative character of upbringing practices by means of hermeneutics and phenomenological research strategies.

In contrast to the other strands, the empirical-analytical strand does not have a normative orientation. It is acknowledged within this strand that moral statements play a part in upbringing practices but, according to this strand, they do not belong to the scientific domain (Brezinka, 1971). The empirical-analytical strand is primarily concerned with instrumental upbringing questions: questions about the conditions under which different upbringing goals can be achieved by the adult and what kind of interventions they have at their disposal (cf. Meijer, 1999). The geisteswissenschaftliche pedagogy is looked upon as being too speculative, philosophical and prescriptive (Ponte & Ax, 2009). The scientific aim is to formulate cause and effect relationships in upbringing situations by means of deductive-nomological research strategies.

The critical strand developed firstly in response to the *geisteswissenschaftliche* strand, which was considered to give too little attention to the social and political context of the relationship between adults and children and, secondly, in response to the empirical-analytical strand, which overtly disregarded normative concepts. In the critical strand, the goal of bringing up children concerns the abolition of societal constraints in order to emancipate children. The method of upbringing is formulated in terms of helping children to develop communicative competencies, by acknowledging them as equal partners in interaction processes and providing them with opportunities to learn to participate in conversations (Mollenhauer, 1964/1979; Masschelein, 2005). With regard to the scientific aim of this particular strand, Ponte & Ax (2009, p. 259) write: 'The scientific aim is to develop emancipatory knowledge and insight into knowledge interest as a base for social transfor-

mation.' Typical research strategies are ideology-critique and action research.

This general overview of the strands in continental European pedagogy illustrates that there are on-going debates about the means and ends of upbringing. These debates continue because the theoretical positions stem from different outlooks on what it means to be an educated person, how children can be helped to become such human beings and what constitutes the good society. These fundamental debates in continental European pedagogy are mainly philosophical in nature and not based on comprehensive empirical accounts of classroom practices. As a consequence, these debates are difficult to connect to concrete classroom situations (cf. Miedema, 1997a; Heytink, 2002; Heytink & De Winter, 2002; Stevens & Van der Wolf; Van der Schee, 2002). However, debates about what kind of upbringing serves the best interest of children are likely to have their counterpart in the actual practice of teaching.

At the level of their day-to-day classroom experiences, teachers probably have different views, whether consciously or unconsciously, on what they consider to be educationally desirable for their pupils and these views may be consistent or inconsistent and well or crudely articulated. Some teachers might conceive good education as preparing pupils for a harsh and demanding world, and therefore promote their pupils' physical and mental development. Other teachers might conceive good education as helping pupils to become happy and balanced people and want them to collaborate with their classmates as much as possible in order to acquire good social and communicative skills. In concurrence with Hansen (2000) and Biesta (2009), it can be assumed that their educational outlooks will reverberate in the way they interpret their daily classroom interaction. However, it is not very likely that teachers will articulate the educational values and ideals that underlie their daily classroom interactions in philosophical or theoretical terms. This research project set out to locate debates about 'what is' and 'what ought to be' at the heart of teachers' day-to-day classroom practices, by asking teachers to relate their classroom interactions as they are to what they consider to be most desirable for their pupils. The general research question was therefore:

> *'How do teachers interpret their daily classroom interactions in terms of their pupils best interest?'*

This research question was broken down into two sub questions:

> *'How do teachers legitimise [2] their daily classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?'*

The aim of researching the first sub question was to find patterns and structures in the way teachers legitimise their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. The second sub question built upon the first sub question and was formulated:

> *'How do teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils best interest?'*

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In accordance with Macmillan English Dictionary, we mean by legitimise 'to make something seem morally right or reasonable'. Retrieved September 21, 2012, from http://www.macmillandictionary.com/thesaurus/british/legitimise

For example, are teachers decisive or doubtful when legitimising their classroom interactions? Do teachers draw on different legitimisation types or do they draw on one legitimisation type in particular when legitimising their classroom interactions? With regard to the second sub question, differences in ways of giving expression to the legitimisation types between teachers, as well as different institutional contexts were taken into account.

In the next section a value-based model of teachers' professionalism is presented, which underlines the fact that teachers necessarily draw on moral ideas when interacting with their pupils.

1.3 A value-based model of professionalism

From the perspective of continental European pedagogy, classroom interactions can always be connected to the question 'what course of action serves the pupils' best interest and why'. This means that moral considerations form an integral part of teachers' day-to-day classroom interactions. Moreover, teachers' classroom interactions will always be informed by what third parties expect them to do and their own understanding of what is needed in their daily classroom practices. Ponte (2003, 2009) argues that teachers have to work within general frameworks that are laid down by the government, school boards, their management team and so forth. At the same time they have certain degrees of freedom to make their own choices with regard to what they consider to be adequate teaching for particular pupils at a particular moment in a particular situation (cf. Ruyter & Kole, 2010). Ponte continues by arguing that professionalism requires teachers to keep seeking a balance between formulating their goals themselves and determining how to achieve those goals, and fitting in with procedures set by others in order to achieve goals set by others (cf. Cribb, 2009; Gleeson, Davies & Wheeler, 2005). This requires them to balance different interests. It could, for example, be in the school's best interest to promote technical skills and knowledge, because (in the Dutch context) the government has funding programmes available for schools that raise pupils' interest in working in the technology sector, which is suffering from a shortage of skilled technicians. However, this may not be compatible with a teacher's mission to help pupils to discover their own passion in life.

 This example indicates that teachers' classroom interactions are not only connected to the instrumental aspects of their classroom practices, such as how to prepare pupils for their exams or how to teach pupils particular subject matter in an effective way, but also touch upon teachers' values and ideals with regard to what they consider to be good teaching. These value-based aspects of teachers' professional conduct have been for the most part disregarded in a model of teachers' professionalism that stems from an 'evidence-based' rationality (e.g. Oakley, 2002; Slavin, 2002). Following an evidence-based model of teachers' professionalism implies that teachers' judgments should focus on selecting those teaching strategies and protocols that research has proven to be effective. This perspective on teachers' professionalism connects to what Mannheim (1940), with

reference to Weber (1946, first published in 1902-24), calls 'functional rationality'. This rationality concerns technical or instrumental considerations about how to reach pregiven goals in the most efficient and effective manner. Debates about the desirability of the substance of particular goals are considered irrelevant for the realisation of those goals. In contrast with functional rationality, Mannhein used the term 'substantive rationality'. This rationality concerns normative and value-based considerations about the desirability of particular goals and the means to achieve those goals. Open debates about what 'the substance' of reality should look like and how to realise such a reality constitutes the main vehicle for legitimising particular points of view (cf. Ax & Ponte, 2008; Biesta, 2010b; Groundwater-Smith, Mitchell, Mockler, Ponte & Rönnerman, 2012).

Scholars such as Atkinson (2000), Blackmore (2002) and Evetts (2009), who problematise an evidence-based model of professionalism often use the argument that the teaching profession also requires teachers to draw on moral ideas about what they consider educationally desirable for their pupils. In line with this argument, Biesta (2010a) proposes a 'value-based' model of teachers' professionalism and argues that teachers' judgments are not simply about finding the most effective means to achieve certain ends, but always involve an evaluation of the desirability of the educational impact that is produced by those means, whether intentionally or not. Such an evaluation requires, in the words of Mannheim, a substantive rationality.

This claim can be illustrated by problematising 'teaching to test' practices. Teaching to test is a practice where the curriculum is heavily focused on preparing pupils for standardised tests. It increases pupils' performance on mandated tests, which in itself could be considered a highly valued outcome. However, from a learning perspective this practice could be problematic, because it may lead to a limited and isolated understanding of the curriculum content. Additionally, from an educational point of view this practice could be regarded as undesirable for another reason: teaching to the test seems to promote the idea to pupils that test scores are an end in themselves, instead of an indication of their mastery of particular skills, subject matter or virtues.

What can be learned from this example is that pupils will not only learn from what they aretaught but also from the manner in which they are taught (cf. Biesta, 2010a). Dottin (2009) argues that professional judgement in education links means and ends reciprocally. This point is also made by Gholami and Husu (2010), who coined the term praxial knowledge, referring to teachers' reasoning in which the means are not technically isolated from the ends. From this it follows that teachers should always consider whether means as well as ends are educationally desirable when making professional judgments. In order to do this, they need to be able to examine their educational values and ideals.

It is important for teachers to elucidate educational values and ideals that guide their interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest, because this enables them to express their educational standpoints (cf. Wallace, 2005; Ponte, 2012). In connection with this claim Mahony (2009, p. 986) states: '…I would argue that teachers might benefit from support in knowing how to formulate the basis on which to articulate and sustain their 'principled'

positions.' Supporting teachers to inquire into the educational values and ideals that underlie their reasoning about their pupils' best interest can fuel collegial and public deliberation about what constitutes good education. In connection with this point, De Ruyter and Kole (2010) argue that these kind of deliberations are not confined to the practicalities of teaching but should involve questions of a wider scope, such as: 'What constitutes the good society?' In this regard, deliberation about the purpose of education requires participants from within civil society and governmental institutions as well as teachers.

By trying to elucidate the substance of teachers' educational values and ideals that guide their interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest, this thesis aims to contribute to (1) a comprehensive understanding of the inherent moral dimension that is necessarily involved in teachers' classroom interactions; and (2) recognition of the importance of teachers being able to participate in deliberation about the purpose of education.

In the two previous subsections it was argued that teachers' educational values and ideals form an innate part of their classroom practices. This raises the question of what research strategy and method is suitable for studying teachers' educational values and ideals. This methodological issue will be the focus of the next subsection.

1.4 A phenomenologically informed methodology

In line with the 'is-ought' debates in continental European pedagogy and the value-based view of professionalism, moral significance is construed as something that permeates the work of teaching (e.g. Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990; Van Manen, 1991; Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993; Biesta & Miedema, 2002; Biesta, 2007; Ax & Ponte, 2010). The inherent moral significance of teacher-pupil interactions is, in the present thesis, connected to the argument that these interactions can be always subjected to moral interpretations, and that these interpretations will in turn be guided by teachers' educational values and ideals (cf. Phelan, 2001). Biesta argues (2009, p. 189):

> We shouldn't think, therefore, of educational values and ideals as something that teachers explicitly hold and endorse. Educational values and ideals 'happen' or 'occur'. They are part of what teachers do and think, they guide teachers' action, they support their decisions, they inform a particular, educational way of seeing and understanding, and they provide inspiration and motivation

Educational values and ideals, thus, can be considered part of the moral dimension of teachers' everyday classroom experiences or what in the phenomenological research tradition is called 'life world'. The concept of 'life world' can be considered an essential element of phenomenology and can be described as the relational world of lived experience as opposed to an objective world 'out there' (Todres, Galvin, & Dahlberg, 2007; Van Manen, 2007). In the present study a life world perspective

implies that we consider educational values and ideals to be embedded in teachers' classroom practices, and conceive it as a challenging task to obtain insight into their substance and significance. This is different from what one might call an 'external perspective' on teachers' educational values and ideals, i.e. looking upon educational values and ideals as a particular set of moral codes or rules that can be 'imported' from outside the world of teaching and explicitly taught to teachers (Hansen, 1998; Van Kan, Ponte, Verloop, 2010a).

Considering teachers' educational values and ideals as an innate part of their life world has two methodological implications for this study. The first methodological implication is connected to the aim of the study, which was to understand how teachers interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest, rather than providing an explanation of some sort. Explaining is in line with what Borko, Withcomb & Byrnes (2008) call effects research, which seeks to find generalised patterns of relationships between a small number of isolated variables in an experimental setting. The aim of understanding is congruent with an interpretative research approach, which is described by Borko et al. (2008, p. 1025) as follows: 'Interpretative research seeks to perceive, describe, analyse, and interpret a specific situation or context, preserving its complexity and communicating the perspectives of the actual participants.' Adopting a life world perspective indicates that understanding how teachers interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest is not possible when these interactions are isolated from the social context in which they took place (cf. Ponte, 2009). In other words, understanding in terms of a life world perspective requires real-life situations.

The second implication, which is closely connected to the first, concerns the research method. In order to concur with this study's research aim, a research method was needed that was suitable for perceiving, describing, analysing and interpreting, rather than measuring. Methods in line with effects research are intended to measure the influence of isolated variables on a targeted outcome. Typical research instruments in effects research are standardised tests, questionnaires and observation lists. Methods that concur with a 'life world' perspective or interpretative research aim to describe in depth how people interpret their experiences in their own terms (Pope & Denicolo, 2001; Butt, 2004). Borko et al. (2008, p. 1026) define the particularities of methods in interpretative research as follows: 'Participants' voice and discourse are critical to capture, so researchers record interactions in naturalistic settings, conduct interviews, and review written artefacts...' Our research needed a research method that captured teachers' interpretations of authentic experiences, i.e. classroom interactions.

In order to meet both methodological implications, one study of this research project was devoted the development of a research method that focused on understanding and describing teachers' interpretations of their classroom interaction in terms of their pupils' best interest. This resulted in the development of a repertory interview procedure (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2010a), which is a qualitative adaption of Kelly's (1955) standard repertory grid application. Further details of this repertory interview procedure will be presented in Chapter 2.

1.5 Points of departure

The 'is-ought' debates in continental European pedagogy on the inherent moral significance of teaching, the value-based model of teachers' professionalism and phenomenologically informed methodology can be considered the points of departure for each study in the present research project. These points had a more or less prominent role in each of the four inter-connected studies, as will become clear in the following sections.

1.6 Focus and overview of this thesis

In order to answer the general research question: '*How do teachers interpret their daily classroom interactions in terms of their pupils best interest?*', four closely related studies were conducted. Each study was based on theoretical concepts as well as empirical data.

Chapter 2
The first study focused on a methodological problem, namely: how to employ a method that enables an exploration of teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. The leading research question in this study was how to conduct research on the inherent moral significance of teaching. The repertory grid application (Kelly, 1955), which is a structured interview that enables the exploration of one person's views, seemed at first sight an adequate response to this complex assignment. The present study examined to what extent this application can be considered a fruitful strategy to probe teachers to articulate their more or less implicit educational values and ideals when interpreting their classroom interactions. During a series of empirical try-outs, several challenges were encountered with regard to the 'life world' qualities of this methodology, which will be laid out in detail. These challenges formed the main reason for creating a repertory interview, which can be considered a phenomenological elaboration of the standard repertory grid application. Chapter 2 gives a comprehensive account of the content of this elaboration and the way it came about.

Chapter 3
A further puzzling question was how to analyse the qualitative data that was collected by means of the repertory interview. The task was to develop a descriptive framework, informed by theoretical concepts from continental European pedagogy, which would enable a systematic description of what teachers consider to be in their pupils' best interest. Because of difficulties connecting theoretical concepts to empirical data directly, an intermediary operation was required. In other words, a descriptive framework was needed to mediate between these concepts and the interview data. To meet this requirement an overarching question that plays a central role in continental European pedagogy: 'Who should be taught what, when, how, and why?' (Imelman, 1995, p. 60) was used as the starting point for the development of the framework. Chapter 3 sets out in detail the iterative process of getting from this question to the descriptive framework.

Chapter 4
The third study reports on the first sub question of the central research question, i.e. '*How do teachers legitimise their daily classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?*' The repertory interview was conducted with thirty-seven teachers. With the help of the descriptive framework based on the compound question 'Who should be taught what, how, when, and why?', a systematic analysis of the interview data was conducted. This resulted in a typology of legitimisations. A legitimisation type, in this study, refers to a particular pattern of educational values and ideals that teachers draw upon when they interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. The substance of these legitimisation types will be described in detail. The chapter concludes with a reflection on how these legitimisation types could be significant for teaching.

Chapter 5
The final study explores the second sub question of the central research question, i.e. '*How do teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils best interest?*' Differences in ways of giving expression to the legitimisation types between teachers, as well as different institutional contexts were taken into account. Drawing on the findings of the former studies, an analytical framework was developed to find themes in the interview data that would help to describe ways in which teachers give expression to the legitimisation types. The chapter concludes with a reflection on how different ways of legitimising classroom interactions related to serving each pupil's best interest.

Chapter 6
This chapter presents the general conclusion and discussion based on the findings described in the previous chapters.

Chapter 2

How to conduct research on the inherent moral significance of teaching:
A phenomenological elaboration of the standard repertory grid application

Chapter 2

How to conduct research on the inherent moral significance of teaching: A phenomenological elaboration of the standard repertory grid application[1]

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Abstract

George Kelly's repertory grid application seems a promising method for researching the inherent moral significance of teaching from a 'life world' perspective. However, we encountered several challenges employing the repertory grid in its standard form for an inquiry into the inherent moral significance of teachers' interpretations of their everyday classroom interactions. In this article we will set out in detail how, on the basis of the standard repertory grid application, we developed a repertory interview method that can be used to collect data that could foster a thorough understanding of the inherent moral significance of teachers' day-to-day classroom interactions.

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The moral significance of teaching

Several theories about teaching practice claim that teaching is more than anything else a moral practice (Hansen, 2001). The moral significance of teaching has been an important topic of debate from ancient times right through to the present day. Although contemporary theories on the moral significance of teaching are quite versatile, a general division can be made between those that have an external perspective and those that have an internal perspective. Theories that have an external perspective refer to the moral in teaching as a set of values and virtues, embraced by a particular group, which can be explicitly taught to teachers, students and pupils. From this perspective, an externally defined set of conditions, issues, or actions determines whether or not teaching practice has moral significance (Nucci, 1989; Beck, 1990; Lickona, 1991; Kelsey, 1993; Cohen, 1995). In contrast, theories that consider teaching an inherent moral practice have an internal perspective and view the moral significance of teaching as an inextricable part of teachers' everyday practices. From this perspective, the moral significance of teaching is construed as something that permeates the work of teaching: any specific teaching act has an inherent moral significance (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990; Van Manen, 1991; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; Biesta & Miedema, 2002; Biesta, 2007; Ax & Ponte, 2010). Because the moral significance of teaching from the latter perspective is connected to teachers' everyday classroom experiences, we refer to this as a 'life world' perspective. The concept of 'life world' can be considered an essential element of phenomenology and can be described as the relational world of lived experience as opposed to an objective world 'out there' (Van Manen, 2007; Todres, Galvin & Dahlberg, 2007).

2.1.2 A methodological challenge

Our ongoing research project on the moral significance of teachers' everyday practices has adopted the 'life world' perspective. Its aim is to explore teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their everyday classroom interactions. This research is being conducted in the context of both special and regular education. A total of thirty-seven teachers working in elementary and secondary schools participated in the data collection phase of this study.

We adopted Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory to study teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their day-to-day classroom interaction. Initially we thought the repertory grid, which is inextricably connected to the personal construct theory, would be a suitable method. This method aims to explore how people understand their worlds by eliciting personal constructs, i.e. in our case eliciting personal ways of construing the moral significance of their classroom interactions. However, a straightforward application of the standard repertory grid with this particular aim proved to be quite challenging. Although

several aspects of the standard repertory grid application were very useful as a starting point, we found that a careful rethinking of these aspects was needed when conducting 'life world' research.

In this paper we primarily focus on how we realized a phenomenological elaboration of five basis aspects of the standard repertory grid application in accordance with the 'life world' perspective. We used samples of the empirical data we gathered with this newly developed method in the context of our on-going research project to illustrate its 'life world' qualities.

Section 2.2 elaborates on the methodological implications and promising qualities of the repertory grid. Section 2.3 provides background information on Kelly's personal construct theory and the standard application of the repertory grid, and then goes on to examine the problems with using its standard application and to provide five desiderata. Section 2.4 sets out how we realised a phenomenological elaboration of these five desiderata, illustrating each desideratum with empirical data. Finally, in section 2.5 we reflect on the qualities of our phenomenological interpretation and its relation to the standard repertory grid application.

2.2 Methodological implications of a 'life world' perspective

Adopting a 'life world' perspective on the moral significance of teaching has some specific methodological implications, which differ from an external perspective. This section focuses on methodological implications that are connected to (a) the research aim and (b) research instruments for conducting 'life world' research on the way teachers interpret the moral significance of their classroom interactions. It then presents our reflections on the repertory grid as a research method that could meet the methodological implications connected to a 'life world' perspective.

The first methodological implication is connected to the aim of the study. The difference between an 'external' aim and a 'life world' aim with regard to a study on the moral significance teaching can be summarised in the following dichotomy; explaining versus understanding. An external perspective is largely congruent with effects research. Borko, Whitcomb & Byrnes (2008, pp. 1020) described the aim of effects research as follows: 'This research genre seeks to identify generalised patterns of relationships between characteristics of teachers (candidates), features of (teacher) education practices and programs, and learning of teachers (candidates) and K-12 students…' (brackets inserted by the author) This research genre enables moral educational programs or interventions of some sort to be considered the explanatory variables in experimental or quasi-experimental research designs. A 'life world' perspective is more in line with interpretative research. Borko et al. (2008, pp. 1025) described the aim of interpretative research: 'Interpretative research seeks to perceive, describe, analyse, and interpret a specific situation or context, preserving its complexity and communicating the perspectives of the actual participants.' From a 'life world' perspective, teaching practice is considered moral by its very nature. Consequently, the question is not whether teaching practice has moral significance, but how the inherent moral significance

of teaching is interpreted by the persons who are part of that practice, and how to understand the implications of these interpretations (Ponte, 2009). The first important methodological implication of adopting a life word perspective when researching the moral significance of teaching is to find a research method that fosters a deep understanding of the way teachers interpret their own classroom interactions.

The second methodological implication has to do with the research method. We refer to this as the difference between measuring and describing. Methods in line with an external perspective or effects research are intended to measure the influence of isolated variables on a targeted outcome. Moral practices or programs are expected, for instance, to influence teachers' moral reasoning or moral judgment (see Blatt & Kohlberg (1975), Thoma, Narvaez, Rest & Derryberry (1999) and Bebeau (2002, 2006) for specific examples). The effects of these 'moral interventions' are regularly articulated in quantifiable terms. Typical research instruments in effects research are standardised tests, questionnaires and observation lists. Methods that concur with a 'life world' perspective or interpretative research aim to describe the way people give meaning to their worlds. Borko et. al. (2008, pp. 1026) described the particularities of methods in interpretative research as follows: 'Participants' voice and discourse are critical to capture, so researchers record interactions in naturalistic settings, conduct interviews, and review written artefacts…' Specific examples of such studies can be found in the works of Van Manen (1999), Lippitz & Levering (2002) and Buzelli & Johnston (2002). The research methods used in interpretative research, thus, focus mainly on capturing qualitative data. A second important methodological implication of adopting a life word perspective when researching the moral significance of teaching is the need to find a research method that is able to thoroughly describe the way teachers give meaning to their own classroom interactions.

When researching how teachers interpret the moral meaning of their classroom interactions from a 'life world' perspective, the challenge is to find a research method that fosters understanding rather than explanation and, furthermore, fosters description rather than measurement. To address the methodological implications raised, we considered Kelly's personal construct theory and, more specifically, the research method associated with it, the repertory grid, to be a feasible approach (Kelly, 1955). The first promising quality of the repertory grid is connected to its focus on understanding the way people make sense of their life worlds by asking them to interpret specific phenomena from their life worlds (Walker & Winter, 2007); in our case their classroom interactions. This quality is congruent with our first methodological implication of 'life world' research, i.e. understanding instead of explaining. Furthermore, the repertory grid offers a structured way to help people explore and describe their views in their own terms (Jankowicz, 2004); in our case personal descriptions of the way teachers conceive their classroom interactions. This quality is in line with our second methodological implication of a 'life world' perspective, i.e. describing instead of measuring. However, during some initial tryouts with the standard repertory grid application we encountered some serious challenges with regard to these two implications.

The next section sets out these challenges in detail. It then goes on to examine the problems with using the repertory grid in its standard form and formulates five desiderata for conducting 'life world' research.

2.3 The merits of the repertory grid for 'life world' research

2.3.1 Kelly's personal construct theory

According to the personal construct theory, people build a system of internal representations of the phenomena they experience. People adjust and broaden this system of internal representations by recognising regularities and recurring patterns in their experience, which they represent internally by means of discriminations, called constructs (Janckowizc, 2004). These personal constructs help people to predict the way future phenomena will be experienced and interpreted; in this sense Kelly (1955) considered every individual his or her own scientist.

2.3.2 The standard repertory grid application

Kelly devised a method for operationalising his personal construct theory by means of the repertory grid procedure. The standard procedure of the repertory grid involves formulating a topic of investigation, defining a set of elements, eliciting a set of constructs that distinguish among these elements, and relating elements to constructs (Bannister & Mair, 1968; Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004; Jankowicz, 2004). Elements can be people, events, situations or things. Constructs can be expressed as bipolar adjective pairs (friendly - hostile, competitive -cooperative). A possible topic of investigation might, for example, be the way teachers construe their professional relationships in terms of their effectiveness. In that case pictures or name tags of a number of colleagues (e.g. Omar, Judith and Kim, see Table 2.1) could serve the purpose of elements in a grid. In order for the particular teacher to discriminate between the elements, an elicitation phrase is formulated such as: 'In what way are two relationships with your colleagues alike and different from a third in terms of their professional effectiveness?' A possible reply might be that relationships with Omar and Judith are alike in the sense that they are professionally enriching, and the relationship with Kim is different because that relationship is professionally insignificant to the particular teacher. The bipolar adjective labels 'professionally enriching' - 'professionally insignificant' together constitute a personal construct. The poles of the construct can be regarded as representing extremes on a five-point scale, running left to right from a value of 1 to a value of 5 (Henze, 2006). The table below shows a grid display of this example.

Table 2.1 Example of a grid display

Topic	Professional relationships			
Elements	Colleagues			
Constructs	1 construct elicited from the teacher			
Ratings	On a 5-point scale			
	Omar	Judith	Kim	
Enriching	1	2	5	Insignificant

In our particular study eliciting teachers' constructs took the form of eliciting teachers to interpret and articulate their views on morally meaningful classroom interactions. At first sight the repertory grid procedure seemed to have the potential to systematically enquire into how teachers give meaning to the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions.

2.3.3 Challenges concerning the standard repertory grid application

Even though at first glance the repertory grid looked promising, after some initial try-outs with the standard repertory grid application we came across some serious difficulties with regard to researching the moral significance of teaching practice from a 'life world' perspective. This section describes these difficulties in detail. Five considerations are formulated accompanied by five challenges specifically associated with the standard repertory grid application (see Table 2.2). Each subsection concludes with a methodological desideratum.

Table 2.2 Considerations and challenges with the standard repertory grid

	Aspects of the standard repertory grid application that need further consideration	Challenges with regard to the standard repertory grid application
1	The method for obtaining elements	The provision of elements by the researcher without involving the subject
2	The representation of elements	The abstracted representations of elements primarily created by the researcher
3	The standard method of eliciting constructs	The complexity of the standard method for eliciting constructs
4	The bipolarity of constructs	The strictly dichotomous character of constructs
5	The meaningfulness of constructs	The superficiality of constructs

2.3.3.1 The method for obtaining elements

In the standard repertory grid application, the researcher provides elements beforehand, e.g. cards with written names of several pupils. This makes it possible to compare the way a group of people give meaning to predetermined elements. This aspect is in line with a more nomothetic approach but, in our experience, does not fit the purpose of understanding teachers' individual perspectives or intentions with regard to their everyday classroom interactions. Stephens & Gammack (1994, p. 176) argued in connection with this: 'When elements are provided by an experimenter, this can compromise subjects' freedom to choose elements meaningful to themselves and requires the experimenter to assume that a subject's construal of the elements is in some way compatible with the rationale for the choice of elements themselves.' Consequently, our first desideratum was that teachers should be allowed to be actively involved in the process of selecting elements.

2.3.3.2 The representation of elements

In the standard repertory grid application, elements are mostly represented by visual abstractions or general descriptions created solely by the researcher. Traditional elements are often generalisations of a specific aspect of the problem that is under investigation. An example of such general elements could be pictograms representing a variety of phrases which in turn represent different kinds of pupils. A point of concern is that these sorts of generic elements might compromise the elicitation of personal meanings that are connected to teachers' own practices. Yorke (1978), for instance, wrote about the use of superficial discriminations when responding to the TARGET (teaching appraisal by repertory grid elicitation techniques) grid of Hopwood & Keen (1977), which uses videotaped extracts of the teaching of individuals unknown to the subject. Our goal was to obtain elements that could be considered authentic slices from teachers' life worlds. Accordingly, our second desideratum was that the elements were created in a spirit of cooperation and were authentic representations of teachers' day-to-day teaching practices.

2.3.3.3 The standard method of eliciting constructs

The standard process of eliciting constructs from elements is known as the triadic method. The normal elicitation phrase would have the following structure: In what way are two elements (for example pupils) the same as each other and different from a third in terms of the particular topic under investigation (for example in terms of their potential). This triadic method is administered in order to capture the bipolarity of the construct. Because we wanted to work with embodied and contextualised elements (i.e. interactions in classroom situations), we considered this triadic method to be too complex. The issue of complexity overload, although mostly ascribed to the capabilities of the subject rather than the elements themselves, has been encountered in earlier research (Baillie-Grohman, 1975; Salmon, 1976; Barton, Walton & Rowe, 1976). Our third desideratum, therefore, was that constructs were elicited using a simple method that has discriminating qualities.

2.3.3.4 The bipolarity of constructs

In the standard repertory grid procedure, the bipolarity of constructs has often been equated with constructs having to have a strictly dichotomous character (see Millis & Neimeyer (1990) and Riemann (1990) for a further discussion on this topic). As a consequence, numerous grid studies have made use of constructs that have clear-cut contrasting or opposite poles. In addition, most constructs in these studies have been evaluative, having a preferable and less preferable pole. Examples of construct pairs that have this kind of structure, taken from a study about the way teachers view their pupils (Christie & Menmuir, 1997), are: quiet - talkative, good listener - easily distracted, well behaved - boisterous. Strictly dichotomous constructs, however, run the risk of reducing the complexity of the topic under investigation into unrefined black and white categories (Bonarius, 1984). The difficulty in our research was that teachers' constructs needed to apply to rather complex elements (specific interactions in social situations), which can be very ambiguous. As a consequence, the constructs that we were looking at did not necessarily have one clear-cut preferred pole. Our fourth desideratum was that both poles of the construct should be considered feasible options.

2.3.3.5 The meaningfulness of constructs

In the standard repertory grid procedure, the focus is on the initial elicited constructs. For the elicited constructs to be used in a grid, they are mostly represented in the form of briefly worded labels or sentences, e.g. 'enjoyable relationship - awkward relationship'. The grid structure leaves only limited space for writing construct labels, let alone specifying any context (Riemann, 1990). As a consequence, a lot of grid studies tend to represent (or elicit) rather general constructs, which are, in themselves, not particularly illuminating (Solas, 1992). When it comes to deepening our understanding of the moral significance that is conveyed in the life world of teachers, we consider the meaning that is behind the initial construct to be of crucial importance. Our fifth desideratum was that the repertory grid procedure should allow initially elicited constructs to be explored and described in depth.

