Culturally responsive teaching in Dutch multicultural secondary schools

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Chapter 4

Unravelling expert teachers' culturally responsive teaching competence when facing a multicultural classroom context

"I find knowledge about cultures interesting, but the question is whether it is necessary. What I see is that people think they have knowledge about cultures in a general sense but what matters is individual interest in the students. I think that this is different from having prior knowledge about cultures."

--- Physics teacher, focus group 4 of this study ---

Abstract

Teachers' attitudes, knowledge, noticing skills, and response intentions regarding events in a multicultural classroom are examined. Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence is used to analyse reflections of five focus groups, each made up of three teachers. The group reflections were based on video clips of multicultural classrooms watched individually with a Head Mounted Display. Although the teachers initially mentioned that they had not seen any events in which culture might have played a role, as the conversation progressed, they did notice some. The theme of prejudice emerged in all groups. Culture-specific knowledge and stereotyping seemed to be closely linked.

This chapter is based on an article under review for publication:
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4.1 Introduction

Western societies, and consequently classrooms, are becoming increasingly multicultural. Besides differences in cognitive abilities and gender differences, multicultural classrooms are characterized by a diversity of students' migration histories, religions, native languages and social classes. Students identify with each of these cultural dimensions in some way, and these identifications may be different for each student (Banks, 2019). Teachers must be able to connect and engage with this cultural diversity to provide as many opportunities as possible for all students to learn and grow.

A rich conceptual landscape has emerged regarding how to teach diverse learners effectively. Many of the concepts share a social justice common ground, for example, *multicultural education* (Banks, 1993; 2014; 2019), *culturally responsive teaching* (Gay, 2010, 2018), and *intercultural competence* (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Bennet, 2004; Deardorff, 2006; Barret et al., 2014). These concepts all pursue equity, maximum achievement, and genuine acceptance of different cultures, but they focus on different aspects of teaching. Multicultural education relates to the entire school context, including the curriculum, teaching materials/ styles, and attitudes. Culturally responsive teaching emphasizes teachers' pedagogy that should consider students' cultural frames of reference, learning styles, cultural knowledge, and prior experiences in order to be relevant for all students. Intercultural competence focuses on behaving sensitively and effectively in intercultural interactions.

These concepts overlap in the way that they refer to teachers as "cultural brokers", defined by Gay (1993, p. 293) as someone who "thoroughly understands different cultural systems, is able to interpret cultural symbols from one frame of reference to another, is able to mediate cultural incompatibilities and knows how to build bridges or establish linkages across cultures that facilitate the instructional process". This definition interfaces with the definition of intercultural competence as "the ability to communicate and behave effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247-248, p. 255). Teachers'

intercultural competence can thus be seen as a crucial characteristic for culturally responsive teaching, which in turn is a prerequisite for multicultural education (Banks et al., 2005).

In line with general competence models (Blömeke et al., 2015), competence can be seen as a set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Deardorff (2006) described each of these components for intercultural competence in general terms and with a focus on student outcomes in the Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (PMIC). However, little is known about what these components specifically entail when focussing on teachers' culturally responsive teaching competence. With this study, we tried to gain more insight into these components in relation to culturally responsive teaching competence in a Dutch secondary education context. Besides scientific relevance, this study offers teacher educators insights into how to prepare their student teachers for teaching at multicultural classrooms.

4.2 Theoretical background

Deardorff's PMIC (2006) (Figure 4.1), which unravels intercultural competence into attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes, and external outcomes is used as basis for this study to explore components of culturally responsive teaching competence. However, culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education are examined as desired external outcomes.

Multicultural education is a broad concept with five dimensions: (1) content integration; (2) knowledge construction; (3) prejudice reduction; (4) equity pedagogy; and (5) an empowering school culture (Banks, 2014; 2019). In short, content integration refers to using examples and content from a variety of cultures. Knowledge construction is defined as the teacher's help in getting students to understand, investigate, and determine how knowledge is constructed and influenced by culture. The term prejudice reduction refers to helping students to develop positive racial attitudes and reduce prejudices. Equity pedagogy means modifying teaching methods to enable students from diverse cultural groups

