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Chapter 3

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

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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.

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 con-
cepts 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 Europe-
an pedagogy we encountered some challenges in our research. Firstly, continental
European pedagogy relies on 'grand theories' (e.g., the positivist, phenomenolog-
ical 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 artic-
ulate 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 theoret-
ical 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 exclu-
sively 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	*Geisteswissen-schaftliche* 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 additional 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 continental 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 categories 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?	
3 When	What do teachers find in their pupils' best interest concerning human development?	Cross-sectional 'why' component
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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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). Notwith-standing its original child-centred focus, we also interpreted the 'who' question as a 'by whom' question, because a first data analysis showed that teachers' under-standing 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 limita-tions 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

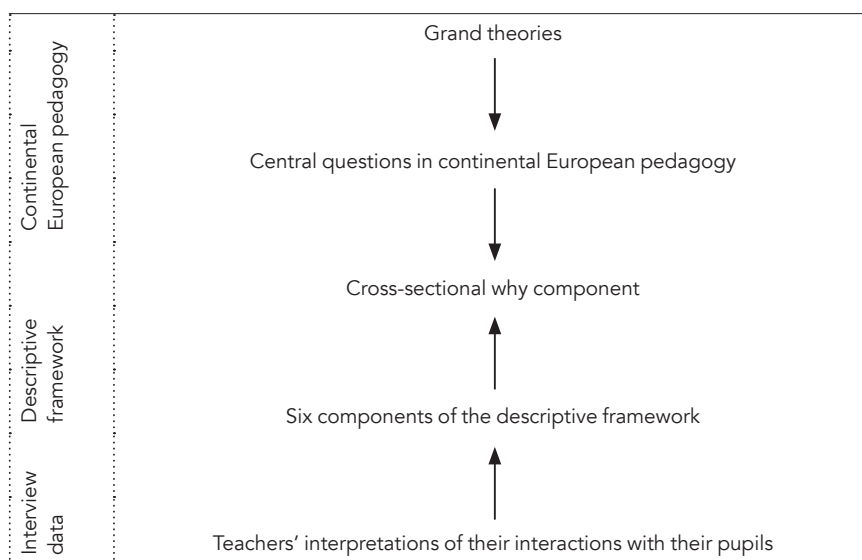| Components	Categories	
1 Who	· Child concept · Professional self-concept · Relationship	7 Cross-sectional why component
2 What	· Acquisition of subject matter · Acquisition of skills · Acquisition of virtues	
3 When	· Opening up subject matter acquisition · Opening up skill acquisition · Opening up 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.