2.3.4 Phenomenological reading of the repertory grid

The formulated desiderata with regard to the standard repertory grid application connect well with a phenomenological reading of the personal construct theory, which can be found in the writings of Warren (1998), Chiari & Nuzzo (2003) and Butt (2004, 2005) among others. The repertory grid, in their writings, is seen as a way to help people to describe their worlds and spell out their intentions. Stressing the resemblance between Kelly's work and phenomenology, Butt (2001, pp. 25) argued: 'His (Kelly's) advocating of the credulous approach precisely mirrors Husserl's phenomenological attitude in contrast to a natural attitude. The phenomenological attitude is one of openness to new possibilities and constructions.' The

phenomenological method (Ihde, 1986) which is characterised by (a) bracketing off the researchers' interpretations from those of the interviewee and (b) describing phenomena instead of explaining them resonates well with the aforementioned methodological implications and desiderata. However, in order to address the formulated desiderata, several aspects of the standard repertory grid application needed to be thoroughly reshaped. As a consequence, we considered several aspects of the repertory grid to be valuable starting points, which needed further elaboration to fit our 'life world' perspective. In connection with the importance of adapting the repertory grid procedure for a particular purpose, Pope & Denicolo (2001, p. 67) stated: 'Many practitioners are now adopting the repertory grid as a means of entering the phenomenological world of an individual by exploring the nature and inter-relationships between various elements and constructs elicited by the method. However, since there is no such creature as 'the grid', it is necessary to make certain methodological decisions vis-à-vis the format of a grid for any particular project.' In our research, Pope and Denicolo's 'methodological decisions' had to do with the way the repertory grid could best be tailored to get a grip on how teachers interpret the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. An overview of the desiderata and aspects of a phenomenological interpretation of the standard repertory grid application is given in Table 2.3. These aspects will be further elaborated in section 2.4.

Table 2.3   Desiderata and aspects of a phenomenological interpretation of the repertory grid

	Desiderata with regard to the repertory grid procedure	Aspects of a phenomenological interpretation of the repertory grid
1	Subjects should be involved in the process of selecting elements	Involving teachers by indicating bumpy moments from a videotaped lesson
2	Elements should be authentic representations created in a spirit of cooperation	Composing storyboards of videotaped elements
3	Constructs should be elicited using a simple method	Presenting only one dilemma-laden element at a time
4	Constructs should not have one preferable pole	Formulating a construct elicitation phrase that addresses both sides of the dilemma
5	Elicited constructs should be explored and described in depth	Subjecting teachers' initial constructs to recursive questioning

2.4 Phenomenological elaboration of the standard repertory grid

2.4.1 Introduction

In this section we describe and explain how we translated the desiderata into aspects of a method that suits a phenomenological purpose. We designed and refined these phenomenological aspects on the basis of the five articulated desiderata, empirical tryouts, and insights that emerged during the data collection phase of our research. The elaboration of the desiderata is illustrated by empirical data from our 'life world' study [2].

2.4.2.1 Subjects should be involved in the process of selecting elements

The involvement of teachers in identifying meaningful elements was incorporated into the study by taking each teacher's own practice as the point of departure. In order to make it possible for each teacher to be involved in the process of indicating elements, an everyday lesson was recorded on video. We assumed that this would best reflect their normal teaching activities. In a follow-up appointment (within two weeks), the teacher watched his or her recorded lesson with the researcher. In this regard it is relevant to refer to an empirical study conducted by Seidel, Stürmer, Blomberg, Kobarg & Schwindt (2011) on teacher learning from analysis of videotaped classroom situations. This study found that teachers who analysed their own teaching experienced higher knowledge activation, indicated by higher immersion, and motivation than teachers who analysed others' teaching. While watching the video recording of their own lesson, the teachers in the present study were asked to indicate meaningful teacher-pupil interactions, which could serve as possible elements. We asked the teachers: 'Could you please indicate those moments where you acted in a particular way and with hindsight feel that that you could just as well have acted in another way?' We adopted the term 'bumpy moment' (Romano, 2006) to signify these dilemma-laden moments. The term bumpy moment did not refer to a situation in which teachers did not know what to do (incapacity to act) but to a situation that could, with hindsight, convey several legitimate and competing courses of action with regard to classroom interactions. We assumed that these mini dilemmas have an inherent moral significance. This is because, from a 'life world' perspective, every teaching act is capable of conveying moral meaning, consequently every dilemma connected to these teaching acts, however small, could be considered a moral dilemma. There is a long tradition of interrelating moral dilemmas to individuals' perspectives in the field of moral research (Blatt, 1969; Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975; Lind, 2006).

2

The quotations from the participating teachers in the text, figures and tables were translated from Dutch by the authors.

Several teachers needed time to allow themselves to indicate those moments that conveyed competing courses of interaction instead of directly judging their interactions as good or bad. A quote from one female physical education teacher at the beginning of her lesson exemplified this judgmental stance that some teachers adopted when watching recordings of their own lessons: 'I should have chosen to let the pupils run around for a bit, instead of putting them directly onto a bench, which clearly did not work'. Although this could be a very important observation for the teacher, we did not consider this to be a bumpy moment, because no real dilemma seemed to be involved. In the process of getting to grips with the intention of the assignment, the bumpy moments became more and more succinct for the teachers involved, and for the researcher. Most teachers indicated 15 to 25 bumpy moments in half an hour of footage. As researchers we intervened in this identification process by offering instructional pointers; for example, by pausing the videotape from time to time and rememorising the assignment in order to help the teacher refocus. The following examples of bumpy moments were indicated multiple times by several teachers:

· A pupil gives a wrong answer to a question and the teacher turns to another pupil for the possible right answer.
· A pupil shouts out the right answer without raising his hand, and so the teacher ignores him.
· A teacher gives some further explanation on an assignment to an individual pupil leaving less time for the rest of the group.

All these bumpy moments have different sides to them, because their moral meaning is connected to specific contexts. Working with dilemmas prompted teachers to weigh the pros and cons of two or more alternative ways of interacting with hindsight. Although the teachers were instructed as to which kind of moments to choose from their videotaped lesson, the exact content of these moments was for every individual teacher to decide. They could choose moments from their own lesson that they themselves considered to be important and most relevant to the task at hand. We considered this kind of deep involvement in the process of element selection to be congruent with our first desideratum.

We selected 8 bumpy moments per teacher at random before continuing to the next step. The first reason for this was that we did not set out to create a representative set of dilemma-laden teacher-pupil interactions of classroom practices in general. A second, more practical, reason had to do with reducing the number of bumpy moments to a workable number for interviewing purposes.

2.4.2.2 Elements should be authentic and created in a spirit of cooperation

The bumpy moments identified on the video recordings needed to be processed in such a way that they could serve as elements to reflect upon. The inherent moral significance of the bumpy moments needed to be interpreted by the participating teachers later on in the procedure. In order for the particular content of the bumpy moments to be personally meaningful and easily accessible to the teachers, it was

very important that the interaction sequence in a bumpy moment was represented in an authentic way. In order to realise this, we decided to use full transcripts of the interactions conveyed in the bumpy moments. However, a transcript alone made it difficult to take the context of the particular bumpy moment into consideration. Our challenge was to embed the transcribed interactions into an authentic context. A single photograph representing the context in which the interaction took place was not a very convincing option because it would not capture the dynamic features of an interaction sufficiently. A possible alternative could have been the use of video vignettes to take the specific context of the interactions into account (Parsons, Graham & Honess, 1983, Holm, 2008). The downside of using video vignettes could be that teachers would be bothered by unnecessary stimuli that could divert their focus away from the interactions in question. On a more practical note, multiple rewinding, forwarding and pausing of the video vignettes would not help the participating teachers' or the researchers' concentration. To cope with these foreseeable problems, the bumpy moments in the video recordings were captured and transferred on to storyboards. A storyboard was a series of 3 or 4 pictures displayed in a sequence in order to visualise the content (i.e. the interactions in context) of a particular bumpy moment. Stills were taken from the video footage and they served as pictures in the storyboards. Text balloons were added with the exact transcription of the words that were spoken. These 3 or 4 pictures together accounted for a good representation of a bumpy moment and avoided the problems mentioned earlier with textual transcription, single photos or videos. On the top of every storyboard a plot sentence was formulated to summarise the particular teacher-pupil interaction. The teacher had already approved this plot sentence during the process of indicating elements. The plot sentence assisted the teacher later on in recapturing the essence of the bumpy moment in the construct elicitation process. Two examples of storyboards are given below.

Figure 2.1 *Storyboard of a teacher's bumpy moment in primary education*

Figure 2.2 Storyboard of a teacher's bumpy moment in lower secondary education

Composing storyboards is quite time consuming, but they turned out to be very useful as elements for the purpose of eliciting teachers' constructs on the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. The storyboards made it possible for teachers, although some time had passed since they watched the video, to go back to that particular interaction in context and give meaning to it. One teacher working in a special secondary school put it like this: 'These storyboards give me pointers from which I can tell my story….I can easily make sense of the situation, because I know the behavioural and learning difficulties these pupils are dealing with. I know, for example, looking at the storyboard, that Tom is keeping up appearances and Mandy is bullying others.' This quotation illustrates how the storyboards helped teachers to relive a bumpy moment in such a way that it became personally meaningful again. We want to stress that it was not our aim to literally let the teachers relive the moment as one would set out to do in a stimulated recall procedure (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Verloop, 1989). Our aim was to give teachers the opportunity to articulate the moral meaning of their everyday classroom interactions in an interview setting.

We consider that the storyboards did justice to the authenticity we desired, because they made it possible to interpret social interactions with hindsight, embedded in a meaningful context. In addition, we consider that the storyboards were composed in a spirit of cooperation because they were directly derived from teachers' personally selected video fragments, and they were involved in formulating the plot sentences.

2.4.2.3 Constructs should be elicited using a simple method

The risk that in comparing three rather complex elements at the same time too much attention is paid to the rules of the method instead of the content of the elements proved to be quite great in our initial tryouts. As a consequence, we felt the need to devise a less complicated method for eliciting constructs. As explained earlier, the main purpose of the standardised triadic method is that it fosters discrimination, by comparing several elements at a time. During some initial tryouts we asked teachers to compare 2 or 3 bumpy moments at a time. This particular method quite often caused an overload of different considerations and as a consequence paralyzed teachers in the interpretation process instead of fostering it. The following examples of bumpy moments illustrate this point:

1. The teacher asks a Turkish pupil about her faith in a predominately Christian classroom.
2. The teacher does not directly indicate whether a given answer is true or false, leaving the child guessing for a moment.
3. pupil asks the teacher if she can do the task with a different pupil from the one she has been paired with.

All three of these particular bumpy moments have different sides to them. It might be possible to find meaningful commonalities and differences between them but it would be very difficult. However, the main trait of a bumpy moment is that it already has a certain kind of bipolarity incorporated into it, because it conveys a mini dilemma. To reduce the complexity of this assignment, we decided to present single elements to the participating teachers (for other studies with single elements, see Hinkle, 1965; Landfield, Stefan & Dempsey, 1990; Fransella et al. 2004). Only on a few occasions was an extra storyboard added at the request of a particular teacher, because some striking similarities or differences between the storyboards were indicated by the teacher in question. Presenting one bumpy moment at a time enabled the participating teachers to have in-depth focus. They were subjected to extended questioning about the different sides of the dilemmas incorporated in each single element. Focusing on both sides of a dilemma automatically inclined teachers to articulate discriminations. An example of such a discrimination made by a teacher when confronted with a student overtly rejecting her help, was: 'On the one hand, I feel it is important to persist in offering him my help; on the other hand, I think it is important to accept his rejection.' In some cases a bumpy moment incorporated several dilemmas at once in the eyes of the teacher. An example of such a bumpy moment, indicated by a teacher working in a regular elementary school was: The teacher compliments a child following a special program on his work, allowing him to present his work in front of the class. She considers this to be a bumpy moment, because with hindsight she is thinking: 'Should I have emphasised the special position of this particular pupil or should I have tried to encourage him to blend in?' Another dilemma she recognised had to do with her expectations of this child's work: 'Should I be just as critical towards

his work as I am with other pupils or should I set a somewhat lower standard when it comes to the learning achievements of this particular pupil?'

The possibility of finding more than one dilemma in a particular bumpy moment underpinned the complexity of a single element. Moreover, it confirmed our assumption that in principle no more than one bumpy moment at a time should be presented to a teacher in order to foster a thorough interpretation. Reducing the complexity of the method to increase the focus on the content of a particular bumpy moment was congruent with our third desideratum.

2.4.2.4 Both poles of the construct should be considered feasible options

The initial tryouts showed that contrasts or opposites did not seem to grasp the finesse or do justice to the potential versatility of teachers' constructs with regard to the inherent moral significance of bumpy moments. Teachers were forced to fit their interpretations into narrow black and white categories, when they were explicitly asked about the contrast pole of a construct. The following example illustrates this point.

Bumpy moment: A pupil has already finished his work satisfactorily, yet the teacher asks the pupil to have another look at it.

I: What do you feel is in the best interest of this pupil?
R: This pupil needs to learn to optimise his potential.
I: What do you feel is in contrast with that?
R: A pupil that learns to be easily satisfied.
      Elicited construct: optimise potential vs. easily satisfied

This example shows that understanding the bipolarity of constructs as contrasts or opposites leads to constructs that have a clear positive and negative pole, and which therefore have a rather judgmental connotation. In our research, however, we were looking for considerations rather than clear-cut judgments with regard to everyday classroom interactions between teachers and their pupils. Another point of concern was that the traditional construct elicitation phrase tends to give rise to general, and sometimes rather meaningless, oppositions when it comes to interpreting social situations. A construct that distinguishes 'promoting the child's independence' from 'promoting the child's dependence' is not particularly illuminating, nor is it grounded in reality. An additional point of concern is that in order to help teachers articulate the implicit contrast pole, a rather coercive elicitation procedure needed to be administered. The chance of such a procedure being experienced as artificial or coercive by the participating teachers proved to be quite considerable. The following fragment of an interview transcript with a female primary school teacher illustrates this point:

I: What do you feel is in the best interest of this pupil?
R: It is in the best interest of this pupil to offer him a safe learning environment.
I: What do you feel is in contrast with that?
R: I'm reluctant to say offering the child a harmful or unsafe learning environment, because that doesn't seem particularly meaningful to me.

Reflecting on the interview session, this teacher said that she could very naturally come up with the first construct pole when interpreting a particular bumpy moment. However, whenever she had to come up with a well-formulated contrast pole, she had the feeling she lost her focus on the particular situation. Whereas the answer to the question 'What do you feel is in the best interest of this pupil?' is related to the actual bumpy moment at hand, the answer to the question 'What do you feel is in contrast with that?' needs to be made up by the particular teacher. As a consequence, this part of the interview turned into a word game rather than an interpretation of the particular situation. Our challenge was to find a guiding, unforced procedure that allowed for a less judgmental and more meaningful kind of bipolarity.

A possible way to realise a procedure that will elicit constructs that are bipolar in a meaningful way is to relate both poles of the constructs to the actual bumpy moment at hand. This was done using a sentence completion assignment (Grice et al., 2004). The participating teachers were asked to complete the following sentence: 'On the one hand, I think it could be important for the pupil to…; on the other hand, I think it could important for the pupil to…' Our assumption was that this sentence completion assignment (i.e. elicitation phrase) would explicitly address both sides of the dilemmas incorporated in bumpy moments. The different sides of a dilemma could be considered the different poles of a construct. By eliciting construct poles in this way, we tried to prevent teachers from becoming caught up in predictable and unrefined black and white schemes. The following example shows how this sentence completion assignment was administered in the actual process of construct elicitation:

Bumpy moment: A pupil asks a teacher for assistance because she got caught up in a quarrel about the use of some colour markers.

I: Please could you complete the following phrase; on the one hand I think it could be important for the pupil to…; on the other hand I think it could be important for the pupil to…
R: On the one hand, I think it could be important for my pupil to be thrown upon her own resources; on the other hand, I think it could be important for her to be lent a helping hand.
Elicited construct: thrown upon her own resources (emergent pole) vs. to be lent a helping hand (emergent pole)

In this case both construct poles elicited from the bumpy moment related, in the eyes of the teacher, to legitimate ways of interacting with pupils. This seems a much more natural and meaningful way to elicit both poles of a teacher's con-

struct. This kind of construct elicitation enables both poles of the construct to be derived from a real embodied context, instead of one of them being disconnected from reality. Our fourth desideratum was realised by formulating a construct elicitation sentence that addressed both sides of the dilemma conveyed in a bumpy moment.

2.4.2.5 Elicited constructs should be explored and described in depth

Although the elicited constructs looked quite promising, an in-depth exploration of these constructs was still missing. For the profundity of these constructs to be captured, they needed to go beyond an initial 'action level' and address the 'why' behind certain competing courses of action. It was striking in this connection to see that teachers were initially inclined to articulate constructs that merely focused on their own actions rather than on the implications of these actions for the child's best interests. Several studies have shown that, when asked to interpret their own practices, teachers too often stop at the 'action' or 'technical' levels, when no help from researchers is offered (see for example Hatton & Smith, 1995; Zeichner & Gore, 1995; Mansvelder-Longayroux; Beijaard & Verloop, 2007). The following initial elicited constructs illustrate this point.

I: Please could you complete the following phrase: On the one hand I think it could be important for the pupil to…; on the other hand I think it could important for the pupil to…
- (that I) show some vulnerability – show a certain infallibility
- (that I) give detailed instructions – give brief instructions
- (that I) create a competitive learning environment – create a learning environment based on equality

The three constructs above are all formulated in terms of what the teacher is doing and not yet in terms of what is in the child's best interests and why these possible ways of interacting are in the child's best interests. In order to further explore teachers' initial constructs, we pursued a form of recursive questioning. In personal construct theory this recursive questioning is referred to as 'laddering' (Hinkle, 1965). According to a number of scholars, using this technique makes it more likely that value-laden constructs will come up (Fransella, 1972; Button, 1980; Neimeyer, Anderson & Stockton, 2001; Butler, 2006). The laddering technique essentially involved nothing more than subjecting teachers' initially elicited construct to extended questioning by repeatedly asking 'why?'(Jancowicz, 2004). An example of laddering as applied in our study is given below.

- Teacher-pupil interaction that needs to be interpreted by the teacher (see Figure 2.3).
- Interview procedure for eliciting teachers' constructs with regard to the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions.

I: Please could you tell me what mini dilemma you're facing in this situation?

R: On the one hand, I think it could be important to stimulate the pupils to value their own work for what it is; on the other hand, I think it could be important to challenge the pupils to strive for the best.

I: In what way could both sides of the mini dilemma be in the best interest of your pupils?

R: To tell the pupils to value their work for what it is could be in their best interest because they will gain self-confidence; to challenge the pupils to strive for the best could be in their best interest because they need to have high expectations.

I: Why do you think both answers could be in your pupils' best interest?

R: I do think the pupils need to feel confident about themselves in order to appreciate their achievements. I do think the pupils need to have high expectations in order to make them persevere to achieve the best possible results.

Figure 2.3 Storyboard of a teacher's bumpy moment in upper secondary education

Probing teachers to thoroughly think through the possible consequences of the alternative ways of interacting by use of recursive questioning is very important to elicit higher order implications of their initial constructs. The laddering technique can be considered a powerful procedure for exploring and eliciting the profundity of teachers' constructs with regard to the inherent moral significance of their everyday classroom interactions. Adopting this procedure for the purpose of our study adequately supported the realisation of our fifth desideratum.

2.5 Conclusions and discussion

We set out in this study to develop a method that would be suitable for collecting data on the inherent moral significance of teaching. The need for such a method was prompted by our ongoing research project on teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral meaning of their everyday classroom interactions. Initially, the standard repertory grid application seemed a fruitful starting point for our inquiry, mainly because this method is grounded in the personal construct theory, which is known for its qualities with regard to addressing personal interpretations related to meaningful phenomena. However, our focus on understanding and describing the way teachers interpret their classroom interactions could not be sufficiently realised with the standard repertory grid application. In order to align the standard repertory grid procedure with a 'life world' perspective, we formulated five desiderata. To strengthen the focus on understanding and describing teachers' perspectives on their lived experiences we (1) involved teachers in selecting meaningful classroom interactions, (2) created snap shots of lived experiences by means of storyboards, (3) used a simple structure to elicit (4) dilemma-laden constructs, and finally, (5) used a laddering procedure to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' initial interpretations. Our phenomenological interpretation of the standard repertory grid application allowed us to 'pause' teachers' lived experiences and help them to thoroughly interpret the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions.

The question now is whether our phenomenological elaboration of the standard repertory grid application still qualifies as a repertory grid method. The basic aspects of the repertory grid procedure entail: (a) formulating a topic of investigation; (b) defining a set of elements; (c) eliciting a set of constructs that distinguish among these elements; and (d) relating elements to constructs. Clearly we did formulate a topic of investigation i.e. the way teachers interpret the inherent moral meaning of their classroom interactions. The second step in the standard repertory grid procedure is also accounted for, although the process of defining the elements was largely steered by the teachers themselves instead of the researcher. Even though we provided a structure for the selection of bumpy moments, the teachers themselves indicated the exact bumpy moments. Furthermore the elements were represented in the form of storyboards, which has not been done before. The third step in the standard repertory grid procedure involves eliciting a set of constructs. With this step we took the liberty to broaden the concept of bipolarity and adjust the method of elicitation to fit our research purpose. We chose to work with dilemmas, which helped the teachers to interpret their classroom interactions from competing perspectives. These perspectives are not necessarily strictly dichotomous, but do foster alternative ways of construing. Building on the dilemma structure already conveyed in every single bumpy moment, we decided that using more than one bumpy moment at a time makes the method of eliciting views unnecessarily complex. Finally the fourth step consists of relating elements to constructs. In the standard repertory grid application each element is rated on each construct to provide an exact picture of views on a particular topic, hence the word 'grid' (Jankowicz, 2004). We chose to seek the meaning behind the initial

constructs of teachers, thereby focusing on qualitative rather than quantitative data. Putting the rating component aside makes it safe to say that, although we drew upon several valuable aspects of the standard repertory grid application and insights from the personal construct theory, our phenomenological elaboration does not qualify as an authentic repertory grid application anymore. The term 'repertory' is however still accurate because it refers to a persons repertoire of meanings with regard to a certain topic (Jankowicz, 2004). Consequently one could think of our method as a repertory interview instead of a repertory grid method.

Chapter 3

Developing a descriptive framework for comprehending the inherent moral significance of teaching

Chapter 3

Developing a descriptive framework for comprehending the inherent moral significance of teaching[1]

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Abstract

Developing a descriptive framework is an important intermediate step in the complex process of theory development in interpretative research. A common way of analysing data is to follow an iterative process, in which both theoretical concepts and empirical data play an important part. In our case theoretical concepts to describe teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions were derived from theoretical standpoints in continental European pedagogy. Because of difficulties connecting abstract theories to empirical data directly, the development of a descriptive framework as an intermediary operation was required. To meet this requirement, the central question for continental European pedagogy according to Imelman (1995): 'Who should be taught what, when, how, and why?' was used as the starting point for the development of the framework. This article sets out in detail the process of getting from this question to a framework that enables teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions to be described.

1

3.1 Introduction

In interpretative research the development of a descriptive framework can be seen as a crucial intermediate stage in the process of theory development. Developing a framework is one step in the complex process of getting to grips with the mass of data collected, mostly by means of unstructured interviews and other open techniques. We experienced this complexity especially when analysing teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. A common way of analysing data is to follow an iterative process, in which both theoretical concepts and empirical data play an important part. Theoretical concepts to describe teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions could be offered by continental European pedagogy (Ponte & Ax, 2009). However, by drawing upon theories from continental European pedagogy we encountered some challenges in our research. Firstly, continental European pedagogy relies on 'grand theories' (e.g., the positivist, phenomenological and critical theories), which are firmly grounded in educational philosophy but difficult to connect directly to teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. Secondly, teachers do not tend to articulate their own interpretations in terms of these theories. In order to overcome these challenges a descriptive framework that mediates between the interview data and theories from continental European pedagogy was required. This article describes the development of such a framework.

3.2 Problem statement

Choices concerning how to approach the data, whether to start from theoretical concepts or from empirical data, are an inherent part of qualitative research. Numerous references have been made in this regard to Glaser and Strauss's (1967) book: *The discovery of grounded theory*. Originally the grounded theory approach entailed the researcher working up from the data, the theory evolving during the research process itself and being a product of continuous interplay between data collection and data analysis. The basic principle is that theory will emerge from the data itself. Over the years this inductive approach has been problematised by several authors. While Glaser (1992) remains committed to the original grounded theory approach, Strauss and Corbin (1994) argued that the significance of theoretical sensitivity was underexposed in the original text of *The discovery of grounded theory*. Consequently, Strauss and Corbin (1998) argued that theory development in qualitative research is an iterative process. The development of a descriptive framework can be regarded as a crucial intermediate stage and as such is also part of this iterative process. Bogdan and Biklen (1998, p. 171) emphasised, for example, that components, categories and codes in a descriptive framework do not exclusively emerge from the data but are equally generated by the theoretical approach: 'Particular research questions and concerns generate certain categories. Certain theoretical approaches and academic disciplines suggest particular coding schemes.' In other words, both the theoretical concepts and the empirical data

guide the way the data are arranged and, subsequently, how the results and conclusions of a study are reached.

The empirical data in our particular study consisted of teachers' interpretations of mini dilemmas in their daily practices. A mini dilemma, here, is constructed as a moment that could, in hindsight, convey several legitimate and competing courses of action with regard to classroom interactions with pupils. Teachers reported these mini dilemmas themselves, while reflecting on video footage from their lessons. Subsequently, the teachers were interviewed about these mini dilemmas in terms of what they felt was in the best interest of their pupils. Furthermore, teachers were subjected to recursive 'why questioning' in order to provoke them to really think through the educational values and ideals that underlie different possible ways of interpreting their pupils' best interest. (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2010a). The aim of this study was to see if, and in what way, the inherent moral significance of teaching could be recognised in teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions (cf. Hansen 2001; Ponte 2009). From this perspective, the moral significance of teaching was construed as something that permeates the work of teaching; any specific teacher-pupil interaction has an inherent moral significance (Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik, 1990; Van Manen, 1991; Biesta & Miedema 2002). This contrasts with theories that construe the moral significance of teaching as something that is external to the work of teaching. These theories construe the moral significance of teaching as a set of values and virtues, embraced by a particular group, which can be explicitly taught to students and pupils. In accordance with this perspective, the moral significance of teaching manifests itself in particular subjects or lessons, for example, moral and character education (Nucci, 1989; Wynne & Ryan, 1993; Cohen, 1995). Because of its intangible nature, we found that the former perspective on the moral significance of teaching was much harder to depict than the latter. The question that arises then is how to develop a framework that serves the purpose of describing teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions.

3.3 The pervasive question in continental European Pedagogy

3.3.1 The inherent moral significance of teaching

We expected that continental European pedagogy could provide adequate theoretical concepts to describe teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. This is because continental European pedagogy does not just pertain to ways or methods of instruction, as is common in the Anglo-American literature (Ponte, 2007; Hamilton, 2009). Ponte and Ax (2009, p. 253) described continental European pedagogy as follows: 'This science seeks answers to questions about what kind of human beings children are and should become and how they can be raised toward becoming such human beings, taking into

account the context in which this process of upbringing takes place.' At the heart
of continental European pedagogy lies the relationship between the educator and
his or her pupils (Van Manen, 1994; Oelkers, 2001; Ax & Ponte, 2010). This relation-
ship and, consequently, the interactions between teachers and pupils are always
concerned with both the empirical question 'what is the case?' and the normative
question 'what ought to be the case?' (Biesta, 2010a). In connection with this,
Ponte (2009, p. 12) argued that: 'The question of the relation between 'what is' and
'what is more desirable' is a normative question. In child-rearing, sense-making
in terms of desirable or undesirable behaviour always comes up in some form or
other. That applies both to the goal being pursued and the means to get there.'

Nevertheless, one cannot speak of continental European pedagogy as if it were
one coherent meta-theory; it consists of a diversity of theoretical positions. The
three most distinctive positions are, in the European context, commonly per-
ceived as the 'land of three strands', respectively the *geisteswissenschaftliche*, the
empirical-analytical and the *critical* strands. Ponte and Ax (2009, p. 257) produced
a schematic account of the differences between the three strands; part of which is
presented in the table below.

Table 3.1   *Strands in continental European pedagogy*

Strands	Aims and method of upbringing
Geisteswissenschaftliche pedagogiek	The child as child – as a specific expression of human existence, brought up by being pro-tected from adult life
Empirical-analytic *pedagogiek*	Interventions of the adult as causes of changes in the child
Critical *pedagogiek*	Emancipation of child from social constraints through communication

Within these strands different perspectives are articulated with regard to the
aims and method of bringing up children. In the *geisteswissenschaftliche* strand,
which originated in the nineteenth century, the child is seen as a distinct form of
human existence (Langeveld, 1969) and no longer considered to be a little adult.
Consequently, the methods of upbringing should connect to the way children
experience this distinct stage of life and protect them from adult life (Aries, 1962).
The goal of upbringing from a *geisteswissenschaftliche* perspective concerns the be-
coming of a person, which means that children will have to develop the ability to
take responsibility and learn to accept that they can be held accountable for their
actions (Beugelsdijk, Souverein & Levering, 1997).

In contrast to the other strands, the empirical-analytical strand does not have
a normative orientation. The empirical-analytical strand is primarily concerned
with instrumental upbringing questions: questions about the conditions under
which different upbringing goals can be achieved by the adult and what kind of
interventions they have at their disposal (Meijer, 1999; Ponte & Ax, 2009). The

moral justifications of these interventions are seen as normative and therefore not amenable to empirical investigation, which means that these justifications have to come from outside the scientific domain. The *geisteswissenschaftliche* pedagogy is looked upon as being too speculative, philosophical and prescriptive (Ponte, 2007).

The critical strand developed firstly in response to the *geisteswissenschaftliche* strand, which gave too little consideration to the social and political context of the relationship between adults and children and, secondly, in response to the empirical-analytical strand, which overtly disregarded normative concepts. In the critical strand, the goal of bringing up children concerns the abolition of societal constraints in order to emancipate children. The method of upbringing is formulated in terms of helping children to develop communicative competencies, by acknowledging them as equal partners in interaction processes and providing them with opportunities to learn to participate in conversations (Masschelein, 2005).

This general overview of the strands in continental European pedagogy illustrates that there is no consensus about the means and ends of bringing up children. Teachers are also likely to have different views on what the maturation of children entails or should lead to. It can be assumed that these different views will reverberate in their interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions.

3.3.2 Challenges with regard to the strands

Drawing upon the strands in continental European pedagogy to develop a framework for describing teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their interactions proves to be quite challenging for the following reasons. Firstly, continental European pedagogy relies on 'grand theories', which are firmly grounded in educational philosophy. We have learned that it is rather difficult to relate these 'grand theories' directly to the way teachers give meaning to their classroom interactions. Miedema (1997a, 17) wrote: 'As it turns out, the several theoretical strands in continental European pedagogy are not adequately adjusted to the problems that are present in the pedagogical practice' (translation by the authors). The strands have a foundational significance but are difficult to connect, without mediation of some sort, to empirical data, such as interview data in which teachers report on their interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. A second factor that adds to the complexity of composing a descriptive framework on the basis of the strands in continental European Pedagogy is that teachers are not naturally inclined to articulate their interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions in terms of these theoretical positions. Teachers do not say, for instance, that they see their pupils in a Rousseauian way and that therefore they will approach them in a naturalistic manner, which could be placed in the *geisteswissenschaftliche* tradition, or that they want their pupils to be freed from a false consciousness in order for them to bring about social change, which could be placed in the critical tradition. In his article on the epistemology of reflective practice, van Manen (1995, p. 38) wrote: 'When one asks teachers how they do this, how they handle

things from moment to moment, they tend to answer in generalities. This is indeed difficult to describe. And if one insists with the question then teachers may respond with a story, a complaint, a self-deprecating joke, an anecdote, or an observation.' Again a mediation of some sort is required between teachers' idiom and theoretical standpoints in continental European pedagogy.