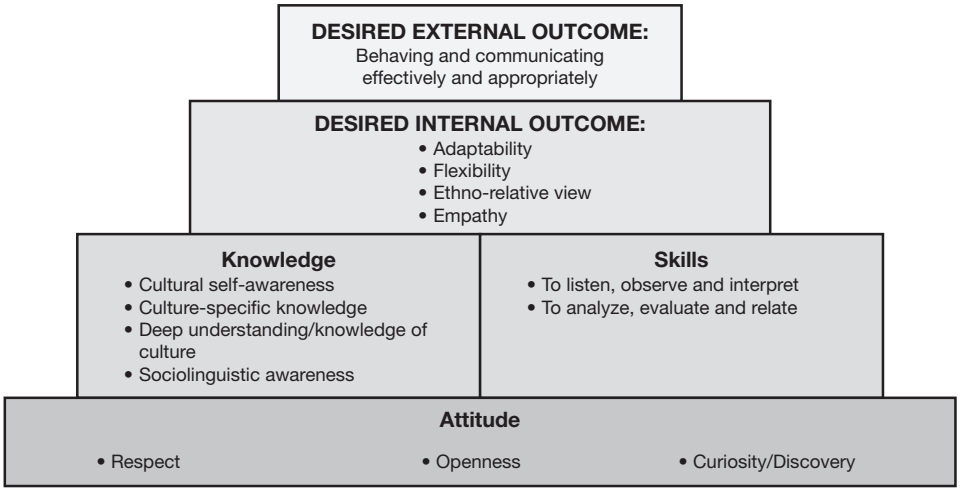

Figure 4.1
Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (PMIC)
Source: Deardorff (2006).

to achieve. Empowering school culture transcends the classroom and refers to making the school culture more equitable.

The multicultural education dimensions of equity pedagogy and content integration (Banks, 2014; 2019) are reflected in the concept of culturally responsive teaching, which refers to considering students' culture in teaching and adapting teaching so that it is relevant for all students (Gay, 2010, 2018). Indeed, the premise of culturally responsive teaching is that teachers should learn from their students' experiences and devise ways to integrate diverse perspectives into their teaching (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally responsive teaching emphasizes the connection with students' cultural experiences and accordingly the consideration of cultural differences in learning, including differences in interaction and communication styles, learning styles, languages, values, etc.

To be able to achieve this, teachers need to have specific underlying attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In the next sections, these are discussed in more detail, following the PMIS (Deardorff, 2006) and supplemented by insights from other scholars in the fields of intercultural competence, multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and general competencies.

4.2.1 Attitudes related to culturally responsive teaching

In the PMIC, Deardorff includes three attitudes: (1) respect, (2) openness, and (3) curiosity and discovery.

Regarding respect, scholars (e.g., Deardorff, 2006; Barret et al., 2014) refer to considering, appreciating, and valuing other cultures and cultural diversity. This implies a multicultural attitude, meaning that teachers acknowledge that there are cultural differences between students (Banks, 2005). This contrasts with a colourblind or culture-blind attitude which assumes that all students should be treated alike, irrespective of their background (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Hachfeld et al., 2011, 2015; Hahn et al., 2010; Milner, 2006). In a study regarding the conceptualization of tolerance (Thijs et al., 2021), respect is seen as the willingness to listen to others and question each other, without the urge to bridge differences in opinions and beliefs. However, these authors argue that there are limits to what can and should be respected. This is in line with Barret et al. (2014, p. 17): "There are limits to respect which should be accorded to actions: respect should be withheld from actions that violate the fundamental principles of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Actions that violate these principles should not be condoned on the grounds of cultural difference".

The second attitude mentioned by Deardorff (2006) is openness. This is defined as "openness to intercultural learning and people from other cultures and withholding judgement" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 254). Gay (2010) also argues that in order to teach culturally responsive, it is necessary to be open to diversity and value it as positive and enriching. In contrast, in a non-open attitude, cultural differences are denied or avoided or are perceived as frightening.

The third attitude for communicating and behaving responsively in a multicultural classroom context is curiosity and discovery. Deardorff describes this attitude as "being willing to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty". Barret et al. (2014, p.19) narrowed this description to "Being curious about and willing to learn from and about people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives from one's own" and "Being willing to question what is usually taken for granted as 'normal' according to one's previously acquired knowledge and experience". In the literature on culturally responsive classroom management,

it is recognized that teachers should be interested in students' customs and traditions at home, the languages they speak, and what they care about (Brown, 2004; Wubbels et al., 2006; Carter and Darling-Hammond, 2016; Theeuwes et al., 2019). Moreover, an essential aspect of culturally responsive teaching is that teachers are genuinely curious about students' funds of knowledge/ identity in order to integrate this knowledge into their teaching. Funds of knowledge encompass the skills and knowledge acquired by students outside the classroom, while funds of identity relate to those specific elements within students' funds of knowledge that they personally regard as significant aspects of their identity (Gay, 2018; Hogg & Volman, 2020; 't Gilde & Volman, 2021).

In sum, this study focuses on three main attitudes which refer to: (1) respect for all students and their experiences, implying a willingness to listen to others and question each other, without the urge to bridge differences in opinions and beliefs; (2) openness to other cultures, thereby withholding judgement; (3) being curious, interested and inquisitive regarding students' cultural backgrounds and being willing to learn from other cultural perspectives than one's own.

4.2.2 Knowledge related to culturally responsive teaching

Deardorff (2006) described four types of knowledge in the PMIC: (1) cultural self-awareness; (2) culture-specific information; (3) deep understanding and knowledge of culture; and (4) sociolinguistic awareness.