3.3.3 Imelman's overarching question

A fruitful strategy to overcome these difficulties with using the strands in continental European pedagogy to develop a descriptive framework might be to look for concepts or questions that: (a) are inextricably at stake in all strands; (b) enable an enquiry into teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions; and (c) address these interpretations in their own terms. Traditionally, the central questions in continental European pedagogy, such as 'what are the aims and methods of upbringing?' have always been subject to debate. Within the strands in continental European pedagogy this debate has led to different outcomes, necessarily coloured by their particular orientations, as one can conclude from section 3.3.1. We were looking however, for a 'neutral' meta-question, which overarches the different strands. A question, which might convey these qualities, can be found in the theoretical writings of Imelman. He formulated what one might call the fundamental question to be studied in continental European pedagogy (1995, 60): 'Who should be taught what, when, how, and why?'(translation by the authors). The 'why aspect' of this question is connected to all other aspects of this question; who – why, what – why, when – why and how – why. Although Imelman (Imelman & Tolsma, 1987; Imelman, 1995) put this question forward to enable critical reflection on what a society considers worth 'carrying over' to the next generation in a formalised fashion, we primarily address this question in the context of teachers' everyday classroom practices (cf. Hamilton, 1992) and more specifically at the classroom level. To use this fundamental question to develop a framework for describing teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions, further elaboration and interpretation is required. A general requirement of a descriptive framework is that it should be open enough to leave room for emerging concepts that stem from the interview data, and closed enough to guide the conceptual interpretation of the interview data.

Before we present the final version of our descriptive framework in section 3.5, we will describe the procedure that led to adopting the central question in continental European pedagogy and subsequently the final framework.

3.4 Procedure

3.4.1 Development process

The process of developing the descriptive framework can be broken down into six different steps. These are described in the following subsections.

3.4.1.1 Step one: exploring an initial strategy

In the first, explorative step we focused on a detailed review of the main strands in continental European pedagogy (Imelman, 1995; Miedema, 1997b; Meijer, 1999; Dieleman & Span, 1992; Smeyers & Levering, 2005). Our primary aim was to locate key issues that would help to describe our interview data in terms of continental European pedagogy. At first these issues were very general in nature and concerned the concept of a child, the relationship between adult and child and the goal of bringing up children. Later we reformulated these central issues into qualifying sentences, for example: 'I do justice to children if I consider them to be…' (see Table 3.2). Each qualifying question could be connected to a statement belonging to one of the particular strands, for example: 'Children are unique individuals that have an active part in their own upbringing, and are entitled to their own form of existence' (see Table 3.2). Initially we thought that these statements could help us to interpret the interview data. An extract from this initial strategy is presented in the table below.

Table 3.2. Extract from our initial strategy

Issue	Qualifying Sentence	*Geisteswissenschaftliche* statement	Empirical analytical statement	Critical statement
What is the concept of child?	I do justice to children if I consider them to be…	unique individuals that have an active part in their own upbringing, and are entitled to their own form of existence.	individuals that very much depend on external conditions and interventions to become adults.	individuals that have the potential communicative ability to free themselves from social constraints.

3.4.1.2 Step two: moving on from the initial strategy

The second step consisted of checking whether these substantive statements
within each of the strands could be connected to a subset of our interview data.
This turned out to be difficult because it required an enormous amount of addition-
al interpretation on the researcher's part. Furthermore these statements were too
restrictive to allow for concepts to emerge from the interview data itself.

3.4.1.3 Step three: developing the preliminary descriptive framework

Step three consisted of rethinking the development of the descriptive framework
by relating the interview data to substantive questions rather than substantive
answers. This process opened up the possibility of using the central question in
continental European pedagogy (cf. section 3.3.) as the basis for our framework.
We composed a preliminary framework assuming that the question 'Who should
be taught what, when, how and why?' could mediate in a meaningful way between
the interview data and the strands. We considered the 'who', 'what', 'how', 'when'
aspects of this question to be the components of our descriptive framework. The
'why aspect' served an integral purpose, which will be explained in sub section 3.5.
Subsequently, we described the components in more detail and operationalised
them into categories.

3.4.1.4 Step four: checking the preliminary descriptive framework

During step four we tested the assumed mediational qualities of the central question
in continental European pedagogy on a different subset of our interview data. Our
first findings were quite promising: the interview data could be roughly arranged
along the components derived from the central question in continental European
pedagogy. However, at the same time we learned that our framework needed to be
further elaborated and adjusted to relate to the interview data in a meaningful way.

3.4.1.5 Step five: elaborating the preliminary descriptive framework

In step five we decided to interview three experts [2] in the field of theoretical conti-
nental European pedagogy. In preparation for this expert review (Tessmer, 1993) we
sent them a sample of our interview data and an updated version of our framework.
We asked them if our descriptions of the components of the question did indeed
convey the central issues in continental European pedagogy. We also asked for
their opinion with regard to the way we had subdivided the components into cate-
gories and the relevance of these categories for the interview data (see Table 3.3 for
an extract from this framework).

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Table 3.3. Extract from our elaborated framework

Component	Description	Categories
What	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teaching content?	To what extent do teachers emphasise the importance of cognitive teaching content?
		To what extent do teachers emphasise the importance of social/ emotional teaching content?
		To what extent do teachers emphasise the importance of moral teaching content?

3.4.1.6 Step six: the final descriptive framework

The sixth step was to finalise the descriptive framework. We took the experts' considerations and comments into account, as well as the findings from an analysis of a third subset of our interview data.

In section 3.5 we present the components of the final descriptive framework. We also explain how we operationalised the components into categories and illustrate this with samples of the interview data.

3.5 The descriptive framework

3.5.1 The purpose of the descriptive framework

The purpose of the descriptive framework was to pre-structure the mass of interview data to enable a theoretically informed in-depth analysis in subsequent stages of our study on the inherent moral significance of teaching. Our final aim in using this descriptive framework was to illuminate patterns in teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions and, subsequently, to further reflect on these patterns by drawing on central questions in continental European pedagogy.

3.5.2 Components of the descriptive framework

Imelman's question originally consisted of five aspects, which we used as components of our descriptive framework (who, what, when, how and why). However, based on an analysis of a subset of our interview data, we added the 'where' and 'for what purpose' components to the framework, which will be further elaborated in subsections 3.5.3.4 and 3.5.3.6. Except for the 'why aspect', all the components are described in terms of what teachers find in the best interest of their pupils. These six components were primarily directed at categorising teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. The 'why

aspect' was intended to analyse the extent to which teachers substantiated their interpretations with reasons that were connected to their educational outlooks. Consequently, this aspect has a cross-sectional function within the framework. A further explanation of this aspect will be given in subsection 3.5.3.7. An overview of the way we arranged and described the components and the positioning of the 'why aspect' can be found in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Components of the descriptive framework

Components	Descriptions	
1 Who	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teacher-pupil relationship?	
2 What (content)	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teaching content?	Cross-sectional 'why' component
3 When	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning human development?	
4 Where	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning work and living environment?	
5 How	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teaching and learning?	
6 For what purpose	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teaching goals?	

3.5.3 Categories for each of the components

Except for the 'why component,' each component was operationalised into several categories. We will now discuss the meaning of each component and its categories, drawing on theoretical concepts, insights and quotations derived from a limited data analysis and experts' comments [3].

3.5.3.1 Who should be taught?

In our descriptive framework, we did not interpret the 'who component' in factual terms, for instance, 'a particular pupil in second year primary school', but we did seek to understand the concepts of child conveyed in the teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. For example, does a teacher see his pupils as a tabula rasa (blank sheet) or as active participants

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[3]
The interviews with the experts and the participating teachers were held in their first language.
The selected quotations in the text and tables were translated from Dutch by the authors.

in their own upbringing process? The concept of child is one of the primary constituents of continental European pedagogy (Beugelsdijk et al. 1997). Notwithstanding its original child-centred focus, we also interpreted the 'who' question as a 'by whom' question, because a first data analysis showed that teachers' understanding of their relationship with their pupils was often accompanied (albeit implicitly) by their professional self-concepts. The following interpretation, of a first year female teacher at a special secondary school, of a moment in which a particular pupil could not find her dream catcher illustrates this point: 'Making real contact with pupils is important, certainly in a situation in which a pupil is not at ease. I think being a teacher constitutes having interactions with pupils, I'm building a relationship. I can't leave her struggling, because that will result in her feeling unsafe about the situation she got into.' The way this teacher talks about a particular pupil reveals to a certain extent the way she understands herself as a professional, as someone who is protective of this pupil's needs. One of the expert's comments is relevant here: 'It would be very valuable if the framework allowed for a description of the way teachers articulate their involvement with their pupils.' Originally the way teachers saw themselves could be considered outside the scope of Imelman's question, because it was primarily directed at children. One of the experts stated: 'Teachers themselves are not part of the central question in continental European pedagogy. Of course, the teacher is involved in this question but the question is not about the way teachers see themselves as professionals.' From a strict perspective, this remark is indisputably correct. At the same time, teachers are a constituent part of the teacher-pupil relationship. The emergence of this category from our data and the educational significance of teachers' professional self-concepts, led us to the conclusion that this broader understanding of the 'who component' is conceivable.

Table 3.5 'Who' categories

Categories	Quotations
Child concept	Children with autism lack empathy and cannot picture what next week will look like. They can't imagine that somebody else is able to think differently... This is a restrictive capacity, although when I first entered this school I thought this particular pupil was self-indulgent and I forced him to go along with my lesson. I had no notion of his limitations…Later on I learned to take his limitations seriously, acknowledged his feelings and gradually tried to guide him to the next step in a safe manner. *(4th year male teacher at a special secondary school)*
Professional self-concept	I consider it my task to be involved in the upbringing of my pupils. I think the interpersonal side of my profession is the most important one. Of course, I'm also involved in teaching maths and languages. I think it is important that pupils learn to spell correctly….But I think that the maturation of the pupils in terms of growing self-confidence and self-efficacy is conditional for them to succeed. *(6th year female teacher at a regular primary school)*

Relationship	The way I approach pupils has to do with how I know them. I can challenge some boys to take the next step. However, if I approached those girls who had already erased their own answers in the same way, and said 'your work is nonsense' nothing good would come out of it. You have to consider how to relate to pupils each time; some pupils need to be treated differently from others. *(5th year male teacher at a regular secondary school)*

3.5.3.2 What should be taught (content)?

In our preliminary framework we operationalised this component in a rather psychological way (see Table 3.3), namely the importance teachers ascribe to cognitive, social and emotional, and moral teaching content. In response to our division of this component into these three categories, one of the experts replied: 'The well known psychological division of what pupils learn into social, emotional and cognitive categories is a bit out-dated. In the life world of teachers and pupils these categories are interwoven. Pupils do not learn in terms of these separate psychological categories.' We had to acknowledge that it was indeed problematic to relate an interview fragment to just one of these psychological categories. The following quotation of a 6th year female teacher in a regular primary school illustrates this difficulty: 'I think it's an important aim that pupils learn how to draw up a plan. This is important for their maturation into responsible grown-ups. Learning to draw up a plan is important for their future careers, but also for secondary education. It's also important for pupils to learn this skill for when they live on their own; I mean, you need to dust before you vacuum clean the house.' To place this quotation in the category 'cognitive development' seems too narrow to depict the full meaning of this quotation. The acquisition of planning skills, as put forward by this teacher, seems to entail more than a solely cognitive activity. Another way of operationalising this component is to subdivide it into categories that refer to the kind of teaching content that is at stake. Subsequently we decided to distinguish the following categories: acquisition of subject matter, acquisition of skills and acquisition of virtues. Following this latter division of the 'what component,' the quotation can be more confidently assigned to the 'acquisition of skills category.'

Table 3.6 'What' (content) categories

Categories	Quotations
Acquisition of subject matter	I have four pupils in my classroom that will attend low-level secondary education. Every year we confront them with a maths assessment: both the first basic level part and the second more advanced part. Each time these pupils totally fail the second part. I think it's important that they learn basic level maths and don't bother about the advanced level. *(8th year female teacher at a regular primary school)*
Acquisition of skills	In our classroom we put a lot of effort into helping the pupils to get along with each other. This group has been labelled as a difficult group. In the first 8 weeks there were several fights. But now the pupils are behaving very well. They have learned to take care of one another better. We are still working on their social skills. *(8th year female teacher at a regular primary school)*
Acquisition of virtues	At school our pupils are in a very protective environment. But there is also a world outside this school in which they have to deal with all kinds of social conventions. Our pupils need to be brought up learning about attentiveness and empathy. This will protect them from unfavourable encounters with other people. *(4th year male teacher at a special secondary school)*

3.5.3.3 When should (what?) be taught?

The 'when component' in the strands in continental European pedagogy is connected to developmental psychological perspectives on children. Questions like: 'Is the development of the child an internal gradual process or is it susceptible to interventions and consequently a process in fits and starts?' play an important role in these perspectives. Teachers who see the development of a child as a natural process are more likely to fit their instructions to the capabilities of the child. On the contrary, teachers who understand the development of a child as a process that can be manipulated are more likely to see their instructions as the cause of the child's development. From our first data analysis we learned that teachers do indeed have ideas about their pupils' development, witness for example the following quotation from a female teacher in secondary special education: 'This child gives in easily. He really has reached the maximum of his capabilities. He doesn't understand the subject matter; he has no idea how to find the answers. He is very confused and is easily distracted, he is not able to concentrate on his task.' One of the experts argued that the 'when' dimension of the central question in Continental European pedagogy is very important in terms of teachers' reflection on their own practice: 'If there is a modus of reflexivity that should come into play in teachers' practices, it should pre-eminently concentrate on questions such as what is the current ability of the child, what is it reasonable to ask of this particular child in this situation.' The 'when' dimension is likely to be conveyed in teachers' everyday interactions with their pupils. In connection with this one of the experts said: 'It could well be the case that a teacher decides not to answer

a particular pupil's question because he thinks it is better to wait a while because the pupil is not ready yet; it has to do with finding the right timing.' We learned from the analysis of a subset of our data that the 'when component' is closely connected to the 'what component' and can be operationalised into three categories. The three categories respectively concern the question of when to open up the acquisition of particular subject matter, particular skills and particular virtues.

Table 3.7 'When' (content) categories

Categories	Quotations
Opening up subject matter acquisition	It is always in the children's best interest to work at their own ability level. In my class the children have a reading folder, which we as teachers can organise individually in order to fit their reading levels. Some children might have reached level 4, but most of them have only reached level 0 or 1. It is indeed possible to offer children reading material that fits their reading ability. I do think this is important; this is adaptive education. *(2nd year teacher at a special primary school)*
Opening up skill acquisition	Last year a girl entered the school with her shoulders down, head down saying: 'I'm not sure what I'm doing here, everything is too difficult for me, I'm good for nothing.' She really was convinced of all this. I've tried to convince her otherwise by saying that she's a valuable person capable of all kinds of things…Over the past half year I've had this girl in my vocational training class, pushing her even further to get socially involved. And then suddenly you notice her when she enters the room; she is proactive, on task, helping fellow students. You can really see that she has grown as a person. *(3rd year teacher at a special secondary school)*
Opening up virtue acquisition	I feel it's very important that children take responsibility for their own actions. Children in the 6th year of primary school should be able to realise that they have to go to school for their own interest. It's a different story with pupils in the 2nd year of primary school, they do not yet understand that they have to go to school for their own sake. Being a teacher I can't say to a pupil in the second year: 'It's alright with me if you don't participate, you are responsible for your own learning.' *(6th year female teacher at a regular primary school)*

3.5.3.4 Where should be taught?

The 'where component' was originally not part of the central question in continental European pedagogy. However, we learned from our first data analysis that this is a relevant component with regard to the way teachers give meaning to their practices. Teachers are, for example, concerned with questions like: 'Where does this pupil need to sit in order to work on task? Is it wise to separate the second years from third years during the break? What are the social consequences for pupils of not living in the same village as the school is located? These questions are related to what we choose to call the *classroom context*, the *school context* and

the *external school context* respectively. One of the experts emphasised the importance of formulating categories that stay close to the classroom interactions and commented on the 'where component' as follows: 'The 'where component' is to a certain extent already a given fact for the teachers, namely their classrooms. For example, it would be interesting to learn about teachers' reasons if they ask a child to go and sit elsewhere.' Although teacher-pupil interactions are located in the classroom, interpretations of the inherent moral significance of these interactions convey questions or concerns that are not necessarily bound to the specific classroom context, as the quotations in Table 3.8 show.

Table 3.8 'Where' categories

Categories	Quotations
Classroom context	Structure in my classroom is very important. To create order and peace is not a goal in itself. Everybody is busy during my manual labour lesson. Pupils talk to each other and need to walk around. This behaviour causes a lot of fuss, and to a certain extent I want to prevent that from happening. A peaceful environment forms the basis of the wellbeing of this one autistic pupil and another pupil that is diagnosed with ADHD. These pupils need to have a safe and quiet space. *(1st year teacher at a special secondary school)*
School context	Children who move here from regular education experience a lot of stress. Every year there will be a pupil who actually refuses to enter our school. In these cases a form of physical restraint is necessary. Most of the time a mother or a father, a professional supervisor or psychologist will accompany the child - one adult on each side of the child - in order to force him or her into the school. At first the child only stays for half an hour. *(4th year teacher at a special secondary school)*
External school context	Our pupils come from several villages. They do not know each other, because they do not come from the same neighbourhood. They arrive here by taxi and then they are dropped in front of the school. That's kind of harsh. Some of the parents you only see sporadically. It's very nice to see that children want to have play dates with each other in spite of the distance. These play dates need to be organised because of travelling difficulties; little room is left for spontaneous arrangements. *(2nd year teacher at a special primary school)*

3.5.3.5 How should children be taught?

The 'how component' is closely connected to the question: 'How should pupils be taught?' At the same time we understand the 'how component' to be directed at the question: 'How do pupils learn?' Although teaching children is an intentional adult activity, the outcomes of this activity are not merely an accomplishment of teachers, but rather the learning outcomes accomplished by children themselves (Meijer 1995). Teaching and learning can be considered two sides of the same coin.

One of the experts commented: 'The framework should also include the question: 'What do teachers find important with regard to how their pupils learn; do they work according a predefined route or do they use their own route and why?' To take into account both the teachers' efforts and the pupils' efforts we decided to include the categories 'teaching methods' and 'pupils' learning'. A lot of empirical research has been done on pupils' learning strategies. One of the experts made the point: 'We have learned, for instance, from empirical research that the merits of learning by reward and punishment are very questionable; it's important to make use of empirical research to inform our actions.' To answer the question as to whether teachers do indeed draw on insight from empirical analytical pedagogy would require an in-depth analysis of the interview data and goes beyond the scope of this particular study. Finally we added a third category about classroom organisation. We learned from the data analysis of a limited number of interviews that several classroom situations were interpreted in organisational terms. By classroom organisation we mean those activities that lend themselves to being planned before the actual teaching, for example: drawing up a lesson plan, the physical arrangement of the classroom and the seating of the children.

Table 3.9 'How' categories

Categories	Quotations
Teaching methods	The handbook with assignments for the manual work courses are outdated, badly copied, incomplete and flawed. It's based on very old-fashioned teaching methods. I rebelled against using this material. I decided to make my own handbook, thereby adopting a process perspective rather then an outcome perspective. Our pupils' work used to be judged on its deficits instead of its merits. *(2nd year teacher at a special secondary school)*
Pupils' learning	This boy has learned so much by imitating other pupils. He sees a lot of good examples. The fact that he is able to sit on his chair for 10 minutes in an open circle lesson is remarkable. In the beginning he wasn't able to do that. He wasn't capable of participating in such a lesson at all; he did not answer any questions and couldn't focus. By imitating other children he now operates as a real participant. *(1st year teacher at a special school for primary education)*
Classroom organisation	We just changed the seating of some pupils. The boys are seated differently now. We also changed the seating places of some girls. Wherever these two girls are seated, they will start talking to anyone. And then there is this one girl; she is seated alone. Actually nobody wants this girl to be seated in his or her sub group. This is because she talks a lot and on top of that she does not concentrate on her work. *(6th year female teacher at a regular primary school)*

3.5.3.6 For what purpose should be taught?

The 'for what purpose component' touches specifically upon the goal orientations that form an inextricable part of teaching activities. Van Manen (1994, 143) cited Nohl to characterise the nature of the relationship between teachers and their pupils: 'The pedagogical relation is an intentional relation wherein the intent of the teacher is always determined in a double direction: 'By caring for a child as he or she is, and by caring for a child for what he or she may become (1982, 135 – 136).' Thus the goal of children's upbringing is a normative matter. Evidently, teachers will have personal views on what teaching pupils should lead to. In connection to this one of the experts argued: 'The goals of children's upbringing will always be normative, because they are free to choose; these goals will of course be constrained by what is humanly possible' This component is directed at concrete goals that teachers want to help the child to achieve. Most likely the majority of the goals that teachers articulate will be somehow school-related, however some goals could be connected to the world outside the school. Teachers can, for example, formulate goals concerning their pupils' move up to the next year, but goals could also be connected to later stages in life, for example their professional careers.

Table 3.10 'For what purpose' categories

Categories	Quotations
Internal school goals	The national state exam has one part in writing and one oral part six weeks later. Regarding the oral part our pupils need to present a project assignment. Part of this assignment consists of a small research project. There is a real goal to achieve. The question is how to reach this goal with our pupils. We have a year extra because our pupils have different kinds of impairments that need to be taken into account. *(4th year teacher at a special secondary school)*
Goals outside school	It's encouraging for these pupils to learn that they have some control over their own lives. They do not always have to wait for somebody else's approval. They're used to always getting things arranged for them. I can imagine the paralysing effect this kind of relationship has on these pupils; somebody else will take care of me. They need to learn to think for themselves. Autonomy and control over their own lives are of crucial importance. They will never be professors or surgeons but they can learn to become assertive grown ups that are able to articulate their own preferences. *(1st year female teacher at a special secondary school)*

3.5.3.7 Why: a cross-sectional aspect

The 'why aspect' of Imelman's question is not to be considered a separate compo-
nent, but rather an additional aspect connected to each of the six components
(who-why, what-why, when-why, etcetera.). Within the descriptive framework the
'why aspect' serves the purpose of connecting the interview data, categorised in the
other six components, to theoretical debates in continental European pedagogy
about 'what is the case' and 'what ought to be the case'. In our framework the six
components formed necessary conditions for the 'why aspect' to be meaningful:
a 'why question' is always connected to a particular substance and a particular di-
rection (cf. Biesta, 2010b). It directly touches upon teachers' reasoning with regard
to what they think is good or bad for their pupils. Consequently the 'why aspect' is
linked to reasons that touch upon teachers' underlying educational perspectives
(cf. Hinkle 1965; Jancowicz 2004). In the table below we give two brief sketches of how
teachers' substantiations with regard to what they find is in the best interest of their
children can be linked to theoretical concepts in continental European pedagogy.

Table 3.11 'Why' component

Sample of a quotation	Why
It's encouraging for these pupils to learn that they have some control over their own lives. They do not always have to wait for somebody else's approval. They're used to always getting things arranged for them. I can imagine the paralysing effect this kind of relationship has on these pupils; somebody else will take care of me. They need to learn to think for themselves. *(Connected to the category ' goals outside school', belonging to the component 'for what purpose', subsection 3.5.3.6.)*	In the teacher's substantiation of why it is important for pupils to learn that they have some control over their own lives, some crit-ical elements can be indicated. This teacher articulated that she felt that these children are kept immature. She does not seem to agree with the dependency that is being cultivated in the relationships with disabled children. Instead these children need to be emancipated, freed from constraining struc-tures. Concepts with regard to emancipation can be found in critical pedagogy.
I've tried to convince her otherwise by saying that she's a valuable person capable of all kinds of things…Over the past half year I've had this girl in my vocational train-ing class, pushing her even further to get socially involved. And then suddenly you notice her when she enters the room; she is proactive, on task, helping fellow students. You can really see that she has grown as a person. *(Connected to the category 'opening up skill acquisition', belonging to the compo-nent 'When should be taught', subsection 3.5.3.3.)*	This teacher's substantiation of why it is important for this pupil to acquire social skills connects to the personal development of this child. From this anecdote we learn that the teacher is involved and concerned about this child's wellbeing. From the teacher's per-spective, the main problem seems to be that this child does not regard herself as a com-plete and valuable human being. Concepts with regard to becoming a responsible and free person can be found in the *geisteswis-senschaftliche* pedagogy.

3.5.4 Overview of the components and categories

Table 3.12 gives an overview of the different categories per component.

Table 3.12 Overview of components and categories

Components	Categories	
1 Who	· Child concept · Professional self-concept · Relationship	7 Cross-sectional why component
2 What	· Acquisition of subject matter · Acquisition of skills · Acquisition of virtues	
3 When	· Opening up subject matter acquisition · Opening up skill acquisition · Opening up virtue acquisition	
4 Where	· Classroom context · School context · xternal school context	
5 How	· Teaching methods · Pupils' learning · Classroom organisation	
6 For what purpose	· Internal school goals · Goals outside school	

3.6 Conclusion and discussion

3.6.1 Qualities of the descriptive framework

Our main aim was to develop a descriptive framework that could adequately mediate between theoretical standpoints in continental European pedagogy and our interview data, i.e., teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. We will now reflect upon the adequacy of our framework in terms of the desired requirements described in section 3.3.3.

The framework consisted of rather general components and categories that allowed for a rearrangement of the interview data along the lines of Imelman's central question. Taking this question as the starting point for our framework ensured that it remained embedded in continental European pedagogy. Furthermore, this question offered a clear but quite open structure for arranging the data. In concurrence with our initial idea, the open character of the framework should leave room for concepts to emerge from the interview data.

We assumed that the six components based upon the central question in continental European pedagogy in combination with the 'why component' could be helpful in describing teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. The results showed that the six components (who, what, when, where, how, for what purpose) served the purpose of an initial arrangement of the interview data. The cross-sectional 'why component' enabled a further analysis of the interview data in terms of the way teachers substantiated what they found to be in the best interest of their pupils. These somewhat more generally articulated substantiations allowed for a plausible connection to theoretical concepts in continental European pedagogy. A schematic overview of this account is given in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Schematic overview of the intermediary function of the descriptive framework

The framework did not have to be forced on the interview data; on the contrary, the components and categories fitted the data quite well. We made a great effort to formulate the categories in such a way that they were closely connected to the way the teachers talked about their own practices. Taking the match between the components, categories and quotations into account, we feel it is safe to say that our descriptive framework fitted the interview data adequately.

3.6.2 First and second order constructs

As we described in section 3.5.1, the descriptive framework was a means to enable an in-depth analysis of the interview data in terms of continental European pedagogy. This function of the framework could be connected to what Schutz (1962)

calls *first order constructs*. In itself, the pre-structuring of the interview data did not reach beyond the meaning level of the teachers. A necessary next step would be to further analyse the pre-structured interview data by taking concepts from continental European pedagogy into account. This would lead to what Schutz calls second order constructs. *Second order constructs* connect the 'life world' with the scientific world of theories.

The formulation of the descriptive framework presented in our study was a necessary step in illuminating the inherent moral significance of the work of teaching.

Chapter 4

How do teachers legitimise
their classroom interactions
in terms of educational values
and ideals?

Chapter 4

How do teachers legitimise their classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?[1]

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Abstract

An important dimension of teachers' classroom interactions is connected to their educational values and ideals. Teachers' classroom interactions are not only informed by instrumental considerations but are also affected by what they consider to be educationally worthwhile, i.e. what teachers consider to be in their pupils' best interest. This study explores the substance of teachers' educational values and beliefs that underlie teachers' interpretations of their daily classroom interactions. The guiding research question is 'How do teachers legitimise their daily classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?' A structured interview procedure was conducted with thirty-seven teachers. With the help of a conceptual framework based on the compound question 'Who should be taught what, how, when, and why?', a systematic analysis of the interview data was conducted. This resulted in a typology of six legitimisation types. This study found that teachers used the following legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest: (1) a caring legitimisation type, (2) a personal legitimisation type, (3) a contextual legitimisation type, (4) a critical legitimisation type, (5) a functional legitimisation type, and (6) a psychological legitimisation type. A legitimisation type entails a systematic description of what teachers consider to be educationally worthwhile. The typology of legitimisations could contribute to the development of an educational vocabulary, which enables teachers to inquire, articulate and discuss their educational values and ideals in a deliberate manner.

4.1 Introduction

Teachers' professional judgments will always be informed by what third parties expect them to do and their own understanding of what is needed in their daily classroom practices. Teachers have to work within general frameworks that are laid down by the government, school boards, management teams and so forth. At the same time they have certain degrees of freedom to make their own choices with regard to what they consider to be adequate teaching for particular pupils at a particular moment in a particular situation. Ponte (2009) argues that professionalism requires teachers to keep seeking a balance between formulating their goals themselves and determining how to achieve those goals, and fitting in with procedures set by others, in order to achieve goals set by others. Seeking this balance requires balancing different interests. It could, for example, be in the school's best interest to thoroughly prepare four- to five-year-old pupils for compulsory standardized tests in order to get good test scores; however, this interest may not be compatible with a particular pupil's interest whose developmental stage does not meet the test requirements (cf. Gleeson, Davis & Wheeler, 2005).

This example suggests that teachers' professional judgments are not only connected to the instrumental aspects of their classroom practices, such as how to prepare pupils for their exams or how to teach pupils particular subject matter, but also touch upon teachers' values and ideals that guide their interpretations of what constitutes good teaching. These value-based aspects of teachers' professional conduct have been for the most part disregarded in a model of teachers' professionalism that stems from an 'evidence-based' rationality, and have, therefore, been criticized by several scholars (Atkinson, 2000; Blackmore, 2002; Evetts, 2009). Following an evidence-based model of teachers' professionalism implies that teachers' judgments should focus on selecting those teaching strategies and protocols that research has proven to be effective. In reaction to this evidence-based model, Biesta (2010a) proposes a 'value-based' model of teachers' professionalism and argues that teachers' judgments are not simply about finding the most effective means to achieve certain ends, but always involve an evaluation of the desirability of the goals that are intentionally or unintentionally produced by those means.

The issue of single-sex education provides a good illustration. From recent brain research we know that the brains of girls are more developed than the brains of boys when they reach puberty. This could justify teaching girls and boys in separate classrooms. Instruction and teaching methods could be adjusted to the needs of both groups, which in turn could optimize pupils' learning outcomes. Generally speaking this idea might seem defendable, if not desirable. However, from an educational point of view this idea could be regarded as undesirable, because teachers might consider single-sex education an inadequate preparation for living in a diverse society.

The essence of this example is that the means in education are not only judged in terms of predefined ends but also in terms of their qualitative contribution to educational goals, which initially might be overlooked (Biesta, 2009). Dottin (2009) argues that, in an educational context, professional judgment links means and ends reciprocally. This point is also made by Golami & Husu (2010), who coined the

term praxial knowledge, referring to teachers' reasoning in which the means are not technically isolated from the ends. Several scholars have argued that because means and ends are reciprocally linked, education is at heart a moral endeavour (Pendleburry, 1990; Van Manen, 1994; Carr, 1992; Phelan, 2005; Biesta, 2010b). From this it follows that teachers always have to consider whether means and ends are educationally desirable when making professional judgments, or as Biesta (2009, p. 186) puts it:

> In order to make such judgments teachers not only need to have general ideas about what is acceptable in human interaction. They also need to have ideas about what it means to be an educated person; they need to have ideas about the good society and the good life. What they need, in other words, are educational values and ideals.

The question 'what is educationally desirable' will always be posed against the background of the situation as it is. In their daily classroom practices teacher's interactions with their pupils are principally concerned with both the empirical question 'what is the case?' and the normative question 'what ought to be the case?' (cf. Biesta, 2010a). Ponte (2012) argues that 'what ought to be the case cannot logically be derived from 'what is'. If teachers formed the opinion that it would be a good idea for their pupils to wear a school uniform, this cannot be logically derived from the empirically established absence of school uniforms. What is educationally desirable can only be established through critical collegial and public deliberation. The 'is-ought problem' has a longstanding tradition in educational philosophy and theory (Carr, 1995; Mahony, 2009; Biesta 2010b; Ponte, 2012).

In continental Europe, there has been much educational theorizing with regard to the is-ought problem in the field of pedagogy (e.g. Benner, 1993; Van Manen, 1994; Smeyers & Levering 2005). Continental European pedagogy studies the means and ends of a child's upbringing in different domains, such as education, social work, child welfare and law (Ponte & Ax, 2009). In this article we focus on education as one of its central domains. One cannot, however, speak of continental European pedagogy as if it were one coherent meta-theory; it consists of a diversity of theoretical positions, which are reflected in the on-going philosophical and theoretical discourses about what is educationally worthwhile. Despite these different theoretical positions, Imelman (1995, p. 60) suggests that it is still possible to formulate one overarching question which could be considered the central object of study in continental European pedagogy: 'Who should be taught what, when, how, and why?' This fundamental question has for the most part been played out at the level of 'grand theories' (such as the positivist, phenomenological and critical theories), which are mainly of a philosophical nature and often not based on comprehensive empirical accounts of classroom practices (cf. Lingard, 2009).

The question formulated by Imelman, however, does not lose any of its relevance if posed at the level of teachers' everyday classroom practices, for example: 'What do teachers consider important for their pupils to learn and why?', 'What do teachers consider important for their pupils when it comes to how they are

being taught and why?' It seems evident that teachers will respond to these questions in a different way. Some teachers might see the goal of teaching as preparing pupils for a harsh and demanding world, and therefore promote their pupils' physical and mental development. Other teachers might see it as their main task to help pupils to become happy and balanced people, and want them to collaborate with their classmates as much as possible in order to acquire good social and communicative skills (cf. Hansen, 2000)

This study focuses on what kind of values and ideals teachers draw upon when they interpret their daily classroom practice (what is) in terms of what they consider to be educationally desirable (what ought to be). In their study on teachers' reflection about educational ideals of teaching, de Ruyter & Kole (2010) draw the conclusion that teachers' professional ideals have received little attention in literature (cf. Biesta, 2009). They put this conclusion into perspective by stating that (p. 212): 'Hansen (2000, 2001) is the clearest exception to this and there are authors who pay attention to ideals of teachers in the overall framework of their theory of professional morality (Day, 2004; Husu & Tirri, 2007; Socket, 1993).' One might add that scholars such as Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik (1990), van Manen (1991), Buzzelli & Johnston (2002), Campbell (2003), Kemmis & Smith, (2008), Ax & Ponte (2008), and Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall & Cribb, (2009) incorporate teachers' educational values and ideals in their overall framework of the nature of teaching. Reviewing this literature, it seems safe to say that the greater part is theoretical and philosophical, rather than empirical. In this regard Campbell (2008a) suggests that there should be more empirical studies devoted to exemplifying the moral and ethical realities of teaching, in the spirit of studies undertaken by Buzzelli & Johnston (2002), Campbell (2003), Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen (1993) and Richardson & Fenstermacher (2001). Biesta (2009) provides a recent example of an empirical study on teachers' values and ideals but this study primarily focused on the conditions under which teachers were able to make value judgments, rather than the substance of the educational values and ideals themselves.

In line with Imelman's question mentioned above, this study aimed to systematically explore what teachers consider to be educationally worthwhile, because educational values and ideals are important constituents of teachers' professional judgment. In the introductory section we stressed that Imelman's question stands in reciprocal relation with the situation as it is. Connecting 'the desirable but not yet existing' to 'what is', requires teachers to make the educational values and ideals behind their teaching explicit. In other words, teachers need to be able to legitimise their classroom interactions in terms of what they consider to be in their pupils' best interest. Our guiding research question is therefore: '*How do teachers legitimise their daily classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?*'

4.2 A conceptual framework

Departing from Imelman's overarching and compound question: 'Who should be taught what, when, how, and why?', we developed a conceptual framework (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2010b). The main purpose of this framework was to

enable a systematic and in-depth analysis of interview data (this will be further explained in the method section), in subsequent stages of the study. The different aspects ('who', 'what', 'when', 'how') of this question were used as the components of the conceptual framework. Subsequently, the 'where' and 'for what purpose' components were added to have a more complete range of components suitable for examining the way teachers legitimise their classroom interactions. The components have a descriptive and formal character; they refer to the types of educational aspects teachers take into consideration when they legitimise their classroom interactions. Each component was operationalized into several categories. The categories served the purpose of connecting the components to the interview data.

Table 4.1 Components of the conceptual framework

Components	Question	Categories
Who	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teacher-pupil relationship, and why?	· Child concept · Professional self-concept · Relationship
What (content)	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teaching content, and why?	· Acquisition of subject matter · Acquisition of skills · Acquisition of virtues
When	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning human development, and why?	· Opening up subject matter acquisition · Opening up skill acquisition · Opening up virtue acquisition
Where	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning work and living environment, and why?	· Classroom context · School context · External school context
How	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teaching and learning, and why?	· Teaching methods · Pupils' learning · Classroom organization
For what purpose	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teaching goals, and why?	· Internal school goals · Goals outside school

The 'why aspect' of Imelman's question is not to be considered a separate component, but rather a recursive follow-up question connected to each of the six components. For example, when connecting the 'why question' to the 'what component'

the question is not merely: 'What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning particular teaching content?', it also concerns the legitimizing question: 'Why do teachers consider particular teaching content to be in their pupils best interest?'. The why questioning directly touches upon teachers' reasoning with regard to what they think is educationally worthwhile. Consequently, the why questioning is linked to reasons that concern issues of principle (e.g. Hinkle, 1965; Jankowicz, 2004). Within this conceptual framework the why questioning serves the purpose of connecting the aforementioned components to teachers' educational values and ideals.

The idea underlying the present study is that teachers will use different kind of legitimisations, that consist of particular educational values and ideals, when interpreting their everyday classroom interactions in terms of what they consider to be in their pupils' best interest. The next section explains how the search for different legitimisation types was conducted.

4.3 Method

4.3.1 Context and participants

In order to get a thorough insight into the substance of the legitimisation types that teachers draw upon when interpreting their classroom interactions, a maximum variation sample was created (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Marshall, 1996; Devers & Frankel, 2000). Presentations about the research project were held at thirteen schools. Two or three teachers from each school decided to join the research project on a voluntary basis. A total of thirty-seven teachers, more or less equally divided among elementary and secondary schools in both regular and special education, entered the project. All participating teachers had to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in order to maximize the chance that they were past the 'survival' stage and able to draw on substantial experience when interpreting their classroom interactions.

4.3.2 Data collection

To find an answer to the research question (How do teachers legitimise their daily classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?), we developed a repertory interview procedure (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2010a), which was a qualitative adaption of Kelly's (1955) standard repertory grid technique. At the first meeting teachers watched video footage from their own lesson and were requested to construct mini dilemmas connected to classroom interactions that took place in that lesson, under the guidance of a researcher. A mini dilemma was defined as a moment in which teachers considered their course of action in an interaction situation as legitimate, and at the same time saw a legitimate alternative course of action with regard to that particular interaction situation. At the second

meeting these mini dilemmas (about eight) were presented to the teachers using storyboards (see Figure 2.1. Chapter 2).

Subsequently, the teachers were interviewed about these mini dilemmas and asked what they considered to be in their pupils' best interest. A sentence completion assignment was used for this (Grice, Burkley, Burkley, Wright, & Slaby, 2004): 'On the one hand I think it could be in the pupil's best interest to…; on the other hand I think it could be in the pupil's best interest to…'. This particular teacher responded to this question as follows: 'On the one hand I think it could be in the pupil's best interest to really listen to his reasons why he brought his mobile phone with him; on the other hand I think it could be in the pupil's best interest to learn that rules need to be followed'. In addition, teachers were subjected to recursive why questioning (cf. section 4.2), in order to provoke them to really think through the educational values and ideals that underlie different possible ways of interpreting their pupils' best interest. After several why questions, this teacher responded that if pupils experience that they are taken seriously '…they will gain self confidence, which will help them to become independent grownups', and that pupils need to learn to follow rules because: '…this will help them to adequately function in their future working environment.' In a following stage of the study the interview data was subjected to an in-depth content analysis, which is explained in the next subsection.

4.3.3 Qualitative analysis

We used the conceptual framework to analyse our interview data (see Table 4.1). The categories connected to each component were used as first order (Schutz, 1962) labels in Atlas-ti, a software program for qualitative analysis (Muhr, 1997), to categorize all the 37 fully transcribed interviews with the teachers. In the following subsections we explain in five steps how we got from the interview data to six legitimisation types.

4.3.3.1 Step 1: Demarcating the interview fragments

In the process of labelling the interview transcripts we chose to work with interview fragments that were long enough to be understood and interpreted when disconnected from the specific context of the interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In our particular case, most of the quotations were a response or part of a response to a 'why question' as mentioned in section 4.3.2. The following interview fragment from a teacher in special elementary education is a typical example of the kind of interview fragments we used for labelling in Atlas-ti: 'First and foremost our pupils need to learn to deal with their complex and at times negative emotions. We have a more succinct focus establishing a caring and peaceful environment for our pupils than schools that primarily focus on learning outcomes. We do value learning outcomes, but all of our pupils have some kind of behavioural or learning disorder. Consequently our pupils have a slower work pace.' In total we demarcated 1,937 interview fragments.

4.3.3.2 Step 2: Coding interview fragments

We coded the interview fragments on the basis of the categories of components. The categories (see third column Table 4.1) complemented with compressed definitions and demarcation rules operated as labels that helped us to adequately assign the components to the interview fragments. Coding the interview fragment in the former subsection using the categories as labels, for example, helped us to assign several components to particular parts of the interview fragment (see Table 4.2). In the last column of the table we included a brief account of why we assigned a component to a specific part of an interview fragment.

Table 4.2 Example of the distribution of one quotation over several components

Component	Question	Category	Specific part of the interview fragment	Attribution rationale
Who	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teacher-pupil relationship?	Child concept	…all of our pupils have some kind of behavior or learning disorder. Consequently our pupils have a slower work pace…	This part of the quotation says something about how the teacher sees her pupil.
What	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning teaching content?	Acquisition of skills	First and foremost our pupils need to learn to deal with their complex and at times negative emotions…	This part of the quotation says something about what kind of emotional skills pupils need to learn.
Where	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning work and living environment?	School context	…We have a more succinct focus establishing a caring and peaceful environment for our pupils than schools that primarily focus on learning outcomes…	This part of the quotation says something about what kind of environment pupils need to be in.

An external researcher was involved during this step to verify whether a person not familiar with the data could apply the coding scheme, i.e. the categories complemented with compressed definitions and demarcation rules. The external researcher (rater 1) coded a substantial part of the data independently from the author (rater 2). The inter-rater reliability with two raters was 0.81 (Cohen's kappa), which we considered good. In total we coded 3,794 interview fragments because we assigned a substantial number of interview fragments to more than one component.

4.3.3.3 Step 3: Composing teacher profiles

Our main aim after coding all the 37 interview transcripts was to find legitimisation types within the coded interview fragments. In order to find these legitimisation types we composed several (initially four) teacher profiles. A teacher profile consisted of summarized descriptions of each component's categories, and a substantive interpretation of the summarized descriptions per component. As an example, the elaboration of the 'where component' of a teacher working in special secondary education is provided in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Example of a 'where component' of a teacher's profile

Component	Question	Categories	Summarized descriptions	Interpretation of the summarized description
Where	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning work and living environment?	Classroom context	The teacher feels that it is in her pupils' best interest that they feel appreciated and accepted in the classroom especially because of former negative experiences.	This teacher feels that her classroom should be a safe haven for pupils. The school should offer pupils a secure connection to the world outside. The home environment could possibly be harmful for the wellbeing of the pupils.
		School context	The teacher feels that it is in her pupils' best interest that the school is a gateway towards further education or a job. The school forms a safe place for practice.	
		External school context	The teacher feels that it is in her pupils' best interest to protect the pupils from unrealistic high expectations coming from their home.	

We considered the elaboration of all six components (who, what, when, where, how, for what purpose) per interview to be constituents of a teacher's profile. Composing the teacher profiles helped us to reduce the volume of data to a manageable size and to analyse the different components in a cohesive way. A total of sixteen teacher profiles proved to be sufficient to reach the point of theoretical saturation, which will be further explained in the next step.

4.3.3.4 Step 4: Indicating legitimisation types

We started searching for cross-sectional legitimisation types on the basis of four teacher profiles. Together with a co-researcher we worked up from the data in the teacher profiles and touched upon sensitizing concepts, which guided our search for legitimisations types. Following this inductive process we initially found three legitimisation types within the four teacher profiles: (1) a caring legitimisation type, (2) a contextual legitimisation type, and (3) a functional legitimisation type. These legitimisations were found across the four teacher profiles. A legitimisation type, here, entails a systematic description of a particular pattern of educational values and ideals that teachers draw upon when they interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. The substance of the legitimisation types will be presented in the result section. Each individual teacher can make use of different legitimisation types; consequently the legitimisation types do not represent a specific kind of teacher but a specific kind of legitimisation.

In order to reach the point of theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), we selected another four teachers at random to compose four teacher profiles and used the three legitimisation types as a starting point. Besides looking for confirmation of the legitimisation types found earlier, we looked for possible new legitimisation types. This led to us to indicate another two types: (4) a personal legitimisation type, and (5) a critical legitimisation type. Because the newly composed teacher profiles led to finding new legitimisation types, we decided to select another four teachers at random to compose four new teacher profiles. This led to a final legitimisation type, referred to as (6) a psychological legitimisation type. Finally we composed another four teacher profiles and concluded that we could not distinguish another legitimisation type.

4.3.3.5 Step 5: Describing the six legitimisation types

In order to get to a systematic description of the six legitimisation types, we used the six components of the descriptive framework as the constituents of each legitimisation type. This resulted in a table with the six types displayed on the horizontal axis and the six components of the descriptive framework displayed on the vertical axis. We tried to fill out each of the 36 cells of the table on the basis of the teacher profiles. First we collated all the data per component coming from the sixteen teacher profiles. Second we described each of the six components in terms of the six legitimisation types. Although some cells were easier to fill than others, we managed to provide each cell with distinctive information about one of the six legitimisation types. Finally we checked our description of the cells with the rest of the data, which resulted in some minor refinements of the descriptions of several cells.

4.3.4 Audit procedure[1]

The quality of the data analysis in this study was assessed using an audit procedure (Akkerman, Admiraal, Brekelmans & Oost 2008). An independent auditor audited each analytical step in order to scrutinize the underlying decisions. Two meetings took place during the audit trail to provide all data sources necessary to retrace each analytical step. Based on all the information provided and a thorough examination of each step in the data analysis, the auditor concluded that this qualitative research study met criteria for visibility, comprehensibility and acceptability (reliability and validity).

4.4 Results

4.4.1 A typology of legitimisations

We found six distinct legitimisation types in the interview data: (1) a caring legitimisation type, (2) a personal legitimisation type, (3) a contextual-pragmatic legitimisation type, (4) a critical legitimisation type, (5) a functional legitimisation type, and (6) a psychological legitimisation type. These legitimisation types reflected what teachers considered to be in their pupils' best interest. In the following subsections each legitimisation type is briefly described. Each description is accompanied by a detailed table, in which the legitimisation type is described in terms of the six educational components. In addition, each component is illustrated by a quotation from a teacher's interview.

4.4.1.1 Caring legitimisation type

This legitimisation type expresses a caring orientation towards the pupils' best interest, in the sense that pupils are seen as vulnerable and very dependent on grownups to survive in a demanding world. One of the main characteristics of this legitimisation type is that pupils need to be handled with great care and patience. According to this legitimisation type, pupils need to be shielded from possibly harmful environments. Furthermore pupils need to develop qualities that will protect them from undesirable situations and predicaments. The school needs to provide a peaceful and healing environment in order for pupils to flourish.

1

See appendix for the audit report written by the auditor about the specifics concerning the trustworthiness of this study.

Table 4.4 Caring legitimisation type

Compo-nent	Caring legitimisation	Illustrative interview fragment
Who	In terms of damaged and vulner-able pupils in need of protection. Emphasis is on: (1) the pupils' susceptibility and vulnerability, (2) pupils' dependency on others, and (3) the pupil as a troubled and complex human being.	Our pupils have dealt with a number of negative past experiences; they always were the low achievers. One girl entered this school as a 'mental wreck', but after a specific support program she blossomed into a happy girl. *(teacher of 2n year pupils: special secondary school)*
What	In terms of focusing on capabilities that will protect them from harm. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' self-esteem, self-concept and self-acceptance, (2) learning to ask others for help and assistance, (3) learning to detect possibly harmful situations, and (4) learning to regu-late their own emotions.	The girls in our school are the targets of lover boys because they are very naïve and vulnerable. I try to educate them about possibly harmful situations in a practical way. They need to learn to detect these situations, so that they can develop a 'protective layer'. *(teacher of 2nd year pupils: special secondary school)*
When	In terms of having modest expectations regarding pupils' development. Emphasis is on: (1) moderating pupils' motivation to make progress, (2) small steps/ fits and starts in pupils' devel-opment, and (3) pupils' unique developmental progress.	This boy always wants to be the centre of attention. At the same time he displays very dependent behavior, not fitting his age. I need to remind myself that although this boy seems quite mature, he is often not ready for new experiences or subject matter. *(teacher of 3rd year pupils: special elementary school)*
Where	In terms of a safe and protective living and learning environment. Emphasis is on: (1) the school as a shelter from the world outside, (2) the school as a place of recovery and support, and (3) the class-room as a caring and nurturing environment.	In our school the pupils are in a relatively safe environment. We work with mixed groups no matter what kind of problems pupils have to deal with; low and high IQs, behavioral and learning problems. Of course the world outside is not as apprecia-tive as we tend to be. *(teacher of 4th year pupils: special elementary school)*
How	In terms of handling pupils with care and consideration. Emphasis is on: (1) patience towards pupils' instructional needs, (2) affirming pupils' abilities and achieve-ments, (3) supporting pupils' comprehension, and (4) pupils' feelings and emotional state.	I want this pupil to know that I will support her in completing the assignment success-fully. But before helping her out, I think it's important to acknowledge this pupil's own attempts in order to give her a sense of control and accomplishment. *(teacher of 8th year pupils: regular elementary school)*
For what purpose	In terms of preparing pupils to be able to survive in a demanding world. Emphasis is on: (1) fitting in/ conforming to their surround-ing world, (2) being able to take care of themselves in the future, and (3) pupils' having realistic future perspectives.	My pupils are not very well equipped to articulate their needs. Consequently, these pupils need to learn to ask for help if something is too difficult to handle. They need to learn this anyway for their later lives. *(teacher of 4th year pupils: special elementary school)*

4.4.1.2 Personal legitimisation type

This legitimisation type expresses a personal orientation towards the pupils' best interest in the sense that pupils need to be understood as unique social beings that have a personal relationship with teachers. In this legitimisation type, the pupils' personal development is of the utmost importance. It is imperative to their personal development that pupils are trusted to articulate their own needs and desires with regard to the educational environment they find themselves in. According to this legitimisation type, it is important to really know the pupils in order to understand their needs. The ultimate goal of education is that pupils grow up to be balanced and happy human beings.

Table 4.5 Personal legitimisation type

Component	Personal legitimisation	Illustrative interview fragment
Who	In terms of pupils as unique persons with unique aspirations. Emphasis is on: (1) the pupil as a human being to relate to in a personal way, (2) the pupil as a unique human being in his/her own right, and (3) the interdependent position of the pupil.	I show the pupils my personal side. It is important when communicating with pupils to know them on a personal level and vice versa. I do tell pupils about my personal life and pupils like to share their personal stories as well. *(teacher of 4th year pupils: regular secondary school)*
What	In terms of what connects to pupils' life worlds and aspirations. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' acquisition of social literacy, (2) pupils' acquisition of self-knowledge, (3) pupils' moral development and education, and (4) pupils' acquisition of a personal way of doing things.	We talk about the essential things in life; for example, a colleague of mine has cancer. Of course I take into account that they're still children, but at the same time these topics are part of life. Talking about these things helps pupils to express their personal feelings. *(teacher of 5th year pupils: regular elementary school)*
When	In terms of knowing what certain pupils need in specific situations. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' willingness to make progress, (2) acknowledging and knowing pupils' specific needs, and (3) pupils' self-regulatory development.	We have several pupils who started their internship in their second year; officially the internship starts in the third year. These pupils couldn't cope with theoretical courses and they wanted to start their internship so badly, that we allowed them to do so. *(teacher of 2nd year pupils: special secondary school)*
Where	In terms of a social communicative environment for pupils. Emphasis is on: (1) the classroom as a social community, (2) the school as an impermanent living structure, and (3) the availability of appropriate resources.	If you ask children what they like about school they often refer to social contacts. Meeting up with friends is what they appreciate the most. School is not only about subject matter, but also about a social context in which pupils interact with each other. *(teacher of 4th year pupils: regular secondary school)*

| How | In terms of tailor-made learning arrangements. Emphasis is on: (1) a personal relationship with the pupils, (2) pupils' learning from their classmates, (3) pupils' intrinsic aspirations and motivation, and (4) pupils' initiatives and responsibilities. | I feel it's important that pupils get the chance and freedom to explore certain subject matter themselves. When pupils can make use of their own learning strategies they will be intrinsically motivated and driven to complete a certain assignment. *(teacher of 8th year pupils: regular elementary school)* |
| For what purpose | In terms of the pupils' development into a happy and whole person. Emphasis is on: (1) the pupils' growth towards becoming self-confident human beings, (2) pupils' search for a meaningful passion, (3) pupils' membership of a social community. | I feel it's important when pupils leave our school that they have an idea of who they are. If pupils have developed a positive self-concept, they will probably become more successful in their future lives than pupils with a lot of knowledge but a lack of self-confidence. *(teacher of 8th year pupils: regular elementary school)* |

4.4.1.3 Contextual legitimisation type

This legitimisation type expresses a contextual orientation towards the pupils' best interest in the sense that pupils' living conditions, life histories and practical lives need to be taken into account in teaching situations. According to this legitimisation type pupils will find themselves in all kinds of social situations. The main qualities they need to develop concern practical living skills that will help them to act adequately in these situations. The school curriculum should include learning arrangements that are situated both inside and outside the school. Consequently the school is considered a training place for the world outside the school.

Table 4.6 Contextual legitimisation type

Component	Contextual legitimisation	Illustrative interview fragment
Who	In terms of seeing pupils as a product of their histories and living environment. Emphasis is on: (1) the pupils as part of a broad social network, (2) the pupils as historical human beings, and (3) the pupils as participants in the real world.	We have a lot pupils from deprived neighborhoods and home situations. Furthermore, most of them have some kind of disorder or disability. Our pupils do not have very well-educated parents and we have to deal with the consequences in our school. *(teacher of 3rd year pupils: special secondary school)*
What	In terms of what pupils need to learn to live in the modern world. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' practical living skills, (2) pupils' understanding of the grownup world, (3) real-life knowledge application, and (4) pupils' acquisition of family life skills.	When it comes to sex education many pupils already know a lot about the subject matter. However, at the same time they do not know essential aspects of a sexual relationship, for example how to treat it with respect. But they also need to learn how to use a condom. *(teacher of 2nd year pupils: special secondary school)*

When	In terms of linking pupils' context and history to their developmental outlook. Emphasis is on: (1) the interplay between pupils' needs and societal demands, (2) what is needed in pupils' contemporary living situation, (3) linking pupils' life histories to their current potential.	Because of behavioral or emotional problems some pupils are not ready yet to go on an internship. One pupil runs away from school when he can't cope with a certain situation. That kind of behavior will not be tolerated in any working context. *(teacher of 2nd year pupils: special secondary school)*
Where	In terms of a real world learning environment. Emphasis is on: (1) the school as a training place for the real world, (2) the interplay between pupils' home situation and school life, and (3) extending the learning environment beyond the school.	We organize a school camp to introduce pupils to several real world situations. On the one hand we create a safe place to practice, on the other hand pupils are being faced with situations they will meet in everyday life. Pupils can handle these situations quite well especially when parents are supportive. *(teacher of 4th year pupils: special primary school)*
How	In terms of transfer of teaching content to several areas of application. Emphasis is on: (1) taking the pupils' social and economic status into account, (2) connecting new concepts to life world situations, (3) organizing authentic learning situations, and (4) teaching as interactive storytelling.	When I teach I try to bring the outside world into my lessons. I do this for two reasons: first pupils are much more motivated when they work on assignments that are realistic, and second to systematically integrate the official school curriculum into everyday practical life. *(teacher of 5th year pupils: regular elementary school)*
For what purpose	In terms of preparing pupils to participate in civil society. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' functioning in private and public spaces, (2) preparing pupils for practical daily life, and (3) preparing pupils for their adult working lives.	Even if bad things happened in the past, pupils need to go on with their lives. It is important that pupils learn a trade, instead of growing up to become unemployable. Under new legislation, pupils who have no qualifications for work will not receive social security. *(teacher of 2nd year pupils: special secondary school)*

4.4.1.4 Critical legitimisation type

This legitimisation type expresses a critical orientation towards the pupils' best interest in the sense that pupils need to be freed from constraining ideas about themselves and living conditions that imprint these ideas. According to this legitimisation type, pupils should be prepared to become equal and qualified participants in conversations. Consequently they should develop qualities that will help them to make informed and independent judgments. Schools should encourage pupils to adopt a critical stance towards constraining social structures. This legitimisation type perceives the school curriculum as a construct that is influenced by both social and political claims.

Table 4.7 Critical legitimisation type

Compo-nent	Critical legitimisation	Illustrative interview fragment
Who	In terms of pupils being capable of standing up for their rights. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils being constrained by social structures, (2) pupils as the promising future generation, and (3) pupils as equal participants in conversation.	Often our pupils are lame ducks waiting until something gets arranged for them. I don't want my pupils to live their lives waiting for assistance or permission from others. I do believe that they can do something meaningful with their lives. *(teacher of 2nd year pupils: special secondary school)*
What	In terms of pupils' acquisition of autonomy and a critical mindset. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils learning to appreciate democratic achievements, (2) pupils' acquisition of a non-prejudiced mindset, (3) pupils learning to stand up for themselves, and (4) pupils forming their own substantiated opinions.	For example, pupils need to learn to compare election programs and analyze messages in the media. It is important that pupils don't just believe anything, they need to be able to form their own opinions based on trustworthy information. They need to be able to ask critical questions. *(teacher of 4th year pupils: regular secondary school)*
When	In terms of growing towards becoming independent human beings. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' timely awakening of their autonomy, (2) scrutinizing political claims regarding pupils' development, and (3) pupils' involvement in the unfolding of the curriculum.	A recent school reform, instigated by the government, turned out to be quite problematic. A lot of questions with regard to pupils' abilities to steer their own learning processes at a particular age are left unanswered. Although I see several upsides to the recent reform, I still have my doubts. *(teacher of 5th year pupils: regular secondary school)*

Where	In terms of an environment that appeals to pupils' ability to express themselves. Emphasis is on: (1) the school as a system that alienates pupils from real life, (2) pupils' home situations as a possibly restraining context, and (3) the school as place that triggers pupils' critical thinking.	Sometimes I wonder whether parents really talk to their children and how often. Do parents ask questions like: 'Why do you think that?', 'Why couldn't it be different?', etc. In my classroom pupils learn to communicate and really think things through, together with their classmates. *(teacher of 5th year pupils: regular primary school)*
How	In terms of bringing about pupils' interests and social commitment. Emphasis is on: (1) encouraging pupils' social engagement, (2) pupils' involvement in running the classroom, (3) pushing pupils to assert their needs and introducing them to different points of view.	These pupils are used to getting everything arranged for them. Eventually this leads to a certain passiveness. They trust that someone else will help them out. I feel it's important to encourage them to take matters into their own hands. I also try to encourage them to assert their needs. *(teacher of 2nd year pupils: special secondary school)*
For what purpose	In terms of pupils becoming aware and independent human beings. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils taking ownership of their lives, (2) pupils growing up to become conscious human beings, and (3) pupils growing up to become democratic citizens.	It is important for our pupils to grow up in an open democracy. In order to function in an open democracy it is imperative that our pupils grow up to be critical citizens. They need live in physical and mental freedom in order to exercise their freedom of speech. *(teacher of 4th year pupils: regular secondary school)*

4.4.1.5 Functional legitimisation type

This legitimisation type expresses a functional orientation towards the pupil's best interest in the sense that pupils need to be raised towards adulthood along the lines of preconceived favourable outcomes. Pupils' learning achievements are of the utmost importance. Great value is attached to evidence-based teaching methods in order to maximize pupils' potential. In accordance with this legitimisation type, pupils are primarily perceived as institutionalized learners. Consequently they should learn to acquire adequate study skills and a good work ethos to master curriculum content that is going to be examined.

Table 4.8 Functional legitimisation type

Compo-nent	Functional legitimisation	Illustrative interview fragment
Who	In terms of pupils as clients with specific learning needs. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils as institutionalized learners, (2) pupils as clients in the formal school system, and (3) safe-guarding a functional relationship with pupils.	I encourage pupils to think beyond their initial reaction. From my experience pupils tend to pick the first answer that comes to mind instead of thinking things through. Yet they are expected to be thorough when they take their final examination next year. *(teacher of 4th year pupils: regular secondary school)*
What	In terms of pupils' acquisition of learning skills and official curric-ulum content. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' acquisition of adequate study skills, (2) pupils' acquisition of content that is going to be examined, (3) pupils' acquisition of a good work ethos, and (4) pupils' acquisition of basic planning skills.	Sometimes I let a pupil know that I think his achievements are very disappointing. I warn those pupils that they will get a C on their final exams and that will diminish their chances when it comes to further education. Of course this all has to do with study skills and perse-verance. *(teacher 3rd year pupils: special secondary school)*
When	In terms of closely following the of-ficial order of the curriculum plan. Emphasis is on: (1) the importance of the content for pupils' future lives, (2) completing the official curriculum schedule, (3) pushing pupils' development.	The planning capacities of our pupils are quite poor. I've just finished this year's curriculum to prepare them for their tests and exams. I need to encourage pupils to comply with the pro-gram so that they are well prepared when they have to take their tests and exams. *(teacher of 5th year pupils: regular secondary school)*
Where	In terms of an environment that boosts pupils' performance. Emphasis is on: (1) school as a means to accomplish success in later life, (2) the classroom as a place of achievement, and (3) the classroom as a place to foster pupils' learning.	A quiet and orderly classroom fosters a good working and learning ethos. It is important that I can have a conversation with a pupil without being disrupted by background noise. A noisy classroom will have a negative effect on pupils' learning. *(teacher of 8th year pupils: regular elementary school)*
How	In terms of optimizing the teaching and learning effectiveness. Em-phasis is on: (1) smooth running of the classroom, (2) structured instruction and assignments, (3) working towards predefined curric-ulum goals, and (4) the rationale of the official teaching methods.	If we work on a week assignment often a kind of 'interval training' occurs. Pupils start work-ing and after 10 minutes they start wandering around. The productivity of these lessons is much lower than in a more structured lesson with set instructions and a set assignment. *(teacher of 4th year pupils: regular secondary school)*
For what purpose	In terms of preparing/ training pupils for future achievements. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' short- and long-term school career, (2) pupils' future employment oppor-tunities, and (3) maximizing pupils' potential.	If pupils primarily focus on having fun they can probably forget a school career in higher edu-cation. I think it's important that pupils learn to strive for the best results possible. It is a waste of talent if they settle for less. *(teacher of 5th year pupils: regular secondary school)*

4.4.1.6 Psychological legitimisation type

This legitimisation type expresses a psychological orientation towards the pupils' best interest in the sense that their conduct needs to be labelled in mental or emotional terms in order for adequate teaching and learning to take place. According to this legitimisation type, pupils are not primarily looked on as individuals but rather as exponents of a larger group. Emphasis is put on pupils' learning and behavioural difficulties. According to this legitimisation type, pupils' diagnostic profiles to a large extent inform how they should be taught. School is considered a place that needs to be equipped to deal with pupil conduct that deviates from the norm.

Table 4.9 Psychological legitimisation type

Compo- nent	Psychological legitimisation	Illustrative interview fragment
Who	In terms of an individual pupil being an example of a larger group of pupils. Emphasis is on: (1) attributing specific characteristics to pupils, (2) pupils' learning and behavioral difficulties, and (3) perceiving pupils in terms of their diagnostic labels.	It is no use trying to educate pupils about the endangered environment we live in; they could not care less. Still I think it is really important to keep on trying even though these kids seem not very susceptible to this kind of content. *(teacher of 5th year pupils: regular secondary school)*
What	In terms of pupils' acquisition of skills that counteract their natural inclinations. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' internalization of basic social conduct, (2) pupils' abilities to open up their inner worlds, (3) skills that counteract pupils' undesirable behavior, and (4) what is within pupils' cognitive comprehension.	There is evidence that pupils with autism like to do repetitive actions. But if I don't intervene, there is a chance that this pupil will spool knit the whole year long. I don't think it's a big problem but I try to help him to be more creative by encouraging him to make a bag or a flower instead of just spool knitting for the sake of it. *(teacher of 1st year pupils: special secondary school)*
When	In terms of pupils' natural developmental phases. Emphasis is on: (1) pupils' deviation from normal development, (2) phases when pupils are best able to learn specific skills or content, and (3) closely monitoring pupils' cognitive progress.	I believe some things need to be learned in elementary school; otherwise it is too late. For example, pupils need to have developed some self-confidence and a good working ethos in the first 8 years of their education. They are not likely to learn these things when they're 15. *(teacher of 8th year pupils: regular elementary school)*
Where	In terms of an environment that compensates for pupils' learning and behavioral disorders. Emphasis is on: (1) adjusting the learning environment to pupils' specific needs, (2) ready access to specialist provision, and (3) special schools for pupils with specific needs.	This boy has a very loud mouth, is very rude and in general is a low achiever. Unfortunately our school is not yet properly equipped to adequately deal with this boy's disruptive behavior. I do my best but I can't be a teacher, psychiatrist and social worker at the same time. *(teacher of 3rd year pupils: special secondary school)*

How	Emphasis on pupils' psychological parameters as the starting point for teaching. Emphasis is on: (1) connecting to pupils' internal life worlds, (2) drilling pupils to memorize specific content, (3) pre-structured instructional steps, and (4) taking pupils' specific diagnostic profiles into account.	'Normal' people save their experiences somewhere in their head and at a later point in time they can draw on these experiences. Because of their disorders these pupils are not capable of doing this. I try to help these pupils by offering them a structured environment and thinking steps to make sense of their world. *(teacher of 3rd year pupils: special elementary education)*
For what purpose	In terms of predictions of what will become of the pupils. Emphasis is on: (1) fixed ideas about what pupils are able to achieve, (2) the impact of pupils' disorders on their later life, and (3) what the pupils' future environment allows them to be.	A lot of the pupils in this group are bound to be working in subsidized establishments in their later lives. Although this one pupil with ADHD is somewhat more intelligent than the others, he still won't make it in a regular workplace because he is too sensitive. *(teacher of 3rd year pupils: special secondary school)*

4.5 Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to distinguish and substantiate ways in which teachers legitimise their classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals. Our findings allow us to conclude that teachers make use of different legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of what they consider to be in their pupils' best interest. The in-depth analysis of the interview transcripts distinguished six different types: (1) a caring legitimisation type, (2) a personal legitimisation type, (3) a contextual legitimisation type, (4) a critical legitimisation type, (5) a functional legitimisation type, and finally (6) a psychological legitimisation type. The legitimisation types were systematically described along the lines of the six components of the conceptual framework. These legitimisation types could (a) contribute to the development of an educational vocabulary, (b) foster collegial and public deliberation, and (c) help teachers to connect their educational outlooks to grand theories. These three claims will be elaborated on in the discussion section.

4.6 Discussion

4.6.1 An educational vocabulary

We have argued in this article that professional judgment implies judging the desirability of particular means and ends in terms of what is to be considered in pupils' best interest. In order to articulate their pupils' best interest, teachers should have a vocabulary that enables them to address and express educational values and ideals that form part of their everyday professional judgments. Several scholars, however, have argued that the conditions teachers are working in do not

encourage teachers to talk about their teaching practice in educational terms (e.g. Lipman, 2009; Kemmis & Smith, 2008; Van de Ven & Oolbekkink, 2008; Zeichner, 2010). Moreover, Biesta (2010b, p. vii-viii) remarks: '… that many of those working in education lack a vocabulary to raise questions about the aims and ends of education, and in relation to this, often also lack real opportunities for asking such questions.' Biesta gives an extensive account of the reasons for the dissolution of educational language in educational practices. One reason is the great emphasis on measurement in contemporary educational policy, which gives the false impression that answers to the question 'what is good education', can be solely based on factual information. This line of reasoning leaves no room to address the value-laden character of this question. In concurrence with this argument, Mahony (2009) sees few opportunities for teachers and other education professionals to develop greater ethical literacy. He claims that (p. 985): '…something is missing from the professional preparation of teachers, given that teaching is an activity which is grounded in values and expressive of them'. According to Mahony, teacher preparation has become predominantly focused on the technical and instrumental, and current policies decrease the opportunities for teachers to sharpen their capacities in valuing values (cf. Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall, & Cribb, 2009).

In this study a structured interview procedure served as an intervention to help teachers to express their educational values and ideals that are embedded in their classroom practice. Several studies have shown that teachers and student teachers are not naturally inclined to think about their practice in educational terms and not sufficiently capable of articulating their ideas about good education in a profound manner without an intervention of some sort (Mansvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard & Verloop, 2007; Shapira-Lishshinsky, 2011; Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011). In this regard, Gholami & Husu (2010) argue that teachers are inclined to use practical knowledge (means to an end reasoning), rather than praxial knowledge (reasoning in which the means constitute the ends) when they interpret their pedagogical actions. Gholami & Husu, as we stated in the introduction section, argue that teachers should develop their practical knowledge and their pedagogical thinking in line with praxial knowledge, by engaging in discourses that motivate them to reflect on the reasoning that lies behind their actions and educational beliefs. In line with this argument, Socket & LePage (2002) urge teachers to use a moral vocabulary to interpret their work, which is missing in classrooms, staff lounges and lecture halls of teacher education. They are hesitant to claim that teachers are able to draw on a corpus of morally informed action when making classroom judgments, as they state (p. 170): 'We are not confident that teachers' use of judgment goes much beyond the intuitive.'

Whether reasons for the lack of an educational vocabulary are to be sought in the conditions under which teaching takes place, or teachers' capabilities or a combination of both, is not the issue here. The main point is the importance of teachers having the professional autonomy and ability to draw on a vocabulary that helps them address and express the value-laden dimensions of their everyday classroom practices (cf. Van Manen, 2000; Campbell, 2008a).

The outcomes of this study could contribute to developing such an educational vocabulary.

4.6.2 Collegial and public deliberation

Teachers could inquire their own classroom interactions in terms of what they consider to be in their pupil's best interest and relate their educational outlooks to the typology of legitimisations. They might find that particular classroom interactions trigger particular legitimisation types to be more in the foreground and other legitimisation types to be more in the background of their considerations. Subsequently, teachers could inquire why that is the case, if this is consistent across different classroom interactions, and if they see any reason to sustain, dispute, constrict or expand the legitimisation types they draw upon. It may be suggested that teachers engage in this kind of critical reflection together with colleagues (cf. Vasquez-Levy, 1998). Inter-subjective interpretations of classroom interactions in terms of pupils' best interest by teachers could help them to go beyond the personal, and weigh new and unanticipated perspectives on what's educationally desirable (cf. Bleakley, 2006). Moreover, articulating, understanding and justifying different ways of seeing what's educationally desirable requires public deliberation. This claim connects to the programs of discourse ethics, presupposing a conception of practical reasoning, which Gilabert (2005) refers to as 'deliberative practical rationality'. He describes this kind of practical reasoning as follows (cf. Ponte, 2012):

> …when we are about to decide what we ought to do, we should follow only those norms which we are confident could be reasonably accepted by all those possibly affected. The way to gain that confidence on the reasonability, or normative validity, of our moral grounds for choice, is to actually engage with others in public argumentation or deliberation. (p. 186).

Deliberations about what is educationally worthwhile, thus, should be connected to what actually goes on in the teaching practice, and should be part of intercollegiate reflection within school, discussions within the professional community as a whole, and debates with organizations within the civil society and the government (Ruyter & Kole, 2010).

4.6.3 Connection to grand theories

From the results of our study we learned that teachers, when they are being asked what they consider to be in their pupils' best interest in a pre-structured manner, are fairly able to articulate their educational values and ideals. Van Manen (1995) observes that teachers tend to do this by telling stories and reporting anecdotes, observations and practical examples. This observation concurs with the experience in this study; the teachers involved were not likely to talk about their practice in terms of grand theories (e.g. the positivist, phenomenological and critical theories). Teachers did not say, for instance, that they see their pupils in a Rousseauian way and that therefore they will approach them in a naturalistic manner, or that they want their pupils to be freed from a false consciousness in order for them to bring about social change. The observation that teachers do not tend to draw on

an external corpus of predefined values when interpreting their classroom interactions is consistent with Hansen's powerful argument that the moral is embedded in the practice itself (Hansen, 1998):

> Teachers need not grop elsewhere first, outside the practice, to find their moral bearings in their work with the young. Teaching means attending to students, listening to them, speaking with them in intellectually serious ways, identifying their strengths and weaknesses with an eye on supporting the former and overcoming the latter, and more. (p. 653).

Similarly, the legitimisation types are not derived from any source external to the work of teachers, e.g. moral theories, political ideologies, societal or cultural values, but based on teachers' interpretations of the educational significance of their daily classroom interactions. In other words, the legitimisation types are the result of a deliberate attempt to make educational values that are embedded in teachers' everyday practices more explicit (cf. Biesta, 2009).

Hansen's claim that 'the moral is in the practice' does not suggest that external sources have no significance for understanding the nature of teaching. External sources serve the purpose of bringing in new perspectives, which can illuminate the practice of teaching in altered ways and might lead to a deeper or different understanding of what teaching practice entails. In this regard Hansen argues (1998, p. 647): 'Moral philosophy especially can illuminate both the idea of the moral and the moral aspects of teaching. However it does not create or define those aspects.' In this regard the legitimisation types illuminate teachers' educational values and ideals by representing them in a refined and schematic manner.

In the context of teacher education, the typology of legitimisations could be further elaborated by connecting it to grand theories, such as the positivist, phenomenological and critical theories. In this sense the typology of legitimisations could function as a framework that mediates between student teachers' personal educational values and philosophical discourses about what is educationally worthwhile. In other words, the typology can be perceived as a heuristic framework that enables student teachers to further explore their educational values and beliefs. They could look for particular connections between their educational values and ideals and the typology of legitimisations. A student teacher might find, for example, that his or her own educational values especially connect to the critical and contextual legitimisation types. Subsequently, student teachers could explore theoretical and philosophical positions that are informed by critical theory. In other words, the legitimisation types could give theoretical and philosophical discourses with regard to what is educationally desirable, e.g. theoretical positions in continental European pedagogy, a meaningful reference to their representation in teaching (cf. Oosterheert & Vermunt, 2001). This kind of inquiry could be part of teacher education programs, which aim to broaden teachers' perspectives with regard to the educational significance of their daily classroom interactions.

The back and forth process between student teachers' own educational values, the typology of legitimisations and grand theories, could warrant its heuristic purpose. In other words, the six legitimisation types are not meant to function

as a prescriptive list, which student teachers should subscribe to. A checklist of educational legitimisations would cut off every possibility for student teachers to deliberately inquire, articulate and expand their educational outlooks.

4.6.4 Future research

Further research could help explore whether the legitimisation types could be transferable to other teachers in other contexts. Teachers within other cultural, religious, or ethnic contexts will have other frames of reference, which might lead to different educational outlooks. The data for this study were collected in a Western culture, which is usually classified as individualist. The nature and the interpretation of the data could have been different if it was collected in more collectivist cultures, as would be the case, for example, in an Asian context (cf. Hofstede, 2007).

Another line of research could focus on the way teachers make use of the different legitimisation types. It could be the case that teachers draw on one or two legitimisation types in particular, while the other legitimisation types play a relatively minor role at the back of their minds when they legitimise their classroom interactions. It could also be the case that teachers draw equally on all six legitimisation types when legitimizing their classroom interactions. This kind of study could explore qualitative differences between teachers in their understanding of the educational significance of their classroom interactions.

Chapter 5

How teachers express what they consider to be in their pupils' best interest

Chapter 5

How teachers express what they consider to be in their pupils' best interest[1]

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Abstract

This study sheds light on how teachers express their pupils' best interest. A former study concluded that teachers draw upon different legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. A legitimisation type entails a systematic description of a particular pattern of educational values and ideals. This study focuses on how teachers give expression to these legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions. The results indicate that teachers differed in how they gave expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of extensiveness, substantiveness, deliberateness and answerableness. Extensiveness relates to the range of legitimisation types that teachers used when interpreting their classroom interactions. Substantiveness relates to the substantive focus teachers had in their way of interpreting their classroom interactions. Thoughtfulness relates to the manner in which teachers weighed and assessed conceivable legitimisation types. Answerableness relates to the grounds on which teachers legitimised their classroom interactions. The results also suggest that the ways in which teachers give expression to the legitimisation types is related to particular institutional contexts. The discussion section suggests an agenda for teachers' professional development to help them recognise what is in their pupils' best interest.

5.1 Introduction

One of the most complex questions in education is what one considers to be in children's best interest. This question refers to one of the most important principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: 'In all aspects of the education system, consideration of the child's best interests must be a primary consideration.' (Unesco & Unicef, 2007, p. 118) What is in the best interest of children is always connected to values and ideals with regard to what is considered to be good education (Biesta, 2007). It seems obvious that teachers will have their own ideas about what constitutes good education and accordingly will express these in their relationships with their pupils.

Some teachers might conceive good education as preparing pupils for a harsh and demanding world and therefore promote their pupils' physical and mental development. Other teachers might conceive good educations as helping pupils to become happy and balanced people and want them to collaborate with their classmates as much as possible in order to acquire good social and communicative skills. These kinds of consideration will, to a certain extent, guide the way teachers' interpret their everyday classroom interactions. Teachers' classroom interactions are not only connected to the instrumental aspects of their classroom practices, such as how to prepare pupils for their exams or how to teach pupils particular subject matter, but also touch upon values and ideals with regard to what they consider to be in their pupils' best interest. The question 'what is in the pupils' best interest?' will always be posed against the background of the situation as it is. However, the question 'what is more desirable?' cannot be logically derived from the situation as it is. Empirical information can inform decision-making with regard to what is desirable, but does not provide in itself an answer to this question. This is known in educational philosophy and theory as the 'is-ought problem' (Carr, 1995; Mahony, 2009; Biesta, 2010b). In continental Europe, there has been much educational theorising with regard to the is-ought problem in the field of pedagogy (Benner, 1993; Van Manen, 1994; Smeyers & Levering 2005).

Continental European pedagogy is the science that studies the child's upbringing in different domains, such as education, social work, child welfare and law (e.g. Van Manen, 1991; Biesta, 2011a; Ponte & Ax, 2009). In this article we focus on education as one of the domains of continental European pedagogy. The meaning of the word pedagogy in continental European literature is different from the Anglo-American literature, in which the word 'pedagogy' merely refers to teaching strategies or methods of instruction. The word 'pedagogy' comes from the Greek words 'paidos', which means 'child', and 'ago', which means 'lead'; it literally means 'to lead the child'. Ponte and Ax (2009) described the research object of continental European pedagogy as follows: 'This science seeks answers to questions about what kind of human beings children should become and how they can be raised toward becoming such human beings, taking into account the context in which this process of upbringing takes place' (p. 293). In continental Europe, pedagogy is a discipline in its own right, separate from, for example, philosophy, psychology, sociology and history, often located in separate departments within university faculties (Biesta, 2011a).

For the present study it is significant that the specific relationship between the adult (e.g. the teacher) and the child (e.g. the pupil), forms the very heart of continental European pedagogy (cf. Saevi, 2012). Teachers will always care for their pupils as they are and, at the same time, care for pupils for what they may become (Nohl, 1982). In other words, in continental European pedagogy, interactions between teachers and pupils are always concerned with both the empirical question 'what is the case?' and the moral question 'what ought to be the case?' (cf. Biesta, 2010a). From this perspective, educating children is an inherent moral practice (cf. Van Manen, 1994; Imelman, 1995; Biesta, 2010b, Ponte, 2009). Inherent, here, indicates that every classroom interaction and its consequences, whether intended or unintended, can be interpreted in terms of its moral impact.

A persistent problem in continental European pedagogy is that debates about what 'is' and what 'ought to be' have for the most part been played out at the level of 'grand theories', such as the positivist, phenomenological and critical theories (cf. Miedema, 1997; König, 1975; Lingard, 2009), and are therefore difficult to connect to day-to-day classroom practice. Continental European pedagogy consists of a diversity of theoretical positions. The three most distinctive positions are, in the European context, commonly perceived as the 'land of three strands': the *geisteswissenschaftliche*, the empirical-analytical and the critical strands (Miedema, 1997). In the *geisteswissenschaftliche* strand, which originated in the nineteenth century, the child is seen as a distinct form of human existence (Langeveld, 1969) and is no longer considered to be a little adult. Consequently, the methods of upbringing should connect to the way children experience this distinct stage of life and protect them from adult life (Aries, 1962). The goal of upbringing from a *geisteswissenschaftliche* perspective concerns the becoming of a person, which means that children will have to develop the ability to take responsibility and learn to accept that they can be held accountable for their actions (Beugelsdijk, Souverein & Levering, 1997).

In contrast to the other strands, the empirical-analytical strand does not have a normative orientation. The empirical-analytical strand is primarily concerned with instrumental upbringing questions: questions about the conditions under which different upbringing goals can be achieved by the adult and what kind of interventions they have at their disposal (Meijer, 1999; Ponte & Ax, 2009). The moral justifications of these interventions are seen as normative and therefore not amenable to empirical investigation, which means that these justifications have to come from outside the scientific domain. The *geisteswissenschaftliche* pedagogy is looked upon as being too speculative, philosophical and prescriptive (Ponte, 2007).

The critical strand developed, firstly, in response to the *geisteswissenschaftliche* strand, which gave too little consideration to the social and political context of the relationship between adults and children and, secondly, in response to the empirical-analytical strand, which overtly disregarded normative concepts. In the critical strand, the goal of bringing up children concerns the abolition of societal constraints in order to emancipate children. The method of upbringing is formulated in terms of helping children to develop communicative competencies, by acknowledging them as equal partners in interactive processes and

providing them with opportunities to learn to participate in conversations (Masschelein, 2005).

These debates in European pedagogy are difficult to connect to the practice of teaching. Teachers are not very likely to articulate what they consider to be in their pupils' best interest in abstract philosophical or theoretical terms. This does not mean that philosophical and theoretical debates are futile for teachers. These debates are significant, firstly because they might inform teachers about the existence of fundamentally different perspectives on what is educationally worthwhile. Secondly, these debates could give substance to (student) teachers' reflection in terms of 'why' and 'what for' questions, instead of merely instrumental 'how' and 'what' questions (cf. Mansvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard & Verloop, 2007; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Zeichner & Gore, 1995). The question remains, then, how do teachers connect their daily classroom interactions (what is) to what they think is in the pupil's best interest (what ought to be) in their own terms? This question was explored in a former study, which concluded that teachers draw upon six different *legitimisation types* when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. A legitimisation type entails a particular pattern of educational values and ideals that teachers draw upon when they interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2013a). The current study focused on the research question: '*How do teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest?*' For example, are teachers decisive or doubtful when legitimising their classroom interaction; do teachers draw on different legitimisation types or do they draw on one particular legitimisation type when legitimising their classroom interactions?

Interestingly, in literature on how teachers reason about or interpret, their teaching practice, several authors have stressed its situational character (Carlgren & Lindblad, 1991; Graig, 1998; Hansen, 2002; Kennedy, 2010). Gholami and Husu (2010), in their in-depth interpretative study on how teachers reason about their practice, argue that the way teachers legitimise their teaching practice is not about the application of general rules or principles but about what has to be done in a particular situation (cf. Biesta, 2007). Following this line of reasoning, it seems plausible that the way teachers interpret their practice, in our case their classroom interactions, might be strongly connected to the particular teaching situation in a particular context. Therefore the second research question was: '*Do teachers differ from each other in how they give expression to the legitimisation types?*'. Prosser and Trigwell (1999) argue that, although different considerations with regard to what is educationally desirable play a role in any act of teaching , a specific context may trigger specific considerations to be more in the foreground and other considerations to be more in the background of the teacher's awareness of a teaching situation. In concurrence with this argument, the third research question was formulated as follows: '*Are differences between teachers in how they give expression to the legitimisation types related to the institutional context they work in?*' The following institutional contexts were distinguished in this study: regular primary education, regular secondary education, special primary education and special secondary education.

We explored the three research questions in an in-depth interpretative study, involving interviews with thirty-seven teachers working in regular or special primary and secondary education.

In the next section we present the analytical framework, which helped us to analyse how teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. We then explain the method used to conduct the study. Following the method section, the results and conclusions are presented. Finally, the question of how to understand the pupils' best interest is addressed in the discussion section .

5.2 Analytical framework

5.2.1 Introduction

As mentioned in the introduction, an earlier interpretative study resulted in the description of legitimisation types that teachers use when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. The legitimisation types were systematically described in terms of six components. In this study we combined the legitimisation types and components in an analytical framework in order to find themes in the interview data that could help answer our research questions (see Table 5.1 for an overview). In the subsections below we summarise how the framework originated and give a substantive account of its makeup.

Table 5.1 Analytical framework

	Legitimisation types					
Components	Caring	Personal	Contextual	Critical	Functional	Psychological
Who should be taught						
What should be taught						
When should be taught						
Where should be taught						
How should be taught						
For what purpose should be taught						

5.2.2 The legitimisation types

Six legitimisation types are displayed on the horizontal axis in Table 5.1. Each legitimisation type represents a particular pattern of educational values and ideals that teachers draw upon when they interpret their classroom interactions. Before presenting the legitimisation types, it is important to stress that they do not simply represent particular teachers, but reflect possible orientations that guide teachers' interpretations with regard to why particular educational considerations are in their pupils' best interest. Moreover, teachers are not necessarily bound to one particular orientation but could draw on several legitimisation types when interpreting their pupils' best interest. In the following subsections we give a brief account of the legitimisation types.

5.2.2.1 A condensed description of the legitimisation types

The *caring* legitimisation type signifies that pupils need to be seen as vulnerable and very dependent on grownups to survive in a demanding world. The *personal* legitimisation type signifies that pupils need to be understood as unique social beings that have a personal relationship with teachers. The *contextual* legitimisation type signifies that pupils' living conditions, life histories and practical lives need to be taken into account in teaching situations. The *critical* legitimisation type signifies that pupils need to be freed from constraining ideas about themselves and living conditions that imprint these ideas. The *functional* legitimisation type signifies that pupils need to be raised towards adulthood along the lines of preconceived favourable outcomes. Finally, the *psychological* legitimisation type signifies that pupils' conduct needs to be labelled in mental or emotional terms in order for adequate teaching and learning to take place. A detailed account of the six legitimisation types is presented in the result section of Chapter 4.

5.2.3 Components of the analytical framework

The components of the analytical framework are displayed on the vertical axis in Table 5.1. These components are the result of an iterative process of data analysis in which the interview data and the different aspects of Imelman's central question for continental European pedagogy ('Who should be taught what, how, when, and why?') played a central role. In the process of going back and forth between the interview data and the aspects ('who', 'what', 'when', 'how'), we decided to include the 'where' and 'for what purpose' components too. This enabled a better fitting description of teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest (Van Kan, Ponte, Verloop, 2010b).

The components can be summarised as follows. (1) The 'who' component concerns teachers' statements about what kind of relationship they should form with their pupils in their pupils' best interest. (2) The 'what' component concerns teachers' statements about what kind of teaching content serves their pupils' best interest in terms of acquisition of subject matter, skills and virtues. (3) The 'when'

component concerns teachers' statements about what moment in pupils' development is best suited for them to be initiated into particular teaching content in terms of subject matter, skills and virtues. (4) The 'where' component concerns teachers' statements about what kind of learning and living environment serves their pupils' best interest in terms of internal and external school contexts. (5) The 'how' component concerns teachers' statements about what kind of teaching methods, learning strategies and classroom organisation serve their pupils best interest. (6) The 'for what purpose' component concerns teachers' statements about what kind of teaching goals are in their pupils' best interest in terms of internal and external school goals.

In the next section we will describe the steps in our data analysis that led us to the results.

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Context and participants

To get a thorough insight into how teachers give expression to the legitimisation types, we tried to create a high degree of variation (Devers & Frankel, 2000) by involving 37 teachers working at both primary and secondary schools and in both regular and special education. All participating teachers had to have a minimum of three years of working experience in order to be able to draw on substantial experience when interpreting their everyday classroom interactions.

5.3.2 Data collection

To get a grasp on how teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest, we developed a repertory interview procedure (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2010a). This is described in chapter two. The procedure subjected teachers to recursive 'why questioning'. The why questioning directly touched upon teachers' reasoning with regard to what they considered to be educationally desirable for their pupils. Consequently, the 'why questioning' enabled a connection between the components and the legitimisation types.

5.3.3 Analysis

In a first round of data analysis we used the components and in a second round we used the legitimisation types as labels in Atlas-ti, a software program for qualitative analysis (Muhr, 1997), to code all 37 fully transcribed interviews. We went through four steps to find four themes within our interview data with regard to how teachers gave expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom

interactions. The first coding round consisted of two steps (i.e. demarcating the interview fragments and identifying components in the interview fragments) and has already been described in the method section of Chapter 4. Steps 3 and 4 are described below.

5.3.3.1 Step 3: Assigning legitimisation types to the fragments

Table 5.2 Example of the distribution of one quotation over several legitimisation types

Legitimisation type	Component	Specific part of the interview fragment	Attribution rationale
Psychological	Who	…all of our pupils have some kind of behaviour or learning disorder. Consequently our pupils have a slower work pace…	This part of the quotation attributes specific psychological characteristics to the pupils.
Caring	What	First and foremost our pupils need to learn to deal with their complex and at times negative emotions…	This part of the quotation stresses that pupils need to regulate their emotions (to protect themselves).
Caring	Where	We have a more succinct focus on establishing a caring and peaceful environment for our pupils than schools that primarily focus on learning outcomes…	This part of the quotation expresses the idea that the school needs to provide a nurturing and peaceful environment.

In the second coding round we coded the interview fragments (which had already been coded in terms of the components) using the six legitimisation types complemented with compressed definitions and demarcation rules. Table 5.2 demonstrates how we conducted this coding round, re-using the interview fragment in section 4.3.3.1 of Chapter 4. An external researcher was involved during this third step to verify whether a person not familiar with the data could utilise the coding scheme. The external researcher (rater 1) coded a substantial part of the data independently from the author (rater 2). The inter-rater reliability with two raters was 0.75 (Cohen's kappa), which we considered satisfactory.

5.3.3.2 Step 4: Finding themes within the data

Assigning the components and the legitimisation types to the text fragments provided insight into their presence in teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of percentages. The percentages formed the basis for a subsequent inductive inquiry into the qualitative data. For example, in several teachers' interviews the functional and psychological legitimisation types accounted for more than fifty percent of the coded text fragments. This kind of information

prompted us to inquire further into how these teachers gave expression to the legitimisation types. Following this process of inductive enquiry, four themes were distinguished in the interview data. The percentages also enabled decision rules to be formulated, assigning particular teachers to particular themes. A basic principle tied to the decision rules was that a component or legitimisation type was considered to play a significant role if it accounted for at least fifteen percent of the coded text fragments of a teacher's interview. The details of the decision rules are presented in the results section.

The first theme that directly followed from the analysis concerned the range of components and legitimisation types that teachers involved in their interpretations of their classroom interactions, which we labelled *extensiveness*. Building on this theme, the question arose as to whether the components and legitimisation types that teachers included in their interpretations could be characterised in terms of a particular substantive focus. This question resulted in a second theme, which we labelled *substantiveness*. Both the third and the fourth themes were based on the extent to which teachers involved particular legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. The third theme concerned how teachers considered different educational perspectives when interpreting their classroom interactions: *thoughtfulness*. The fourth theme addressed the grounds on which teachers legitimised their classroom interactions, which we labelled *answerableness*.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Introduction

In this section we present the answers to the research questions in terms of four interconnected themes: (1) How do teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest?; (2) Do teachers differ from each other in how they give expression to the legitimisation types?; and (3) Are differences between teachers in how they give expression to the legitimisation types related to the institutional context they work in?'

5.4.2 Overview of coded text fragments

Table 5.3 shows that the teachers in this study mainly drew upon the 'how', 'who' and 'what' components of the descriptive framework, when interpreting their classroom interactions. Furthermore, they tended to use these components in combination with the personal, functional and caring legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions. Having a closer look at the cells, the one that stands out in particular is the cell that represents the percentage of text fragments coded with both the 'how' component and the functional legitimisation type

(13%). The cell that represents the text fragments coded with both the 'how' component and the personal legitimisation type also has a relatively high percentage score (9%). The 'where', 'for what purpose', and 'when' components were assigned much less frequently. Similarly, relatively few contextual and critical legitimisation types were present in teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions.

Table 5.3 Overview of all coded text fragments (n=1,937) in terms of percentage of assigned components and legitimisation types

| | | Legitimisation types | | | | | | |
		Caring	Personal	Contextual	Critical	Func-tional	Psycho-logical	Total
Components	Who	5	8	1	1	5	5	25
	What	3	7	2	2	5	1	20
	When	1	1	0	1	1	0	4
	Where	2	2	2	0	2	1	9
	How	6	9	1	1	13	4	34
	For what purpose	1	2	2	0	2	1	8
	Total	**18**	**29**	**8**	**5**	**28**	**12**	**100**

Note: All values represent percentages of the total coded text fragments.

5.4.3 Theme 1: Extensiveness

Extensiveness relates to the range of components and legitimisation types that teachers used when interpreting their classroom interactions. In order to give meaning to the way teachers used the components and the legitimisation types, we distinguished between: (1) a *broad range*, which signifies that four legitimisation types each accounted for at least 15% of the coded text fragments and four components each accounted for at least 15% of the coded text fragments of a teacher's interview; (2) a *combined range*, which signifies that four legitimisation types each accounted for at least 15% of the coded text fragments or four components each accounted for at least 15% of the coded text fragments of a teacher's interview; (3) a *small range*, which signifies that the decision rules connected to a combined range and broad range did not apply; that is, teachers draw predominantly on three components and legitimisation types or less. In the following subsections we will explain what we mean by this distinction.

5.4.3.1 Broad range

Only one out of the thirty-seven teachers had a broad way of interpreting her classroom interactions. Although it is difficult to portray all the components and legitimisation types this teacher drew upon when interpreting her classroom interactions in a single interview fragment, the following composite quote gives a good impression:

> To be honest, I think pupils should learn social norms and values at home, at the same time children spend a lot of their time at school. As teachers we can't shut ourselves off from this task, especially because some children are living in deprived home situations… All the pupils in my classroom are different, some of them need to be encouraged to learn something new, whereas other pupils need to be treated with great care to take a next step… teaching a pupil with ADHD or an autistic disorder also requires a very different approach.

The quote shows that when this teacher talked about the importance of pupils learning norms and values, she was taking into consideration where the pupils should learn this kind of content. She also related to her pupils in different ways and acknowledged that they have different ways of learning. The quote also illustrates that she took her pupils' psychological make-up into account when considering their best interest.

5.4.3.2 Combined range

Combined means that teachers either use a small range of components and a broad range of legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions, or vice versa. Using a broad range of components signifies that teachers not only drew upon the 'who', 'what' and 'how' components, but also took the 'where' component into account to a significant extent. A broad range of legitimisation types signifies that, in addition to the personal, functional and caring legitimisation types, teachers also took the psychological and/or contextual and/or critical legitimisation types into account to a significant extent.

Three teachers took a broad range of components into account and tended to legitimise their classroom conduct from a small number of educational perspectives. The following quotation illustrates this point:

> I think it's important that pupils are at ease both in their home situation and in their school environment. I strongly believe that when pupils are happy at home this will have a positive effect on their learning achievements in school.

Including pupils' home situations shows that this teacher took the 'where' component into account when she interpreted her classroom interactions. For this teacher the importance of taking the 'where' component into account was directly

connected to a particular purpose, namely, for her pupils to do well at school.

Seven teachers took a small range of components into account and used a broad range of legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions. The following quotation of a special secondary education teacher contains features that link to these legitimisation types:

> Due to their autistic disorders our pupils have trouble handling unpredictable situations in public places. These pupils need to develop coping mechanisms that will help them to really participate in the outside world.

This quotation indicates that this teacher legitimised the importance of what her pupils needed to learn in contextual and psychological terms.

5.4.3.3 Small range

Twenty-six out of thirty-seven teachers in our study drew predominantly on three or fewer components or legitimisation types. These teachers mainly used the 'how', 'who' and 'what' components when interpreting their classroom interactions. This indicates that they were mostly concerned with how to teach particular content to particular pupils. In addition, they primarily drew upon the personal, functional and caring legitimisation types. This indicates that teachers that use a small range of legitimisation seem to take pupils' personal development, and/or learning achievements, and/or vulnerability especially into account when interpreting their classroom interactions.

Evidently when teachers were interpreting their classroom interactions, the 'how', 'who' and 'what' components were to some extent related to particular legitimisation types. For example, when teachers primarily saw their pupils as learners in a formal school system, this was likely to reverberate in the kind of teaching methods and teaching content they considered to be in their pupils' best interest. The following quotation of a regular secondary school teacher who primarily drew on the functional legitimisation type illustrates this point:

> One of the main things pupils need to learn for their final exams is to draw upon different sources of information to get a right answer. That's why I repeatedly ask pupils to elaborate on their answers in order to get the message through that they have to think further than their first guess. In my experience pupils are not inclined to do so by themselves.

Another example of the interconnectedness between the 'who', 'how' and 'what' components, in this case directed by the personal legitimisation type, was given by a regular primary school teacher:

> I want pupils to develop a positive self concept, because I strongly believe this will make them happier in their later lives. That's why I spent a lot of time on classroom talks about their personal feelings with regard to what happens in their everyday lives.

5.4.3.4 The role of institutional contexts

All the teachers in regular secondary education, seven out of eight teachers in regular primary education, seven out of ten teachers in special primary, and two out of nine teachers in special secondary education were attributed a small range of components and legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions. It is noteworthy that seven out of the nine teachers in special secondary education had a combined range of components and legitimisation types that they involved in their interpretations of their classroom interactions, five of which included a broad range of legitimisation types. Thus, in our study special secondary school teachers tended to include a broader range of components and/or legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions than teachers in the other educational contexts.

5.4.4 Theme 2: Substantiveness

Substantiveness relates to the substantive focus teachers had in their way of interpreting their classroom interactions. Inquiring into the substance of the teachers' interpretations, we found that those who included a small range of legitimisation types (twenty-nine in total) had what we choose to call a technical-local focus. Teachers that used a broad range of legitimisation types (eight in total) were attributed a technical-societal focus. Technical, in this case, refers to the character of the components that teachers took into account when they interpreted their classroom interactions. The terms 'local' and 'societal' relate to the character of the legitimisation types that teachers drew upon. We will elaborate on these different foci in the following subsections.

5.4.4.1 Technical-local focus

A technical-local focus signifies that teachers were particularly concerned with the instrumental question: 'Who to teach what, and how?' in relation to the context of pupils' day-to-day school lives. The majority of the teachers in our study had this particular focus. The teachers with a technical-local focus tended to give less attention to the developmental (i.e. 'when' component) and teleological (i.e. 'for what purpose') aspects of their teaching practice when interpreting their classroom interactions. In other words, these teachers' interpretations seem to indicate that they conceived their teaching mainly as a means to achieve pre-given ends. At the same time, they tended to focus on the locality of their classroom practice, rather than taking the pupils' wider contexts into account when interpreting their classroom interactions. These teachers mostly focused on (1) pupils as individual (often vulnerable) beings, which is the main focus of the caring and personal legitimisation type, and/or (2) pupils' learning capabilities, which are at the heart of the functional legitimisation type.

   The combination of the technically oriented components and locally oriented legitimisation types indicates that these teachers perceived their teaching as

being part of a small-scale schooling domain that exists parallel to the outside world. The following quotations of a regular primary school teacher and secondary school teacher respectively illustrate the technical and local focus these teachers tended to have: 'I think it's important that pupils learn to be attentive to each other's learning needs. They should be quiet during work time, in order not to disturb their fellow classmates'; and 'I try to be efficient in my teaching in order to save time for pupils to do their homework during my lessons. This way they can properly prepare for their exams.' The main question in these teachers' interpretations seemed to be how to work towards (pre-given) learning outcomes without questioning the desirability of particular learning outcomes.

In conclusion, we found that these teachers' usage of the components was generally characterised by 'means-to-an-end thinking', whereby the means rather than the ends were subjected to explicit deliberation.

5.4.4.2 Technical-societal focus

A technical-societal focus signifies that teachers were mostly concerned with the technical aspects of their teaching but, unlike the teachers with a local focus, tended to consider pupils' best interest in terms that surpassed their immediate classroom practice. A relatively small group (seven out of thirty-seven) of the teachers had this particular focus in their interpretations. Apart from the personal, functional and caring legitimisation types, these teachers drew to a significant extent on the psychological and/ or contextual and/ or critical legitimisation type. They were likely to consider aspects in their interpretation of their classroom interactions that touched upon the pupils' psychological makeup, and/or practical living conditions, and/or critical awareness of their social positions.

The following quotations of a special primary school teacher and special secondary school teacher respectively illustrate the characteristics of a technical-societal focus, with an emphasis on a critical perspective:

> My pupils are used to getting everything arranged for them at home or when they are at the day-care centre. I think it's important to encourage them to take matters into their own hands and learn to live their own lives.

> If pupils learn to be obedient they will probably get a job somewhere but they won't learn to become independent thinkers. Actually I think we are doing pupils injustice if we don't teach them to be critical towards themselves and others.

5.4.4.3 The role of institutional contexts

All the teachers in regular primary and secondary education and most (seven out of ten) teachers in special primary education had a mainly technical-local focus when interpreting their classroom interactions, whereas a substantial number (five out of ten) of the teachers in special secondary education had a technical-societal focus. The local nature of teachers' interpretation in regular and special

primary education was particularly connected to a pupil-centred perspective, meaning that they were mostly concerned with the wellbeing and self-development of their pupils. In regular secondary education the local focus was mostly connected to a curriculum-centred perspective, meaning that they were primarily concerned with their pupils' attainment of the official curriculum content.

The first two themes, extensiveness and substantiveness, were based on teachers' different usage of both the components and legitimisation types. The third and fourth themes were mainly connected to the analyses of teachers' usage of the legitimisation types.

5.4.5 Theme 3: Thoughtfulness

Thoughtfulness relates to the manner in which teachers considered different legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. We found that teachers had: (1) a closed way of considering, which signifies that one legitimisation type accounted for at least 33% of the coded text fragments of a teacher's interview; or (2) an open way of considering, which signifies that the decision rule connected to a closed way of considering did not apply; that is, teachers do not draw predominantly on one particular legitimisation type.

In the following sub sections we explain what we mean by these different ways of considering different legitimisation types.

5.4.5.1 Closed way of considering

Our results indicate that thirty-one out of the thirty-seven teachers had a closed way of considering different legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions. These teachers gave the impression that they had very strong convictions about what was in their pupils' best interest. They had very set ideas about what kind of educational ends were worthwhile pursuing. The following quotations of a regular secondary school teacher and a special secondary school teacher respectively are typical: 'This is the way our school system works; everything is about grades and selection for tertiary education. I hope every pupil will end up in the right place in our school system'; and 'The only chance these pupils have to make something of their lives is by putting an enormous amount of effort into their school careers. That's why I am very demanding when it comes to their work attitude.'

In their interpretations of their classroom interaction these teachers left little room for second-guessing and problematising their educative ends. Judging from their interview transcripts, they were not inclined to consider alternative ways of conceiving their pupils' best interest.

5.4.5.3 Open way of considering

Six out of the thirty-seven teachers in our study had an open way of deliberating when interpreting their classroom interactions. These teachers tended to carefully

weigh different educational perspectives before making their mind up with regard to the question: 'What suits my pupils best interest?' The following quotation of a special secondary education teacher gives an impression of the considerate way in which these teachers tended to deliberate on their pupils' best interest:

> Brandon will not accept help, he is very independent but can't do the theoretical subjects on his own; that's a huge struggle for him (and for me). If you see him work with his hands, he totally transforms into this capable and happy person. If I'm honest, the theoretical subject matter is distressing for all my pupils. That's why I think its important to limit the theoretical subject matter to those aspects that have meaning in their everyday lives.

These teachers showed a multiple and contextual understanding of what served a particular pupil's best interest, when interpreting their classroom interactions.

5.4.5.4 The role of institutional contexts

All six teachers ascribed an open way of considering different legitimisation types were working in special education, four of which worked in special secondary education. All of the teachers working regular education were ascribed a closed way of considering different legitimisation types.

5.4.6 Theme 4: Answerableness

Answerableness addressed the grounds on which teachers legitimised their class room interactions. We have indicated that teachers that predominantly drew upon the functional and psychological legitimisation types tended to answer for their teaching conduct in terms of what they were held accountable for. An accountable way of answering signifies that the functional and psychological legitimisation types accounted for at least 50% of the coded text fragments of a teacher's interview. Teachers that made less use of these particular legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions tended to answer for their teaching conduct in terms of what they personally felt responsible for. A responsible way of answering signifies that the decision rule connected to an accountable way of answering did not apply; that is, teachers do not predominantly draw on the functional and psychological legitimisation types. In the following subsection we will explain the difference between these two ways of answering for one's teaching conduct.

5.4.6.1 Accountable way of answering

By an accountable way of answering we mean that teachers primarily perceived their teaching as subscribing to agendas set by others (e.g. teaching politically endorsed subjects) and rule following (e.g. conducting prescribed tests and examinations). A little over a quarter (ten) of the teachers involved in our study answered

for their teaching conduct in an accountable way. We defined the predominant presence of the functional and psychological legitimisation types as an accountable way of answering for one's teaching conduct, because the substance of these legitimisation types relates to meeting external requirements. The functional legitimisation type is connected to using effective teaching methods and meeting formalised curriculum goals, and the psychological legitimisation type is connected to basing teaching conduct on diagnostic tests and subsequent guidelines.

A regular secondary teacher illustrated the foreshadowing effect centralised tests had on his teaching practice:

> Pupils need to learn to fulfil their assignments in a particular way, because they will be asked to do so when they have to take their tests. There is no grey area in these tests; pupils can give either a good or a wrong answer.

The following quotation of a special primary school teacher shows that her actions were largely steered by diagnostic tests results:

> I think it's important to have a clear picture of a pupil. I want them to have the kind of education that fits them best. In order to realise this we rely on objective tests such as an achievement test and an intelligence test.

Teachers that had an accountable way of answering for their actions seemed to conceive teaching in terms of meeting external requirements, rather than purposeful action.

5.4.6.2 Responsible way of answering

A responsible way of answering for teaching conduct signifies that teachers relied on their own professional judgements when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest rather than external and formal 'authorities'. About three-quarters (twenty-seven) of the teachers involved in our study had a *responsible* way of answering for their teaching conduct when interpreting their classroom interactions. Teachers that had this answering approach drew particularly on the caring, personal, critical and contextual legitimisation types (together these legitimisation types accounted for at least fifty percent of the coded text fragments of a teacher's interview).

Teachers with a responsible way of answering for their teaching conduct displayed a more autonomous disposition towards their teaching conduct than those who had an accountable answering approach. The following quotations of a special primary school teacher and a regular secondary school teacher respectively, illustrate this point:

> Our pupils made a lot of progress. Especially, because we decided to take their past experiences and feelings into consideration. We pay much more attention to the general wellbeing of our pupils than schools that are mainly focused on pupils' learning outcomes. I want my pupils to learn

that they can make their own choices in life. These choices may have nothing to do with the curriculum we are offering in our school. They can grow up to be perfectly happy people without passing the exams.

5.4.6.3 The role of educational contexts

Our results indicate that teachers in regular secondary education (six out of ten) tended to answer for their teaching conduct in terms of meeting formalised requirements, more than teachers in other contexts. In the other educational settings, the teachers exhibited more freedom in their interpretations to make decisions with regard to what they considered in their pupils' best interest.

5.5 Conclusion

Before revisiting the specific research question, two general conclusions can be drawn. First, the components and legitimisation types were found to be an adequate framework for empirically structuring ways in which teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. Second, this framework allowed us to distinguish four themes on which teachers differed from each other when giving expression to the legitimisation types. Hence, the themes extensiveness, substantiveness, deliberateness and answerableness gave an insightful response to the first and second research questions.

Closing in on the four themes, we concluded that most teachers: (1) drew upon a small range of components and legitimisation types; (2) tended to have a rather instrumental 'here and now' focus; (3) had a closed way of considering different legitimisation types; 4) answered for their teaching conduct in terms of what they felt personally responsible for.

The third research question: '*Are differences between teachers in how they give expression to the legitimisation types related to the institutional context they work in?*", can be answered in the affirmative. More specifically, we concluded that teachers in special education: (1) included a broader range of components and legitimisation types; (2) were more perceptive towards pupils' extended social contexts; and (3) had a more open way of considering different legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions, than teachers in the other institutional contexts involved in this study. Furthermore, the findings indicate that teachers working within the same institutional context tended to have similar ways of expressing the legitimisation types in terms of the presented themes. At least half the teachers within a particular educational context could be assigned to the same position with regard to each of the four themes.

5.6 Discussion: understanding pupils' best interest

As stated in the introduction, a central principle behind the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the principle that the best interests of the child must guide any decision taken in connection with the education of children. It seems evident that what serves a pupil's best interest depends to a large extent on how one understands the pupil, what is at stake in a particular situation and what courses of action are possible and desirable. It is of paramount importance that teachers have a rich understanding of what the best interest of pupils might be in all kinds of circumstances. Pendlebury (1990, pp. 176-177) argues: 'A competent practitioner is one who has a rich understanding of the goods of the practice and a realistic, clear-sighted perception of what is possible under different situations. That is, she should consider good ends and possible means.' It seems plausible that teachers that include a broad range of educational perspectives, take in societal aspects of pupils' living conditions when interpreting their pupils best interest and feel responsible for deliberating about different ways of seeing what is educationally desirable are akin to the competent practitioner Pendlebury describes. However, the results indicate that the majority of the teachers involved in this study did not interpret their classroom interactions in terms of these qualities. This is not to say that these teachers had no regard for their pupils' best interest but it can be considered questionable whether they were capable of articulating rich and sound understandings of what could be educationally desirable for their pupils. Being able to articulate what is educationally desirable or to use language that expresses a multitude of educational perspectives is important, because it opens up new and unanticipated pathways to understanding pupils' best interest and consequently acting upon that interest (cf. Biesta (2010c).

If education for all is about the proactive creation of adaptive education, where differences between children are the norm and not the exception (Ponte & Smit, in press), it could be argued that teachers should seek to understand what is educationally desirable by looking beyond immediate circumstances and interpreting their pupils' best interest in richer terms than those that might immediately present themselves (cf. Kemmis & Smith, 2008). In this regard Hansen (1999) states:

> …understanding students involves depending on the aims of teaching for guidance, rather than seeking a standpoint from outside the practice. It means recognizing that understanding students is necessarily an ongoing, open-ended affair. The process has no terminus because students are always changing as persons, even if such changes may be difficult to detect. (p. 173)

One might argue that if teachers have a rather instrumental way of understanding 'the aims of teaching' they are less responsive to what pupils have to offer apart from these objectified teaching aims. Biesta (2006, 2010b) argues, by drawing on Arendt (1958), that teachers should be receptive to the 'unique' and the 'unforeseen' that pupils can bring into world, without discarding their own educational dispositions. This is not to say that teachers should have a child-centred educational outlook, dissociating judgements about what is educationally desirable.

Educating pupils necessarily involves matters of relationships, substance and purpose (Biesta, 2010b).

An interesting finding is that most teachers in this study had a responsible way of answering for their teaching conduct, meaning that they experienced considerable autonomy and freedom to make their own professional decisions with regard to their pupils' interest, within the larger frameworks that are laid down by the government, school boards, management team and so forth. This might present opportunities for teachers to broaden their basis for professional decision-making if they were introduced to and confronted with other ways of appreciating what is educational valuable. A possible way to arrange such an introduction or confrontation would be by providing professional development programs, in which teachers are invited to inquire, articulate and question their educational outlooks. Subsequently, teachers could be encouraged to reflect on their teaching practice and their educational outlooks by drawing on the theoretical debates in the field of education. The three strands mentioned in the introduction to this article could provide an interesting framework for this. Ponte and Ax (2009), for example, argue that debates between theories in continental European pedagogy could offer an integrating framework for examining educational questions in the context of teachers' professional development. This examination could be related to questions about 'what is', and 'what is more desirable' for pupils at a particular moment in a particular situation. From an 'education for all' perspective, it is a perpetual task for teachers to consider the moral impact of their daily classroom interactions and to wonder if possible alternative ways of interacting might be more desirable (from a particular educational perspective). Following this line of reasoning, questions about what 'is' and what 'ought to be' are not bound to philosophical debates but are also significant for teachers' everyday teaching practice.

Enriching one's perspective on what is educationally worthwhile requires substantive dialogue and debate (Ruyter & Kole, 2010; Ponte, 2009). This might support teachers to go beyond the personal and the familiar and give way to new and unanticipated perspectives on their pupils' best interest. After all, teachers have the principal role in schools in deciding the best thing to do for different pupils in a given situation.

Chapter 6

General conclusions and discussion

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6.1 Overview of the thesis

This thesis set out to answer the compound question formulated in the general introduction: *'How do teachers interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest?'* Two empirical studies were conducted. The first study (Chapter 4) addressed the sub question: *'How do teachers legitimise their daily classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?'* The second study (Chapter 5) explored the second sub question: *'How do teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest?'* Differences in ways of giving expression to the legitimisation types between teachers and different institutional contexts were taken into account. Before the research questions could be answered, two methodological problems had to be addressed. The first concerned how to collect empirical data that is suitable for inquiring into teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest (Chapter 2). The second methodological problem revolved around how to identify teachers' educational values and ideals that underlie these interpretations from the perspective of continental European pedagogy (Chapter 3). The next subsection summarises the main findings and conclusions of the thesis.

6.2 Synthesis of the findings and conclusions

The two methodological problems were addressed in two successive studies. The first study focused on the development of a method to enable understanding of teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. The repertory grid application (Kelly, 1955) seemed at first sight an adequate tool for this complex assignment, as it is especially designed to explore and understand how people make sense of a particular part of their experience. However, the 'life world' perspective adopted in this thesis challenged some important aspects of the standard repertory grid technique. A life world perspective, which is an essential element in phenomenology, implies that teachers' educational values and ideals form an inherent part of their everyday classroom interactions. Consequently, every classroom interaction, whether intended or unintended, can be interpreted in terms of its moral impact. This led to the development of a repertory interview procedure, which can be considered a phenomenological elaboration of the standard repertory grid application. The main conclusion was that the modifications to the standard repertory grid technique fostered the collection of rich data that served the purpose of understanding and describing teachers' inter-

pretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest in subsequent stages of the research project.

The second methodological problem was addressed in a study that revolved around the question of how to identify teachers' educational values and ideals that underlietheir interpretations of their classroom interactions in the interview data. The tradition of continental European pedagogy offered a fruitful perspective to explore this question. A descriptive framework was developed, which served the purpose of mediating between theoretical concepts and the empirical data collected in the study. This framework was based on Imelman's question (1995, p. 60), which could be considered the central object of study in continental European pedagogy: 'Who should be taught what, when, how, and why?' The different aspects ('who', 'what', 'when', 'how') of this question were used as the components of the descriptive framework. During an iterative process of data analysis, two complementary components emerged from the data, i.e. the 'where' and 'for what purpose' components. The 'why aspect' of Imelman's question, which formed an integral part of all six components, enabled a further analysis of the interview data, in terms of how teachers substantiated what they considered to be in their pupils' best interest. Taking the match between the components and the interview data into account, we concluded that the descriptive framework fostered an adequate connection between concepts from continental European pedagogy and the interview data.

The results of the methodological studies made it possible to conduct two successive empirical studies to answer the two sub questions. The first sub question, i.e. 'How do teachers legitimise their daily classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?' was addressed in the first empirical study (Chapter 4). When interpreting their classroom interaction in terms of their pupils' best interest, teachers used different 'legitimisation types'. A legitimisation type in this study entailed a systematic description of a particular pattern of educational values and ideals that teachers draw upon. The following legitimisation types were distinguished: (1) a caring legitimisation type, (2) a personal legitimisation type, (3) a contextual legitimisation type, (4) a critical legitimisation type, (5) a functional legitimisation type, and (6) a psychological legitimisation type.

The second sub question, i.e. 'How do teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest?', was explored in the second empirical study (Chapter 5). Four themes upon which teachers differed from each other when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest were found: (1) extensiveness, (2) substantiveness, (3) thoughtfulness and (4) answerableness. The most significant findings with respect to these themes were that the majority of teachers involved in this research project: (1) included a small range of components and legitimisation types; (2) tended to have a rather instrumental 'here and now' focus; (3) had a closed way of considering different legitimisation types; and (4) answered for their teaching conduct in terms of what they personally feel responsible for when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils best interest. Furthermore, the results indicate that teachers in special secondary education: (1) involved a broader range of components and legitimi-

sation types; (2) were more perceptive towards pupils' extended social contexts; and (3) had a more open way of deliberating when interpreting their classroom interactions than teachers in the other contexts involved in this study. Finally, the findings indicate that teachers working within the same institutional context tended to have a similar outlook on what served their pupils' best interest.

6.3 Discussion

The results raise a number of issues that require further exploration. The first issue addresses the educational significance of the typology of legitimisations. The second issue concerns the relationship between particular ways of drawing upon educational values and ideals and pupils' best interest. The third issue relates to the more fundamental question of whether what is educationally desirable is just a matter of opinion.

6.3.1 The educational significance of the typology of legitimisations

A legitimisation type gives expression to what serves pupils' best interest from a particular educational perspective. It could be argued that matters of content and direction are intertwined within a legitimisation type. By asking teachers to interpret dilemma-laden situations from their own practice, they had to reflect on the content that was presented in these situations. Subsequently, by recursively asking why teachers considered particular content to be in their pupils' best interest, questions of direction also came into play. Consequently, the typology of legitimisations gives a detailed account of both content and direction with regard to what serves pupils' best interest.

Because of these qualities, the legitimisation types could contribute to bringing questions of content and direction back into discussions about education, questions such as: 'What serves pupils' best interest at a particular moment in a particular situation, and why?' Scholars such as Socket & LePage (2002), Mahony (2009) and Gholami & Husu (2010) have argued that the teaching profession has become uncomfortable about using a vocabulary that addresses questions of substance and purpose. The dissolution of substantive language in education has often been equated with the rise of an evidence-based model for professional action (e.g. Atkinson, 2000; Blackmore, 2002; Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall & Cribb, 2009; Saevi, 2012). Biesta (2010b) argues that the cause of this development is the 'learnification' of education: 'Learnification' refers to the transformation of the vocabulary used to talk about education into one of 'learning' and 'learners' (p. 18). Biesta elaborates this claim by arguing that learning is an individualistic term, which dissociates the purposeful relationship between the person educating and the person that is educated. In addition, Biesta argues that learning is essentially a process term: 'It denotes processes and activities but is open – if not empty – with regard to content and direction.' A similar argument can be made with regard to terms such as 'what works', 'school effectiveness', and 'quality assurance'. With-

out connecting questions of content and direction to process terms, they remain empty vessels, and do not have any educational meaning.

The typology of legitimisations could contribute to discussions about, for example, 'adaptive learning', 'inclusive education' or 'raising standards' by exemplifying the kind of substance and directions that are at stake from an educational perspective. For example, teachers who predominantly draw upon the functional legitimisation type, which is directed at preparing pupils for future achievements by emphasising the importance of study skills, acquisition of formal curriculum content and attainment of a good work ethos, are likely to position themselves differently in a discussion about 'raising standards' in schools than teachers that mainly draw upon a caring legitimisation type, which focuses on pupils' survival in a demanding world, their attainment of self-esteem, self-acceptance and regulating their emotions.

The term exemplifying is not meant in the sense that teachers should adopt particular legitimisation types, in order to justify their teaching conduct. If this was the case then the typology of legitimisations would become a prescriptive moral framework, indicating how teachers should legitimise their classroom interactions. Exemplifying here means that the typology of legitimisations provides examples of language that can be used to address issues of content and purpose in educational practice. After all, no prescriptive framework can relieve teachers of the responsibility of exercising judgement about what is good or bad, right or wrong for a particular pupil in a particular situation (cf. Ponte, 2012).

6.3.2 Pupils' best interest

The legitimisation types that teachers draw upon when they interpret their classroom interactions can be considered particular ways of understanding what teachers perceive to be in their pupils' best interest. Teachers differ in the way they ponder this complex question. Our results show that teachers that were assigned a closed way of considering different legitimisation types formed the vast majority. These teachers had strong convictions with regard to what they considered educationally desirable. Furthermore, most teachers in this research project were particularly concerned with the instrumental question of who to teach what and how, and they tended to be less concerned about the 'for what purpose' aspects of their classroom interactions. At the same time, most teachers tended to focus on the locality of their classroom practice, rather than taking pupils' wider social contexts into account. On the one hand, this restricted focus in teachers' educational outlooks might help them to position themselves and find direction in open and unanticipated situations. A classroom context can clearly be considered such a situation. It is, for example, largely unknown what pupils will learn from teaching activities. In the end, teaching activities constitute opportunities for students to respond and, by responding, pupils might learn something (Hansen, 1999; Burton & Chapman, 2004; Biesta 2006). A consistent focus may help teachers to reduce the complexity in their everyday teaching practice and could help them to put their efforts into the technical aspects of their teaching, which in them-

selves are imperative for their teaching practice. On the other hand, having such a consistent focus in one's educational values and ideals might close off in advance particular ways of seeing what is educationally worthwhile. It might even cause teachers to conceive their educational values and ideals as decontextualised principles that run the risk of becoming unresponsive to pupils' actual needs. Yan and Chow (2002) give an insightful account of the pressure exerted on Hong Kong students by the examination system and the teachers who are part of that system. After arguing that a certain level of pressure might spur young people to get the most out of themselves, Yan and Chow write: 'Yet, from a pedagogical point of view, it can be argued that there are values embedded in our convention-al practices that allow adults to ignore the stresses and quality of students' lived experience, and turn a deaf ear to their problems and difficulties' (p. 148). Inevitably, the question of what is educationally worthwhile will always be influenced by historical and cultural contexts (cf. Hansen, 1999). From an educational point of view, therefore, each educational practice should be subjected to questions of substance and purpose again and again, as exemplified by Yan and Chow.

The argument here is that closing off ways of considering and understanding pupils' best interest might lead teachers to have an impoverished orientation towards educating pupils. An open mind, not hampered with rigid ideas about what serves the pupils' best interest, might be conditional for really taking their best interest into account, at particular moments, in particular situations. This is not to say the teachers should have a naïve child-centred educational outlook, disconnected from substantiated views on mankind and educational objectives (Boyd, 1964; Ponte & Ax, 2009). Biesta (2006, 2010b, 2011b) argues, by drawing on Arendt (1958), that teachers should be receptive to the 'unique' and the 'unforeseen' that pupils can bring into world, without discarding their own educational dispositions. Thus the challenge for teachers is, on the one hand, not to leave pupils to their own devices and, on the other hand, not to have unyielding educational outlooks that constrain continuous inquiry into how pupils can be understood (cf. Robertson, 2000). This ambiguous and perpetual task is worthy of teachers' very best efforts.

6.3.3 Educational values and ideals; a matter of like or dislike?

In this thesis teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions were explored from teachers' individual perspectives on what they considered to be in their pupils' best interest. Personal construct theory, which underpins the repertory interview developed in this research project, primarily focuses on how individuals make sense of their world. An important reason to adopt this theory was that educational values and ideals that underlie teachers' classroom interactions could be considered as something that teachers are personally committed to and identify with as professionals (cf. Ruyter & Kole, 2010). Following this 'individualistic' line of reasoning, one might conclude that educational values and ideals are a matter of personal like or dislike. If values and ideals are perceived as a matter of personal choice, then on what basis could anyone object? Burwood (1996) refers to this

standpoint as an ideology of extreme subjectivism: 'Within this ideology all values are regarded as being equally acceptable, no viewpoint is judged to be wrong and a "shop window" approach to moral beliefs has become the norm' (p. 415) However, if a teacher is convinced that substantial differences of treatment between the sexes serves pupils' best interest, it is difficult to maintain, at least in Western societies, that this point of view is equally as acceptable as any other point of view. Burwood argues that in education only those values and ideals should be promoted, which '…either are socially valuable in that they contribute to the maintenance of a liberal society or are deemed to be educationally valuable (or both)…' (p. 421) For example, in liberal-democratic societies educational ends should, one way or another promote autonomous thinking, discussion of complex arguments, freedom of speech and emancipation (cf. Apple & Beane, 1995; De Winter, Janssens & Schillemans, 2006; Biesta, 2006). A further elaboration of Burwood's point will be given by drawing on Gilabert's (2005; see also Ponte, 2012) account of public reasonable deliberation. According to Gilabert, public reasonable deliberation requires both substantive and procedural principles.

Substantive principles are important because the elaboration of such principles, in terms of common substantive ideas such as solidarity, equality and freedom, provides a basis for evaluating particular substantive claims (cf. Clark, 1990; Campbell, 2008b). For example, the more consistent a substantive claim is with common substantive ideas, the stronger the claim is. In this regard, Gilabert claims that people involved in public reasonable deliberation should subscribe to particular common substantive ideas in order solve moral problems consensually. Procedural principles are important because the actual interpretation of particular substantive claims in concrete situations will not automatically lead to consensus. A democratic procedure will be needed to reach an outcome that is acceptable to all those affected (cf. Habermas, 1981).

Connecting Gilabert's account of public reasonable deliberation to arguments about what, in complex interaction situations, serves pupils' best interest, and why, could help to distinguish the force of the better argument from the force of custom, faith or coercion (Scott & Usher, 2011). Teachers need to articulate their educational values and ideals in order to evaluate them in terms of, for example, their consistency with the ways in which solidarity, equality and freedom are elaborated in continental European pedagogy. The different theoretical positions within this scientific discipline provide different substantive ideas about what children have in common as members of the human race and human society, what kind of human beings they should become, and how they can be raised towards becoming such human beings, what the educational needs are in society etcetera (Ponte & Ax, 2009). At the same time, it seems evident that substantive claims about what, according to teachers, serves pupils' best interest will not immediately lead to general agreement. Procedural principles, which could be made practical in peer review sessions or open debates, are conditional for an outcome that is acceptable to all those affected.

To sum up, this thesis advances that teachers' educational values and ideals are not a personal matter It also argues that in order to justify substantive claims about what is educationally desirable, claims need to be subjected to public reason-

able deliberation, incorporating both careful articulation of these educational values and ideals (substantive principle) and of how they are subjected to legitimate disagreement (procedural principle).

In the end, public reasonable deliberation is not a practice that ends arguments through everlasting agreement. On the contrary, it functions to keep arguments about what constitutes good education vibrant, dynamic and consequential (cf. Hansen, 2008).

6.4 Implications for teacher education

Three questions can be formulated in connection with the three points of discussion that could help shape teacher education as a place where substantive issues are welcomed. A first point of consideration, linked to the educational significance of the typology of legitimisations, is for teacher education to acknowledge the importance of putting questions of content and direction back on the educational agenda: *a matter of priority*. A second point of consideration, linked to pupils' best interest, is how students teachers can learn to inquire into their classroom interaction in terms of their educational outlooks: *a matter of teachability*. A final point of consideration, linked to the question of whether what is educationally desirable is just a matter of like or dislike, is directed at teaching student teachers the importance of engaging in collegial and public deliberation about the purpose of education: *a matter of responsibility*.

6.4.1 A matter of priority

Teacher education could play a pivotal role in getting questions about the inherent moral significance of teaching back on the educational agenda. Teacher education should not only maintain the current state of affairs but should also focus on the question 'What do we want the future of teacher education to look like, and how are we going to realise it?' Hansen (2008) argues that teacher education not only has functions, which indicate maintenance, but also has purposes, which signify creativity. Hansen continues by stating: 'If a 'purpose' is understood as something envisaged that is to be brought about through human creativity, then it remains legitimate, coherent, and necessary to speak of the purposes rather than merely the functions of teacher education.'

It seems that in the current state of affairs teacher education increasingly connects to a technical model of standardisation, competency matrices, behavioural checklists and rating scale rubrics with regard to the preparation of student teachers, largely ignoring questions of purpose (cf. Bullough, Clark & Patterson, 2003; Van de Ven & Oolbekkink, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2004). Sherman (2006) claims that teacher education does not include enough substantive aspects (such as student teachers' educational values and ideals) of teaching because of their intangibility. According to Sherman, supervision of student teachers is increasingly focused on technical competencies, completing checklists and matching

standards to fieldwork components, which are less subject to interpretation than the inherent moral aspects of teaching. The latter are more difficult to recognise, and assessment of these aspects requires scrutiny. It is doubtful, however, whether teacher educators are adequately equipped to evaluate the ambiguous moral dimensions of teaching (cf. Socket and LePage, 2002; Mahony, 2009). Sherman's main concern is that a one-sided focus on technical competences such as instructional planning, lesson implementation, and assessment design '…make it more difficult to develop a language of moral practice that is explicitly connected to preparation of new teachers' (p. 51) The point here is not that technical competencies are futile in the preparation of teachers; inescapably, they do form an important part of what student teachers need to learn.

Expertise, skills, competence, objectivity, validity and assessment alone do not, however, grasp the essential meaning of teaching. Without problematising the purpose of teaching and its impact on pupils' lives, it amounts to little more than a technical performance with no particular direction (cf. Fenstermacher, 1990; Hansen, 2001; Dottin, 2009; Biesta, 2010a). The non-technical qualities of teaching concerning its inherent moral significance are expressed in questions such as 'How do I understand pupils?'; 'Why is it important that pupils learn particular subject matter in a particular way?'; 'What kind of relationships should I develop with pupils?'; 'What are my outlooks on what kind of human beings pupils should become?' These questions should be given a high priority in teacher education in order to adequately prepare student teachers for teaching in complex, dynamic and indeterminate environments. In line with this argument, Groundwater-Smith, Ewing and Le Cornu (2011) state that: 'Teacher education must reinvent itself so that the complexity of the enterprise may be revealed through sustained debate. We need to go beyond individualism and make critical dialogue a cornerstone of our work. Particularly, we need to eschew the easy fix, which attends only to the immediate and to move to resolutions which themselves may continue to be challenged.' (p.18) Inevitably, social, economic, political, and cultural forces will always influence the priorities with regard to purposes of teacher education. However, whatever the prevailing conditions, teacher educators should consider it their task to help student teachers to understand teaching in richer and more far-sighted terms than a mere technical model has to offer.

6.4.2 A matter of teachability

An important question for teacher education is whether student teachers can develop the capacity to understand their classroom interactions in rich educational terms and how they can be supported in this learning process. Several authors have claimed that this kind of professional action is not a matter of learning particular technical competences, but has more to do with acquiring a reflective and inquiring disposition (cf. Husu & Tirri, 2003; Ponte, 2003; Biesta, 2007; Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011). Dottin (2009), for example, connects the concept of professional dispositions, which he refers to as habits of mind, to pedagogical mindfulness and thoughtfulness. Sherman (2006) emphasises the relational aspects of teachers' depositions by

stating that dispositions are teachers' propensities to conduct themselves in certain ways when they interact with their pupils in certain teaching moments. Drawing on experience from an empirical research project on teachers' educational values and ideals, Biesta assumes: '…the ability to make normative judgements, that is, judgements about what is educationally desirable, is not a rule-based skill, but is more akin to a complex disposition – a way of seeing and being – which can be developed over time through systematic reflection on the normative dimensions of one's professional practice and a systematic exploration of the educational values and ideals at stake.' (2009, p.191) This brings up the question of how student teachers can acquire a disposition that inclines them to consider their pupils' best interest in an educational way.

An adequate response to this question might be that teacher educators should support student teachers to comprehend the educational impact of their classroom interactions, by offering them ways to see their daily classroom interactions in terms of how, if at all, these interactions might serve their pupils' best interest. This kind of inquiry does not imply that student teachers should study academic literature on the moral significance of teaching, separate from their teaching practice. An overemphasis on theory leads to conceptual information without reference to its representation in teaching (Oosterheert and Vermunt, 2001). At the same time, an overemphasis on practice leads to unimaginative and unreflective action (Ponte, 2003). A suitable method should help student teachers to connect practice to theory and vice versa.

The repertory interview method and the findings of this study could serve as a starting point for a systematic exploration of student teachers' educational outlooks in the context of teacher education. To this end, student teachers could be instructed to make a video recording of interactions in a lesson and select specific interaction sequences that they believe contain mini dilemmas, e.g. 'How much of my personal life should I disclose to my pupils?', To what extent shall I give pupils the opportunity to influence the lesson plan?' Next, educators could ask student teachers to thoroughly interpret these mini dilemmas using the guiding question that was employed in the present study: 'On the one hand, I think it could be in the pupil's best interest to…; on the other hand, I think it could be in the pupil's best interest to…' This could start out as an individual assignment and later on student teachers' initial ideas could be discussed collectively. In a subsequent phase educators could ask student teachers to connect their ideas about what they consider to be in their pupils' best interest to the typology of legitimisations or themes with regard to the way one reasons about these substantive matters. For example, if student teachers say that they think it is of paramount importance to have pupils with problematic behavioural patterns officially diagnosed in order to teach them adequately, they might recognise themselves in the psychological legitimisation type. They could explore how far their own ideas match this legitimisation type and how they relate to other legitimisation types as presented in the typology of legitimisations. This could invoke various substantive arguments about what is educational desirable and why. Teacher educators should bring in new and unanticipated perspectives, e.g. from real life teaching experiences or publications in the field. In connection with this point, Hansen (2008) claims

that: '…a core purpose of teacher education is to cultivate an open mind towards multiple views of educational purpose, and yet without lapsing into an uncritical or bland relativism…' (p. 23)

6.4.3 A matter of responsibility

Practising teachers should be able to justify their classroom interactions in terms of educational purposes. They should be able to explain to themselves, pupils, parents, colleagues and others involved what kind of dilemmas they face in their daily classroom interactions, what they consider to be in pupils' best interest, and why. In other words, when teachers make substantive claims they should be able to justify them. Student teachers could get acquainted with the practice of justifying substantive claims by being initiated into such practices by their teacher educators. Kemmis and Smith (2008) argue that: 'The teacher educator needs to be a knowledgeable interpreter of educational situations (in terms of what makes them educational), a knowledgeable actor whose educational practice is informed by educational ideas and ideals that have developed and are encoded in the traditions of the education profession, including relevant theoretical knowledge' (p. 28) These are the kind of teacher educators that can help transform teacher education into a deliberative practice, which aims to contribute to on-going discourses about the means and ends of education.

The legitimisation types could serve as a framework that teacher educators can use to help student teachers to explore their own positions in discourses about what is educationally desirable. The legitimisation types can invoke discussion about which educational values and ideals are worthwhile, the kind of dilemmas that come into play when weighing up different perspectives, and how particular values and ideals can be realised in the daily classroom practice. In terms of the substantive and procedural principles that are connected to the practice of reasonable public argumentation (as put forward in subsection 1.3.3.), teacher educators face a challenging task. Student teachers should be taught that although particular educational ideals, such as equal educational opportunities for all pupils, seem to be generally accepted, the actual interpretation of such an educational ideal in concrete situations will not lead automatically to consensus. Consequently, student teachers will have to learn that their own educational values and ideals are also not objectified truths, but can always be subjected to legitimate debate. Furthermore, teacher educators should point out that educational debates are not akin to uncritical conversations in which all values are equally acceptable. Teacher educators should teach their students to respect the conditions for fair deliberation, to build solid arguments and encourage them to exchange disputing perspectives. In order to participate in such deliberations, teacher educators should initiate student teachers into significant topics of debate, for example: Should education focus primarily on preparation for work and life, academic learning, human development or social justice (cf. Hansen, 2008)? Should teachers' professionalism connect to a value-based model or an evidence-based model of professional action (cf. Biesta, 2010a)? Are pupils' interests best served by an

education for all or inclusive education perspective (Miles & Singal, 2010)? It is the teacher educators' task to elucidate the educational philosophies that underpin these debates. For example, with regard to the particular focus of education, i.e. the question 'what is education for?', teacher educators could offer student teachers a framework as formulated by Biesta (2010b), which denotes the functions of education in terms of qualification, socialisation, and subjectification. Being knowledgeable about current educational debates and their substantive backgrounds can help student teachers to become aware of different educational outlooks, justify their own positions with regard to the purpose of education and, as a consequence, take responsibility for their own teaching conduct.

This agenda for teacher education is quite demanding and difficult to implement in an already packed curriculum. However, if teacher educators feel responsible for teaching their student teachers to participate in educational discourse, they will have to find opportunities in the teacher education programme to address this issue. One practical suggestion is to host debates, a couple of times per year, about key educational questions in contemporary society. For example, a topic of debate could be the growing number of children with learning and behavioural disorders that are taught in regular education classrooms instead of special education classrooms. Such a debate touches upon questions such as: 'What serves the child best interest?', 'What are schools for?', 'What can be asked of teachers' professionalism?' In order for such debates to cut through faculty boundaries and have an impact that goes beyond the teacher education institute, they could be organised in cooperation with schools, educational researchers, professional associations, interest groups, and politicians (cf. Ruyter & Kole, 2010; Hansen, 2008). Hosting debates about educational matters will give students teachers the opportunity to subject their educational values and ideals to legitimate disagreement.

6.5 A reflection on the research process

A first point of reflection is connected to the decision to develop a specific research method. The rationale for this decision will be examined by relating the repertory interview we developed to the stimulated recall protocol. A second point of reflection is connected to the question of how the outcomes of this research project connect to the original problem statement.

6.5.1 The rationale for developing the repertory interview

In order to answer the explorative research question in this study: *'How do teachers interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest?'*, one methodological study was completely devoted to constructing a suitable method. The development of the repertory interview procedure made it possible to have teachers interpret their daily classroom interactions in terms of what they considered educational desirable and why. A possible criticism is that developing a research

method is a very time-consuming enterprise especially when, at first glance, there might be adequate alternatives. One possible alternative could have been the stimulated recall protocol. Lyle (2003, p. 861) describes the stimulated recall protocol as follows: 'It is an introspection procedure in which (normally) videotaped passages of behaviour are replayed to individuals to stimulate recall of their concurrent cognitive activity.' Although several similarities can be distinguished (such as the use of videotaped lessons, and reflection on particular classroom interactions), an important distinction has to do with the particular research aim for which the two procedures can be used. In the context of teaching, the stimulated recall procedure is mostly used to make explicit what teachers were thinking during the lesson they have just given. The aim is to collect data about teachers' thoughts during their lessons; they are stimulated to relive their lessons in detail (cf. Calderhead, 1981; Verloop, 1989; Meijer, Zanting & Verloop, 2002). This connects to what Schön (1983) calls reflection in action, i.e. thinking while doing something. The repertory interview, however, aims to collect data about how teachers interpret particular classroom interactions in terms of what they consider to be in the best interest of their pupils and why. Although a particular classroom interaction forms the starting point for the interview, teachers are not so much stimulated to explicate what they were thinking during the exact interaction, but are invited to articulate how the particular interaction could serve the pupils' best interest and why. Moreover, teachers were even encouraged to construct an alternative course of interaction that would have been legitimate in their eyes. This method does not focus so much on determining teachers' actual thoughts about their pupils' best interest at a particular point in time, but rather connects to the possibility that every classroom interaction and its consequences, whether intended or unintended, can be interpreted in terms of its moral impact. The particular interaction is just an elicitor to stimulate teachers to talk about their deep-seated educational convictions guided by recursive 'why' questioning. The data that is collected with the repertory interview is closely connected to what Fenstermacher & Richardson (1993, p. 104) call practical arguments, which they define as: '…post hoc examinations of actions. They are accounts of actions that serve to explain or justify what they did'. This process of data collection is akin to what Schön (1983) refers to as reflection on action, i.e. thinking back on what one has done in order to discover something new.

6.5.2 Addressing the relation between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'

'Continental European pedagogy is a discipline which studies its object not only to know how things are but to know how one ought to act.' (Langeveld, 1969, p.13, translation by the authors) In line with Langeveld's principled position, this thesis set out to investigate how teachers interpret the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions by asking them to relate their classroom interactions as they are to what they consider to be most desirable for their pupils. The introduction argues that every classroom interaction and its consequences, whether intended or unintended, can be interpreted in terms of its moral impact. In

continental European pedagogy, this principle is closely connected to the relation between the empirical question 'what is the case', and the moral question 'what ought to be the case'. However, this thesis has stressed that debates in continental European pedagogy about what 'is' and what 'ought to be' are mainly philosophical in nature and not based on comprehensive empirical accounts of classroom practices and, as a consequence, are difficult to connect to concrete classroom situations. The descriptive framework we developed, based on Imelmans' question (1995, p. 60) 'Who should be taught what, when, how, and why?', made it possible to: (1) address the relation between the empirical question 'what is the case', and the moral question 'what ought to be the case' at the level of teachers' own understanding of their everyday classroom practice; and (2) inquire into the inherent moral dimensions of teaching from the nature of the work of teaching itself, instead from a source that is external to teaching practice, such as moral philosophy or social and political ideology (cf. Hansen, 1998). Furthermore, the value that this research project adds to current research on the moral dimensions of teaching is that it offers an extensive empirical account of teachers' educational values and ideals and ways in which teachers draw upon them. This research project complements the considerable body of research on teachers' moral reasoning that is concerned with small-scale case studies that focus on means to comprehend and describe the moral significance of teaching from a particular moral point of view external to teaching practice (see e.g. Elbaz, 1992; Fallona, 2000; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Husu & Tirri, 2003). The typology of legitimisations can be considered a systematic description of the various ways that teachers understand the relation between their actual classroom interactions and what these interaction ought to bring about from an educational perspective.

6.5.3 Limitations of the research

A first limitation has to do with the comprehensibility of the perspective from continental European pedagogy in an international context. This perspective was adopted to understand everyday teacher-pupil interactions in terms of what teachers consider to be in their pupils' best interest. A perspective from continental European pedagogy entails that every classroom interaction, whether intended or unintended, can be interpreted in terms of 'what is' and 'what is more desirable'. At the beginning of the research project we tried to translate this particular perspective by using the term 'inherent moral significance of teaching', mainly because we set out to publish the research in Anglo-American research journals. However, an adequate translation proved to be quite confusing, judging from our correspondence with journal editors from the English-speaking world. It is likely that two reasons played a central part in this confusion: (1) in the Anglo-American world the term moral is often and quite persistently connected to an external focus, i.e. something that can be taught to others or should be adopted by others (e.g. moral education); and (2) in the Anglo-American world pedagogy has a instrumental connotation, as it merely refers to teaching strategies or methods of instruction. Later on in the research project we tried to deal with this translation

issue by using the term 'educational' when we intended to refer to a perspective from continental European pedagogy. Arguably, in hindsight it would have been better to use more consistent terminology throughout the whole dissertation.

A second limitation has to do with the kind of statement that can be made on the basis of the research outcomes. As this research project focused on how teachers interpret their classroom interactions in hindsight, no statements can be made about what teachers were actually thinking while they were teaching. All kinds of motives could have played a role during teaching that were not necessarily connected to what teachers considered to be in their pupils' best interest. Teachers could, for example, have been motivated by reasons connected to practicalities, their own interests, or their basic psychological needs. Furthermore, within this research project no correlations can be observed between particular reasons and particular teacher-pupil interactions. For example, statements about the credibility of what teachers put forward as being in their pupils' best interest and consistency with their actual teaching performances cannot be substantiated on basis of the outcomes of this research project. Our research project did not set out to formulate cause and effect relationships. Its added value is that it offers teachers a framework that enables them to (1) understand how teachers in general perceive their pupils' best interest when interpreting their day-to-day classroom interactions; and (2) critically reflect on their own ways of perceiving their pupils' best interest.
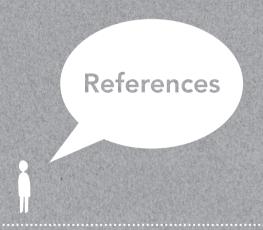
6.6 Future research

The scientific aim of this thesis was to understand and describe how teachers interpret their daily classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. Its findings are in the first place relevant to the group of teachers that were involved in our study; it was not our intention to find statistically generalisable outcomes. However, we did aim to find theoretical insights on the basis of empirical findings, which could contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the inherent moral dimension that is necessarily involved in teachers' professional judgements that go beyond the educational settings involved in this research project.

Further research could help to explore whether the legitimisation types and the way teachers give expression to the legitimisation types proved to be a meaningful framework for understanding teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in contexts other than those researched in this study. Teachers that work in other educational settings, such as vocational education, might develop different outlooks on what they consider to be educationally desirable. These teachers work with adolescents and they have to prepare their students for specific vocations, spanning several areas of activity. Teachers that work in this context might have educational outlooks that are especially focused on functional qualifications for the job market. On the other hand, teachers might also involve notions about democratic decision-making across public and private institutions, or considerations with regard to the academic education of their students, in their ways of reasoning about their students' best interest.

Teachers working in other cultural, religious, or ethnic contexts will most probably have other frames of reference, which might lead to other ways of interpreting the inherent moral significance of teaching. The data for this study were collected in a Western culture, which is usually classified as individualist. The nature and the interpretation of the data could have been different if it was collected in more collectivist cultures, as would be the case, for example, in an Asian context (cf. Hofstede, 2007).

An assumption in this research project was that the typology of teachers' legitimisations enables a connection between their accounts of classroom interactions, that serve to explain or justify what they consider in their pupils' best interest, and grand theories, such as the strands in continental European pedagogy. However, this assumption was not put to the test. At first sight it seems that a case could be made that: (1) the caring and personal legitimisation types seem to be closely connected to the *geisteswissenschaftliche* strand; (2) the contextual and critical legitimisation type seems to have most in common with the critical strand; and (3) the functional and psychological legitimisation types seem to be most akin to the empirical analytical strand. However, it would be too superficial to draw the conclusion that these legitimisation types neatly fit such complex and multifaceted theories. An exploration of the way the legitimisation types relate to the different strands in continental European pedagogy, if at all, would require further research.

To conclude, empirical research into how teachers interpret their everyday classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest, in all kinds of contexts, could further perpetual inquiry into the complex relationship between how teaching 'is' and how teaching 'ought to be'.

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Appendix

Appendix
Audit report of 'legitimisation types'

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Auditee: Carlos van Kan
Auditor: Ben Smit, ICLON/ Universiteit Leiden
Final version, July 2013

Introduction

The study that is audited here focused on the ways teachers interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. An analytical framework had been developed in a former study based on continental European pedagogy (a scientific discipline that studies the child's upbringing in institutional and societal contexts). The analytical framework served the purpose of analysing teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their inherent moral significance. In this study, the researchers looked for the ways in which teachers interpret their classroom interactions. Specifically, the study resulted in a table of six legitimisation types, which were described along six components (see Audit report - Appendix 1).

An audit was conducted to assess the degree to which this study – which is part of a Dutch dissertation project – met the criteria of visibility, comprehensibility and acceptability (reliability, validity) . The data collection, analysis and synthesis processes were scrutinised to determine whether 1) the table of legitimisation types was grounded in the data; and 2) on-going inquiry decisions and the overall inquiry designs were appropriate, given the needs of the study. However, at the time of the audit, two articles on parts of the study had already been accepted and published in peer-reviewed scientific journals (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2010a, 2010b). The publication of these two articles had already covered step 1 of the analysis. It was agreed therefore that the actual audit would concentrate on the subsequent steps in the analysis (steps 2-5 in the audit trail; see below). The audit techniques and procedure were agreed upon by the dissertation tutors, the auditee and the auditor. The preliminary meetings consisted primarily of analysing aspects of the documentation system, or audit trail, used during the conduct of the inquiry. The auditor was a colleague researcher of the auditee, but not involved in the study.

Procedures

Roughly speaking, the auditor's activities fall into five stages: 1) orientation to audit procedures and their applicability to this study; 2) orientation to the study; 3) auditing the study and writing a draft audit report; 4) feedback of results and renegotiations; and 5) final audit report.

Phase 1: Orientation to audit procedures and applicability to this study

The auditor was familiar with the audit procedures as described by Akkerman et al. (2008) in their article on auditing quality of research in the social sciences. Furthermore, he had conducted another audit on a PhD study before. The research aim and the research problem were identified along with the methodological choices (approach and techniques), the theoretical framework, the findings and conclusions. The auditor and auditee negotiated and agreed upon goals, roles and rules of the audit. This was the actual start of the audit.

Phase 2: Orientation to the study

The second activity was to become familiar with the study and the audit trail. During the orientation phase, the auditor received all of the audit trail components along with a written explanation of the materials and procedures that had been used in the process of data analysis and interpretation. These components included all of the data that had been used for steps 2-5 that led to the description of the six legitimisation types. Furthermore, the steps between the separate acts and/or products of the analysis were identified and documents were identified that substantiated the outcomes (see Figure 1). The following specific components were used as input for the audit:

- *General:*
  - Audit trail document: table of components, steps and substantiating documents; description of analysis steps and their rationale; examples of analysis process (Audit report - Appendix 2)
- *Component A:*
  - Transcripts of repertory interviews with teachers (n=37), as imported in Atlas/ti (QDA software)
  - Published article A (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2010a)
- *Component B:*
  - Descriptive framework (table of components, their descriptions and categories within them (Word file)
  - Published article B (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2010b)
- *Component C:*
  - Coding of the 37 transcripts (Atlas/ti file)

- *Component D:*
  - · Teacher profiles (16 Word files)
  - · Published article C, method section (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2013)
- *Component E:*
  - · Table of 6 legitimisation types (Word file)
  - · Published article C, method section (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2013)
- *Component F:*
  - · Descriptions of 6 legitimisation types (Word file)
  - · Published article C, method and results section
    (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2013)

Figure 1. Audit trail (components and linkages)

Steps in the analysis					
Step 1	**Step 2**	**Step 3**	**Step 4**	**Step 5**	
a. Repertory interviews with 37 teachers	b. A descriptive framework consisting of 6 components subdivided into 2 or 3 categories	c. Coded interview fragments of 37 interviews according to the categories of the 6 components of the descriptive framework	d. Teacher profiles. A profile consisted of a compressed description of the 6 components per teacher	e. Indication of legitimisation types alongside a co-researcher. This resulted in 6 legitimisation types	f. Description of the six legitimisation types

Documents substantiating each act/ product (a t/m f)					
a. Published article A	b. Published article B	c. Atlas/ti hermeneutic unit: 'Descriptive Framework'	d. a) Word document with descriptions of 16 profiles b) Method section of draft article C	e. a) Table of 6 legitimisation types b) Method section of draft article C	f. a) Method section of draft article b) Result section of draft article C

These audit trail components were explained by the auditee during two meetings with the auditor of about 2 hours in total and in several email messages. Finally, five linkages between the six components were identified as steps in the data analysis process. Four of these linkages (steps 2-5) and five of the components (b-f) constituted the actual audit trail. The auditor focused mainly on the quality of the linkages, that is how the components (acts/products) were derived from their predecessors. It was decided not to audit all the data, but to select several chunks of data from each component and to scrutinise these for their linkage with preceding components, working backwards from component F (the table of legitimisation

types) to component B (the descriptive framework of components). The auditor himself determined the selection of data chunks.

Phase 3: Audit implementation

The auditor's findings are described in detail in the sections below. These findings are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Audit findings; summarised

	Steps			
Criteria	2	3	4	5
Visible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compre-hensible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes/No
Acceptable: reliable valid	Code system was adequate for research purpose; quotations were consistently selected on an explicit basis; codes were applied correctly, consistently and transparently; interrater agreement was not determined[1], but the auditor's proof coding matched the auditee's coding; no relevant information was left uncoded.	Codes adequately summarised into teacher profiles; content of coded transcripts transparently condensed in summarising descriptions and compressed descriptions; descriptions can be traced back to codes and quotations.	Careful and adequate cyclic procedure of deriving a typology out of teacher profiles; appropriate qualitative research criteria used for decision on analysis procedure.	Final result (the typology of legitimisations) can be inferred to be grounded in preceding components; no data available for full tracing of this step.

Assessing visibility

Is it clear what data sources were used and how each data source is linked to the next one and what procedure was followed?

On the basis of the documents provided and the additional explanation by the auditee, the visibility of the data sources (components) and the linkages between them were clear. The procedures followed in processing the data were adequately

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This was the case at the time of the actual audit. Afterwards interrater agreement indices for coding the components and legitimisation types were calculated by the auditee (Cohen's kappa 0.81 and 0.75 respectively, which is good).

described in the draft article and in an additional text. It was made clear what groups were involved in the study, what the aims of the study were, what kind of data were collected and at what stages and in what way the auditee was involved in linking the components. The theoretical underpinnings of the descriptive framework and the legitimisation types were to be found in the two published articles and the draft article. Copies of these were provided by the auditee.

Assessing comprehensibility

Is it clear how findings are grounded in data from former components and what decisions, inferences, and interpretations have been made by the auditee at every linkage?

In general, the linkages from raw data to the analysed data to the synthesised results were extensively described. The draft article provides a good overview and understanding of these linkages, which were further explained by the auditee in discussions with the auditor. The diagram of the audit trail (Figure 1) helped to keep track of the components and linkages. In addition, the linkages are clearly founded in the data and it is clear from the documents and from oral explanation by the auditee how steps followed from each other: what data were used and how they were interpreted, combined, or condensed into the next component. However, it is apparent that step 3 – deriving teacher profiles – and step 4 – deriving legitimisation types across the teacher profiles – had been the most difficult steps (see below). These steps obviously required extensive interpretation of the data by the auditee, in the light of the aims and theoretical concepts of the study. Nevertheless, apart from step 5, the auditor was able to follow the decisions taken and agrees with the results in the sense that the profiles and legitimisation types can be regarded as grounded in the data. In the auditor's opinion, however, the typology descriptions that were formulated in step 5 are in line with the preceding steps and acceptably capture the essence of the derived types. Furthermore, the description of the methods of analyses, results and conclusion and the author's terminology are clearly related to the theoretical framework described in the research paper.

Assessing acceptability

Is the processing of the data and the linkage of the components done in a valid and reliable way?

The procedure for selecting quotations for coding was made explicit and was followed consistently. Uncoded parts of the interview transcripts were appropriately identified as not relevant to the research questions. The code system is described in full in the digital files (code labels and descriptions). The codes are relevant to the research questions, provide a complete categorisation of the data on the basis of the theoretical concepts in the study and can reliably be applied. No interrater

agreement index was determined for the coding of raw data , even though this would have been possible and feasible for step 2. Nor was member checking used to check the quality of the auditee's coding of the interview data. Proof coding by the auditor on several parts of the data matched the auditee's coding to a large extent, supporting the assessment that the coding reached an acceptable level of reliability.

Steps 3 and 4 were described as procedural steps which aimed to develop legitimisation types that could distinguish ways in which teachers legitimise their classroom interactions. As an intermediary step, teacher profiles were derived from the interview coding (Step 3). The auditee followed a clear and theoretically underpinned way of working for this, which was suited to the purpose of the study. For an individual teacher, in step 3, the auditee had to summarise the codes per component category into a condensed description and subsequently into an overall compressed description for each component. Step 4 was aimed at finding cross-sectional types based on the teacher profile, which was done in several rounds until theoretical saturation was reached. This step was carefully conducted and four profiles were chosen randomly for each round . To complete the logical sequence of the study, the resulting six types were described again in terms of the descriptive framework (step 5). The descriptions are distinctive and valid in terms of the research aims and practical purpose of the typology and are convincingly based on earlier steps. However, this step could not be fully traced by the auditor.
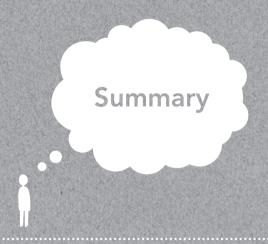
Overall assessment

On the basis of this audit trail, I conclude that the overall quality of this research (theory, data, analyses, results and conclusion) is satisfying in terms of its trustworthiness. The research meets criteria for visibility, comprehensibility and acceptability for a qualitative research project in the social sciences. Although not always explicitly described, the findings (the legitimisation types) are grounded in the data and the inferences are logical and traceable. In addition, the inquiry decisions are rational and appropriate and there seem to be no disturbing influences from outside the research project. It should be noted, however, that the teachers included in the study were selected on the basis of a minimum of three years' teaching experience. It is inferred, though not explicitly, that the derived legitimisation types are valid for describing teachers' legitimisations of their classroom interactions in general. This could well be true, and might reasonably be expected on theoretical grounds, but this implicit claim needs additional evidence to back it up. Future research with different categories of teachers could possibly provide this. Finally, as this audit trail had a central position in the quality checks in this research project, no additional quality check techniques were performed, although this would have been possible and advisable in some cases.

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Appendices[2]

Appendix 1 – Legitimisation types
Appendix 2 – Audit trail

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[2]

Appendices of the Audit report are not included here, because they are already part of this thesis.

Summary

Summary

Introduction

This thesis reports on an interpretative research project about teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. The thesis comprises four closely related studies. A total of thirty-seven teachers working at elementary or secondary schools in both regular and special education participated in the research project.

At the heart of this thesis lies the inherent moral significance that is ascribed to teacher-pupil interactions by teachers. Inherent here signifies that the moral significance of classroom interactions is construed as something that permeates the work of teaching. In other words, every classroom interaction, whether intended or unintended, can be interpreted in terms of its moral impact.

Theoretical framework

In this research project the inherent moral significance of teacher-pupil interactions is related to (1) debates in continental European pedagogy about 'what is' and 'what ought to be', and (2) a value-based understanding of teachers' professionalism. Departing from the inherent moral significance of classroom interactions implies that teachers should not only be concerned with the instrumental aspects of their classroom interactions, but also with the desirability of what their actions bring about; this is a central point of debate in continental European pedagogy. Consequently, teachers are not just considered operators but professionals that have moral ideas about the means they can use in education to try to achieve certain desirable outcomes. This particular outlook on teachers' professional practice is what constitutes a value-based model of teachers' professionalism.

These theoretical standpoints imply that, whether consciously or unconsciously, teachers will have moral ideas about what they consider educationally desirable. These ideas may be consistent or inconsistent and well or crudely articulated. In other words, teachers are likely to have educational values and ideals that underlie their daily classroom interactions.

With regard to the literature that is available on teachers' values and ideals, two observations can be made. The first is that a great part of this literature has a focus that stems from sources external to the practice of teaching, such as moral philosophy and social and political ideology, instead of from teaching itself (cf. Hansen, 1998). The second observation is that a great part of literature that involves teachers' ideals has a strong advisory character and is often not based on comprehensive empirical accounts of classroom practices (cf. Lingard, 2008).

The present research project sets out to give a comprehensive empirical account of (1) teachers' educational values and ideals when interpreting their interactions in terms of pupil's best interest, and (2) how teachers give expression to these legitimisation-types.

Research questions

The standpoints outlined above lead to the following general research question: '*How do teachers interpret their daily classroom interactions in terms of their pupils best interest?*' This research question was broken down into two sub questions: '*How do teachers legitimise their daily classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?*' (Chapter 4) Researching this sub question led to the conclusion that teachers draw upon six different legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. A legitimisation type entails a systematic description of a particular pattern of educational values and ideals that teachers draw upon when interpreting their classroom interactions (Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2013a). The second sub question builds upon this conclusion: '*How do teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils best interest?*' (Chapter 5) For example, are teachers decisive or doubtful when legitimising their classroom interaction; do teachers draw on different legitimisation types or do they draw on one legitimisation type in particular when legitimising their classroom interactions? With regard to the second sub question, differences in ways of giving expression to the legitimisation types between teachers as well as different institutional contexts were taken into account.

Before the general research question could be answered, two methodological problems required attention. The first methodological problem was how to collect empirical data that is suitable for inquiring into teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest (Chapter 2). The second methodological problem was how to identify teachers' educational values and ideals that underlie these interpretations from the perspective of continental European pedagogy (Chapter 3).

Results and conclusions

First study
The first study focused on the development of a method to enable teachers to interpret the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions. The repertory grid application (Kelly, 1955) seemed at first sight an adequate response to this complex assignment; i.e. a method especially designed to explore and understand how people make sense of a particular part of their experience. The study examined the extent to which this application could be considered a fruitful strategy to get teachers to articulate their more or less implicit educational values and ideals when interpreting their classroom interactions. This examination chal-

lenged some important aspects of the standard repertory grid technique. It led to the development of a repertory interview procedure, which can be considered a phenomenological elaboration of the standard repertory grid application. The main conclusion was that the repertory interview enabled the collection of rich data that served the purpose of understanding and describing teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest.

Second study

The second methodological problem was addressed in a study that examined how to analyse and describe teachers' interpretations of the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions from the perspective of continental European pedagogy. A descriptive framework was developed, which served the purpose of mediating between theoretical concepts and the empirical data collected in the study. This framework was based on the central object of research for continental European pedagogy which, according to Imelman, can be summarised as: 'Who should be taught what, when, how, and why?' (1995, p. 60). The different aspects ('who', 'what', 'when', 'how') of this question were used as the components of the descriptive framework. During an iterative process of data analysis, two complementary components emerged from the data: the 'where' and 'for what purpose' components. The 'why aspect' of Imelman's question, which formed an integral part of all six components, fostered a further analysis of the interview data in terms of how teachers substantiated what they considered to be in their pupils' best interest. Taking the match between the components and the interview data into account, we concluded that the descriptive framework enabled an adequate analysis and description of the inherent moral significance of teachers' everyday classroom interactions.

Third study

The third study reports on the first sub question of the central research question, i.e. '*How do teachers legitimise their daily classroom interactions in terms of educational values and ideals?*' The results show that teachers used different legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions. A legitimisation type was defined in this study as a systematic description of a particular pattern of educational values and ideals that teachers draw upon when they interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. Six legitimisation types could be distinguished. (1) The *caring* legitimisation type signifies that pupils need to be seen as vulnerable and very dependent on grownups to survive in a demanding world. (2) The *personal* legitimisation type signifies that pupils need to be understood as unique social beings that have a personal relationship with teachers. (3) The *contextual* legitimisation type signifies that pupils' living conditions, life histories and practical lives need to be taken into account in teaching situations. (4) The *critical* legitimisation type signifies that pupils need to be freed from constraining ideas about themselves and living conditions that imprint these ideas. (5) The *functional* legitimisation type signifies that pupils need to be raised towards adulthood along the lines of preconceived favourable outcomes. Finally, (6) the *psychological* legitimisation type signifies that pupils' conduct

needs to be labelled in mental or emotional terms in order for adequate teaching and learning to take place.

Fourth study

The final study explored the second sub question of the central research question, i.e. '*How do teachers give expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils best interest?*' Differences in ways of giving expression to the legitimisation types between teachers as well as different institutional contexts were taken into account. Four themes upon which teachers differed from each other in their way of giving expression to the legitimisation types when interpreting their classroom interactions were found: (1) extensiveness, (2) substantiveness, (3) deliberateness, and (4) answerableness. *Extensiveness* related to the range of components and legitimisation types that teachers used when interpreting their classroom interactions. The most significant finding within this theme was that the majority of teachers included a small range of components and legitimisation types in their interpretations. *Substantiveness* related to the substantive focus of the components and legitimisation types that teachers included in their interpretations of their classroom interactions. The results indicate that most teachers tended to have a rather instrumental 'here and now' focus in their interpretations. *Thoughtfulness* related to the manner in which teachers weighed and assessed conceivable ways of legitimising types when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. The majority of teachers showed in their interpretations of their classroom interactions that they had a closed way of considering different educational outlooks. *Answerableness* addressed the grounds on which teachers legitimise their classroom interactions when interpreting their classroom interactions. The results show that most teachers answered for their teaching conduct in terms of what they personally felt responsible for, rather than what others expected them to do.

Furthermore, the results indicate that teachers in special secondary education: (1) included a broader range of components and legitimisation types; (2) were more perceptive towards pupils' extended social contexts; and (3) had a more open way of deliberating when interpreting their classroom interactions, than the teachers in the other institutional contexts. Finally, the findings indicate that teachers working within the same institutional context tended to have similar ways of expressing the legitimisation types in terms of the presented themes.

Discussion

In the discussion section it is argued that the legitimisation types could contribute to bringing educational questions back into discussions about what constitutes good education. This is a response to the claim that the teaching profession has become uncomfortable about using a vocabulary that addresses educational questions (e.g. Mahony, 2009). The legitimisation types provide a practical language that can be used to address questions about what serves pupils' best interest in educational practice. This is not to say that the typology of legitimisations is a

prescriptive moral framework, indicating how teachers should legitimise their classroom interactions. After all, no prescriptive framework can relieve teachers of the responsibility to exercise judgement about what is morally good or bad, right or wrong for a particular pupil in a particular situation.

A second point of discussion is connected to the finding that only a relatively small group of teachers in this study had an open way of deliberating when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. It is argued that an open mind, not hampered with rigid ideas about what serves the pupils' best interest, might be conditional for really taking pupils' best interest into account, at particular moments, in particular situations. The challenge for teachers is, on the one hand, not to leave pupils to their own devices and, on the other hand, not to have unyielding educational outlooks that constrain continuous inquiry into how pupils can be understood.

A third point of discussion is that educational values and ideals, that come into play when inquiring into what, according to teachers, serves pupils' best interest, will not immediately lead to general agreement. Consequently, collegial and public deliberation about interpretations with regard to what is educationally desirable is required. This not only requires procedural conditions, such as reflection cycles or dialogical structures, but also requires substance; teachers need to articulate their educational values and ideals and subject them to collegial and public deliberation.

Drawing on the three points of discussion, three questions can be formulated that could help shape teacher education as a place where substantive issues are welcomed. The first point of consideration is for teacher education to acknowledge the importance of putting questions of content and direction back on its agenda: *a matter of priority*. The second point of consideration is how student teachers can learn to inquire into their classroom interaction in terms of their own educational outlooks: *a matter of teachability*. The final point of consideration is directed at initiating student teachers into on-going educational debates and supporting them in justifying their own positions in these debates: *a matter of responsibility*.

Future research could help explore whether the legitimisation types and the way teachers give expression to the legitimisation types prove to be a meaningful framework for understanding teachers' interpretations of their classroom interactions in contexts other than those researched in this study. Teachers that work in other educational settings, such as vocational education, might develop different outlooks on what they consider to be educationally desirable. Moreover, teachers in other cultural, religious or ethnic contexts will have other frames of reference, which might lead to other ways of interpreting the inherent moral significance of teaching. Another direction for future research would be to explore our assumption that the legitimisation-types can help teachers to connect empirically the inherent moral significance of their classroom interactions to grand theories, such as the strands in continental European pedagogy.

Samenvatting

Samenvatting

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Inleiding

Dit proefschrift betreft een interpretatief onderzoek naar de wijze waarop leraren hun dagelijkse leraar-leerling interacties interpreteren in termen van het belang van hun leerlingen. Het bestaat uit vier samenhangende deelstudies. In totaal hebben zevenendertig leraren, werkzaam in het (speciaal) basis- of (speciaal) voortgezet onderwijs deelgenomen aan dit onderzoeksproject.

De kern van het proefschrift betreft de inherent morele betekenis die toegekend wordt aan leraar-leerling interacties. Met *inherent* wordt bedoeld dat de morele betekenis van deze interacties wordt opgevat als iets dat onlosmakelijk verbonden is met het werk van een leraar. Het centrale uitgangspunt is dat alle leraar-leerling interacties, intentioneel of niet-intentioneel van aard, geïnterpreteerd kunnen worden in termen van hun morele betekenis.

Theoretisch kader

De inherent morele betekenis van leraar-leerling interacties wordt gerelateerd aan (1) debatten in de pedagogiek over 'het bestaande' en 'het meer wenselijke', en (2) een op waarden gebaseerd model van de professionaliteit van leraren. Het uitgaan van de inherent morele betekenis van leraar-leerling interacties impliceert dat leraren zich niet alleen moeten richten op de instrumentele aspecten van hun leraar-leerling interacties, maar ook op de gevolgen van hun interacties en de wenselijkheid daarvan; een centraal uitgangspunt in de pedagogiek. Hieruit volgt dat leraren niet alleen uitvoerders zijn van wat door anderen bedacht is, maar professionals die de wenselijkheid van de methoden die ze inzetten om bepaalde doelen te bereiken en de wenselijkheid van de doelen zelf afwegen. Dit specifieke perspectief op de professionele praktijk van leraren vormt het hart van een op waarden gebaseerd model van de professionaliteit van leraren.

Wanneer in het vervolg de relatie tussen 'het bestaande' en 'het meer wenselijke' met betrekking tot leraar-leerling interacties ter sprake komt, zal meestal het woord 'pedagogisch' gehanteerd worden. De theoretische uitgangspunten impliceren dat leraren, bewust of onbewust, ideeën hebben over wat ze in hun dagelijkse leraar-leerling interacties in het belang van hun leerlingen vinden. Leraren zouden die ideeën bijvoorbeeld heel precies of algemeen, consistent of inconsistent kunnen verwoorden. Het is aannemelijk dat leraren pedagogische waarden en idealen hebben die ten grondslag liggen aan hun dagelijkse leraar-leerling interacties.

Met betrekking tot de literatuur die handelt over pedagogische waarden en idealen van leraren kunnen twee opmerkingen worden gemaakt. De eerste opmerking is dat een aanzienlijk gedeelte van de literatuur zich baseert op bronnen die van buiten de onderwijspraktijk zelf komen, zoals moraalfilosofie, en sociale

en politieke ideologieën. De tweede opmerking is dat een groot gedeelte van literatuur over pedagogische waarden en idealen van leraren een voorschrijvend karakter heeft en meestal niet gestoeld is op uitgebreid empirisch onderzoek.

Het hier gerapporteerde onderzoeksproject heeft tot doel op basis van empirisch onderzoek inzicht te geven in (1) de pedagogische waarden en idealen die leraren hanteren bij het interpreteren van hun dagelijkse leraar-leerling interacties en (2) de manier waarop leraren uiting geven aan deze pedagogische waarden en idealen.

Onderzoeksvragen

De voorgaande uitgangspunten leiden tot de volgende algemene onderzoeksvraag: *Hoe interpreteren leraren hun dagelijkse leraar-leerling interacties in termen van het belang van hun leerlingen?* Deze onderzoeksvraag is onderverdeeld in twee subvragen. De eerste subvraag luidt: *Hoe legitimeren leraren hun dagelijkse leraar-leerling interacties in termen van hun pedagogische waarden en idealen?* Het beantwoorden van deze vraag leidde tot de conclusie dat leraren gebruik maken van zes verschillende legitimatie-typen bij het interpreteren van hun leraar-leerling interacties. Een legitimatietype betreft een bepaald patroon van pedagogische waarden en idealen die leraren hanteren bij het interpreteren van leraar-leerling interacties. De tweede subvraag borduurt voort op deze conclusie en is als volgt geformuleerd: *Op welke wijze geven leraren uitdrukking aan de legitimatietypen wanneer ze hun leraar-leerling interacties interpreteren in termen van het belang van hun leerlingen?* Bijvoorbeeld: 'Zijn leraren gedecideerd of onzeker wanneer ze hun interacties legitimeren?', 'Hanteren leraren verschillende legitimatie-typen of maken ze gebruik van een legitimatietype in het bijzonder?' Met betrekking tot de tweede subvraag zijn verschillen tussen leraren in hun manier van het uitdrukken van de legitimatietypen onderzocht. Tevens is onderzocht of verschillen tussen leraren in hun manier van uitdrukken van de legitimatie-typen gerelateerd kan worden aan de institutionele context waarin ze werkzaam zijn.

Alvorens de algemene onderzoeksvraag beantwoord kon worden, moesten eerst twee methodologische problemen opgelost worden. Het eerste methodologische probleem betrof de vraag op welke wijze empirische data verzameld kunnen worden die geschikt is voor onderzoek naar interpretaties van leraren van hun leraar-leerling interacties, in termen van het belang van hun leerlingen (Hoofdstuk 2). Het tweede methodologische probleem ging om de vraag op welke wijze de pedagogische waarden en idealen die ten grondslag liggen aan die interpretaties van docenten geïdentificeerd konden worden (Hoofdstuk 3).

Resultaten en conclusies

Deelstudie 1
De eerste studie richtte zich op de ontwikkeling van een dataverzamelingsmethode die leraren in staat stelt de inherent morele betekenis van hun leraar-leerling interacties te interpreteren. De repertory grid-techniek (Kelly, 1955) leek op het

eerste gezicht een adequate methode om deze complexe opdracht het hoofd te bieden. Het betreft een methode die speciaal ontwikkeld is om te begrijpen hoe mensen betekenis geven aan een specifiek gedeelte van hun ervaringen. In deze deelstudie wordt nagegaan in welke mate de repertory grid-techniek een kansrijke methode is om leraren te stimuleren hun, in meer of mindere mate, impliciete pedagogische waarden en idealen te expliciteren die ten grondslag liggen aan hun interpretaties van hun leraar-leerling interacties. Het in deze deelstudie ontwikkelde instrument, het repertory-interview, kan als een fenomenologische uitwerking van de standaard repertory grid-techniek beschouwd worden. De algemene conclusie van deze studie was dat het repertory-interview het mogelijk maakte data te verzamelen, die bruikbaar waren om de interpretaties van leraren van hun leraar-leerling interacties in termen van het belang van leerlingen te duiden en te beschrijven.

Deelstudie 2
Het tweede methodologische probleem was onderwerp van een studie die ging om de vraag hoe de interpretaties van leraren van de inherent morele betekenis van hun leraar-leerling interacties geanalyseerd en beschreven konden worden vanuit een pedagogisch perspectief. Hiertoe werd een beschrijvingskader ontwikkeld, dat een mediërende functie vervulde tussen theoretische concepten en de empirische data die verzameld werden in de eerste studie. Het beschrijvingskader is gebaseerd op de centrale vraag voor de pedagogiek, die volgens Imelman (1995) kan worden samengevat als: 'Wie wordt wat wanneer hoe en waarom onderwezen?' De verschillende aspecten ('wie', 'wat', 'wanneer', 'hoe') van deze vraag zijn gebruikt als de componenten van het beschrijvingskader. Het 'waarom'-aspect van de vraag van Imelman, dat integraal onderdeel uitmaakt van alle zes de componenten, maakte een nadere analyse van de interview-data mogelijk, specifiek gericht op de manier waarop leraren onderbouwden wat ze in het belang van hun leerlingen vinden. Door middel van een iteratief data-analyse proces werden twee aanvullende componenten aan het beschrijvingskader toegevoegd, namelijk de 'waar' en de 'waartoe'-component. Op basis van dit deelonderzoek kan gesteld worden dat het beschrijvingskader het mogelijk maakt de pedagogische betekenis van dagelijkse leraar-leerling interacties te analyseren en te beschrijven.

Deelstudie 3
In de derde studie wordt gerapporteerd over de eerste subvraag van de centrale onderzoeksvraag: *Hoe legitimeren leraren hun dagelijkse leraar-leerling interacties in termen van hun pedagogische waarden en idealen?* De resultaten laten zien dat leraren verschillende, zogenaamde legitimatietypen gebruiken bij het interpreteren van hun leraar-leerling interacties. Een legitimatietype betreft een bepaald patroon van pedagogische waarden en idealen die leraren hanteren bij het interpreteren van hun leraar-leerling interacties. Er zijn zes legitimatietypen onderscheiden. (1) Zorglegitimering is erop gericht leerlingen te zien als kwetsbare wezens, die afhankelijk zijn van volwassenen om te overleven in een veeleisende wereld. (2) Persoonlijke legitimering is erop gericht leerlingen te begrijpen als unieke sociale wezens, die een persoonlijke relatie met de leraar hebben. (3) Contextuele legi-

timering is erop gericht de leefomstandigheden, het verleden, en de praktische levensbehoeften van leerlingen te betrekken bij onderwijssituaties. (4) Kritische legitimering is erop gericht leerlingen te bevrijden van beperkende ideeën over zichzelf en van de levensomstandigheden die deze ideeën inslijpen. (5) Functionele legitimering is erop gericht het maximale uit kinderen te halen in termen van hun prestaties op school. (6) Psychologische legitimering tenslotte, is erop gericht het gedrag van leerlingen te labelen in mentale of emotionele termen ten einde adequaat onderwijs te kunnen verzorgen. Dit gaat om ideaal typische beschrijvingen, individuele leraren blijken in de praktijk veelal combinaties van deze legitimatietypen te hanteren.

Deelstudie 4

De laatste studie handelt over de tweede subvraag: *Op welke wijze geven leraren uitdrukking aan de legitimatietypen wanneer ze hun leraar-leerling interacties interpreteren in termen van het belang van hun leerlingen?* Met betrekking tot deze tweede subvraag zijn verschillen tussen leraren in hun manier van het uitdrukken van de legitimatietypen, evenals verschillende institutionele contexten in acht genomen. Er zijn vier thema's waarop docenten van elkaar verschillen wanneer ze uitdrukking geven aan de legitimatietypen bij het interpreteren van hun leraar-leerling interacties: (1) uitgebreidheid, (2) inhoudelijkheid, (3) bedachtzaamheid, en (4) verantwoordelijkheid. *Uitgebreidheid* verwijst naar de range van componenten en legitimatietypen die leraren betrekken bij het interpreteren van hun leraar-leerling interacties. De meest opvallende bevinding binnen dit thema was dat de meerderheid van de leraren gebruik maakte van een smalle range van componenten en legitimatie-typen. *Inhoudelijkheid* verwijst naar de inhoudelijke gerichtheid van de componenten en legitimatietypen die leraren betrekken bij het interpreteren van hun leraar-leerling interacties. De resultaten wezen erop dat de meeste leraren in deze studie overwegend een instrumentele 'hier en nu' focus hebben in hun interpretaties. *Bedachtzaamheid* refereert aan de manier waarop leraren mogelijke legitimaties afwegen en beoordelen wanneer ze hun interacties interpreteren in termen van het belang van hun leerlingen. Opvallend was dat de meerderheid van leraren op een gesloten manier mogelijke legitimatietypen afwegen. *Verantwoordelijkheid* betreft de wijze waarop leraren verantwoording afleggen of nemen voor hun onderwijs wanneer ze hun leraar-leerling interacties interpreteren in termen van het belang van hun leerlingen. De resultaten lieten zien dat de meeste leraren bij het interpreteren van hun leraar-leerling interacties persoonlijk verantwoordelijkheid nemen voor hun onderwijs, in plaats van dat ze te kennen geven aan derden verantwoording af te moeten leggen.

Tevens kan uit de resultaten opgemaakt worden dat in deze deelstudie, leraren in het speciaal voortgezet onderwijs (1) een bredere range van componenten en legitimatietypen hanteren, (2) meer oog hebben voor de bredere sociale context van leerlingen, en (3) op een meer open manier het belang van hun leerlingen afwegen wanneer ze hun leraar-leerling interacties interpreteren, dan leraren in de andere institutionele contexten. Tenslotte wijzen de resultaten erop dat leraren die in dezelfde institutionele context werken de neiging hebben op eenzelfde manier uiting te geven aan de legitimatietypen in termen van de vier genoemde thema's.

Discussie

Het eerste punt van discussie is dat de gevonden legitimatietypen een bijdrage kunnen leveren aan het weer nadrukkelijker agenderen van pedagogische kwesties in het onderwijs. Dit in reactie op de stelling dat spreken over onderwijs in pedagogische termen goeddeels verdwenen is uit de dagelijkse onderwijspraktijk. De legitimatietypen voorzien in een taal die het mogelijk maakt in de onderwijspraktijk pedagogische vragen over de inhoud en doelen van het onderwijs op praktische wijze bespreekbaar te maken. Het is daarbij niet de intentie om de legitimatietypen te presenteren als een voorschrijvend model van hoe docenten hun interacties met hun leerlingen zouden moeten legitimeren. Uiteindelijk kan geen enkel voorschrijvend model leraren ontslaan van de verantwoordelijkheid waardeoordelen te vellen over wat goed of slecht, wenselijk of niet wenselijk is voor een bepaalde leerling in een bepaalde situatie.

Een tweede punt van discussie is verbonden aan de bevinding dat een relatief kleine groep van leraren in deze studie op een 'open' manier nadenkt over het belang van hun leerlingen, wanneer ze hun leraar-leerling interacties interpreteren. De stelling wordt ingenomen dat deze houding, die zich niet beperkt tot gesloten denkbeelden over wat in het belang van een leerling zou zijn, conditioneel is voor het daadwerkelijk kunnen afwegen van wat voor een bepaalde leerling op een bepaald moment in zijn of haar belang is.

Een derde punt van discussie is dat gedachtewisselingen over de pedagogische waarden en idealen die in het geding zijn bij de vraag wat volgens leraren het belang van de leerlingen dient, niet direct tot consensus zullen leiden. Hieruit volgt dat collegiaal en publiek debat over interpretaties van wat pedagogisch wenselijk is, noodzakelijk is. Het voeren van een dergelijk debat is niet alleen gebaat bij procedurele regels zoals die worden gehanteerd in reflectiecirkels of diverse intervisievormen, maar vereist juist ook een inhoudelijke positiebepaling; leraren zouden in staat moeten zijn hun pedagogische waarden en idealen te expliciteren en ter discussie durven te stellen in het collegiale en publieke debat.

In relatie tot deze drie discussiepunten, kunnen drie overwegingen geformuleerd worden die pleiten voor hernieuwde aandacht voor de inherent morele betekenis van het onderwijs in de lerarenopleiding. Ten eerste het onderkennen van de importantie om kwesties als de waardegeladenheid van onderwijs op de agenda van de lerarenopleiding terug te brengen: *een zaak van prioriteit*. Ten tweede hoe leraren-in-opleiding kunnen leren hun leraar-leerling interacties te onderzoeken in termen van hun eigen pedagogische waarden en idealen: *een zaak van begeleiding*. Ten derde het vertrouwd maken van leraren-in-opleiding met debatten over goed onderwijs en hen te ondersteunen bij het bepalen van hun positie in deze debatten: *een zaak van verantwoordelijkheid*.

Vervolgonderzoek zou een antwoord kunnen geven op de vraag of de legitimatietypen en de wijze waarop leraren hieraan uitdrukking geven, een bruikbaar kader bieden voor het duiden van interpretaties van leraren van hun leraar-leerling interacties in andere contexten dan onderzocht in dit onderzoek. Leraren die werkzaam zijn in andere onderwijssectoren, zoals het beroepsonderwijs, zouden andere

ideeën kunnen ontwikkelen over wat ze pedagogisch waardevol vinden voor hun leerlingen. Tevens is het aannemelijk dat leraren in andere culturele, religieuze of etnische contexten, andere referentiekaders hebben en als gevolg daarvan op een andere manier de inherent morele betekenis van hun onderwijs interpreteren. Een andere richting voor vervolgonderzoek is na te gaan of de aanname in dit onderzoeksproject dat de legitimatietypen leraren helpt de inherent morele betekenis van hun dagelijkse interacties met hun leerlingen te verbinden met 'grote theorieën', zoals de stromingen in de pedagogiek, op een feitelijke basis steunt.

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Curriculum Vitae

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Carlos Alberto van Kan was born in Villavicencio, Colombia on July 20th 1976. He attended secondary school at Melanchthon College in Rotterdam, where he graduated in 1994. That same year, he started a four-year teacher education program at the Ichthus University of Applied Sciences in the same city and received his teaching degree for primary education in 1998. He worked as a primary school teacher, teaching children aged 5 to 12, in De Poort from 1998 to 2001. During this period, he also studied Pedagogical and Educational Sciences at Leiden University with a specialisation in andragogy. In 2002, he received his Master of Education with honours. Following his graduation, he worked as an educational researcher until 2009 at PLATO, a centre for research and development in education and training.

Carlos started as a PhD candidate in February, 2006, at the Department of Inclusive and Special Education at the Fontys University of Applied Sciences, in cooperation with ICLON Leiden University Graduate School of Teaching. He was a member of the research groups 'Interactive Professionalism and Interactive Knowledge Construction in Inclusive and Special Education' (2006-2007) at the Department of Inclusive and Special Education at the Fontys University of Applied Sciences and 'Behaviour and Research in Educational Praxis' (2009-2011) at the Faculty of Education at the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences. Carlos' research project focused on the way teachers interpret their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest. He attended courses and master classes related to this research topic that were provided by ICO, the Dutch Interuniversity Center for Educational Research. In addition, he attended two doctoral courses organised by the international Pedagogy, Education and Praxis (PEP) research group. He presented his research at national (ORD, VELON) as well as international conferences (CARN, JURE, AARE, ECER). Furthermore, he is a member of the board of the Teaching and Teacher Education division of the Netherlands Educational Research Association.

Currently, Carlos is employed as a senior researcher at the Centre for Expertise in Vocational Education and Training (ecbo). His research focuses on teachers' professional development and the moral dimensions of teaching.

Dankwoord

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Wanneer ik mijn eigen interacties interpreteer met mijn begeleiders, de docenten die aan het promotieonderzoek hebben deelgenomen, collega's verbonden aan verschillende organisaties, vrienden en familie in termen van het belang van het voltooien van dit proefschrift, komen drie woorden in mijn gedachten: *vertroosting*, *onderwijzing* en *vermaning*. Ooit vertelde een dominee mij dat een goede preek alle drie deze aspecten in zich zou moeten dragen. Deze aspecten hebben mijns inziens ook zonder meer betrekking op de aard van de gesprekken die ik gedurende het promotietraject met jullie heb mogen voeren.

Vele van de interacties met jullie hebben mij *vertroosting* geboden, bijvoorbeeld wanneer er meer dan eens een beslissing over een ingediend artikel langs kwam met onnoemelijk veel punten voor revisie, of wanneer een maand van analysewerkzaamheden vooral duidelijk maakte welke weg niet ingeslagen moest worden. Tijdens diverse congressen en cursussen wanneer het de hoogste tijd werd de bar op te zoeken, kwamen vaak de humorvolle verhalen van herkenning die altijd een rijke bron van troost vormden. Mijn dank daarvoor. Tevens hebben de vele interacties met jullie *onderwijzing* geboden als het gaat om de inhoudelijke thematiek van mijn proefschrift en het proces van het verrichten van langlopend onderzoek. Jullie hebben een rijke leeromgeving geboden door mij toegang te verschaffen tot jullie ideeënwereld en sociale netwerken. Jullie kritische en constructieve commentaren op tussenproducten in verschillende stadia van het onderzoeksproces, zijn van onschatbare waarde geweest voor de succesvolle afronding van dit promotieonderzoek. Mijn dank daarvoor. Vanzelfsprekend waren er ook momenten van *vermaning* nodig waarin ik vriendelijk doch dringend aangespoord werd mijn proefschrift te voltooien. Wellicht een dominee uitgezonderd, zit niemand op een gebed zonder end te wachten. Het streng, eerlijk en helder communiceren van jullie verwachtingen heeft mij dikwijls over lastige drempels heen geholpen. Mijn dank daarvoor.

Het niet aflatende vertrouwen dat jullie hebben gesteld in mijn kunnen het proefschrift succesvol af te ronden, heeft uiteindelijk zijn vruchten afgeworpen. Het proefschrift is nu empirisch waarneembaar.

Carlos van Kan
Vorden, juli 2013

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