Cultural self-awareness is an essential foundation for culturally responsive pedagogy (Banks et al., 2005; 2014; Gay, 2010; 2018; Carter & Darling Hammond, 2013). It refers to teachers' awareness of themselves as cultural beings, meaning that they recognize that their worldview is not universal but influenced by their life experiences and other identity aspects such as gender, race/ethnicity, social class, and religion. Teachers who are culturally self-aware are also aware that multiple perspectives exist, which is a prerequisite for culturally responsive teaching. In addition, Barret et al. (2014, p.19) confirmed that teachers should be aware of their own and others' "assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, and overt and covert discrimination".

The second knowledge aspect is culture-specific information, which refers to teachers' general knowledge of the histories and cultures of diverse groups (Banks, 2019), including related beliefs, values, traditions, discourses, products, etc. (Barret et al., 2014; Gay, 2010; 2018). However, knowing static facts of different cultural groupings and superficial understandings of students' cultural backgrounds can lead to stereotyping (Banks et al., 2005; Banks, 2019; Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016). In addition to this general cultural knowledge, teachers should take students' funds of knowledge/ identity (Hogg & Volman, 2020; 't Gilde & Volman, 2021) into account by actively listening to their students and examining their assignments or contributions (Banks, 2014; 2019; Barret et al., 2014; Gay, 2010; 2018). This consideration of individual differences and understanding of the internal diversity and heterogeneity of cultural groups is in line with what Deardorff means by the third knowledge aspect, which she calls "deep understanding and knowledge of culture".

The fourth knowledge aspect mentioned by Deardorff (2006) is sociolinguistic awareness. This aspect is defined more specifically by Barret et al. (2014, pp. 19-20) as: "Communicative awareness, including awareness of the fact that other peoples' languages may express shared ideas in a unique way or express unique ideas difficult to access through one's own language(s), and awareness of the fact that people of other cultural affiliations may follow different verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions which are meaningful from their perspectives". From the perspectives of multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching, sociolinguistic awareness is related to teachers' understanding of how students master a language, both as native speakers and as a second language (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016). In addition, it is argued that teachers should positively value students' native languages and dialects (Banks, 2014).

In conclusion, we focus in this study on four knowledge aspects of teachers' intercultural competence: (1) cultural self-awareness, which implies knowing that there are various cultural perspectives other than one's own and being aware of one's own and others' assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices; (2) general cultural knowledge of for example histories, cultures, traditions, values and discourses of diverse groups; (3) deep cultural knowledge which refers to

having particular knowledge of each student, considering the intersection of other variables such as gender, religion, social class, etc. and the extent to which students feel connected to each of these variables (weak or strong affiliations); and (4) sociolinguistic awareness, which refers to knowing what students face in being taught in a language other than their native language and positively appreciating students' native languages.

4.2.3 Noticing skills related to culturally responsive teaching

The skills aspect is summarized in the PMIC (Deardorff, 2006) as "to listen, observe and interpret; to analyse, evaluate, and relate". In general competency models, noticing skills mediate between attitudes/ knowledge and responses to events in a classroom (Blömeke et al., 2015; Blömeke et al., 2020) and refer to the ability to identify and interpret classroom events in the complexity of the classroom context (Sherin et al., 2011; Van Es & Sherin, 2002). Classrooms are highly complex environments because many events take place, such as students looking at their phones or getting angry with each other, not reacting when addressed by the teacher, not understanding the subject matter, etc. Doyle (1986; 2006) refers to this classroom characteristic as *multidimensionality*. Moreover, these events often happen at once and at a rapid pace. These classroom characteristics are called *simultaneity* and *immediacy* (Doyle, 1986; 2006).

In a multicultural classroom context, it is imperative to be aware of and sensitive to students' cultural differences and, where relevant, consider culture in the interpretation of classroom events (Weinstein et al., 2003; Wubbels et al., 2006; Van Es et al., 2017; Theeuwes et al., 2019). Teachers should be aware of discrimination based on differences in, among other things, religion, values, and ethnicity (Shah & Coles, 2020), and should also take culture into account when, for example, students do not seem to understand instructions or when they drop out. It could be that some students do not understand the teacher's instructions or the information in the textbook because of their limited vocabulary or because their cultural knowledge does not match the mainstream expected cultural knowledge. Van Es and Hand (2017) call this noticing of classroom events through a cultural lens 'noticing for equity and equitable teaching practice'.

4.3 This study

The goal of the present study was to gain more insight into teachers' culturally responsive teaching competence in a Dutch secondary education context and to make this concept more concrete. Teachers' attitudes, knowledge, noticing skills, and response intentions regarding events in a multicultural classroom context were investigated by examining expert teachers' group reflections on events that they faced in Spherical Video-Based Virtual Reality (SV-VR) clips of multicultural classrooms.

The study was based on the PMIC (Deardorff, 2006) which we adapted for culturally responsive teaching in a multicultural classroom context (Figure 4.2). The external outcomes of the original model were translated into teachers' intended responses to events in a multicultural classroom since actual teaching in class was not addressed in this study.

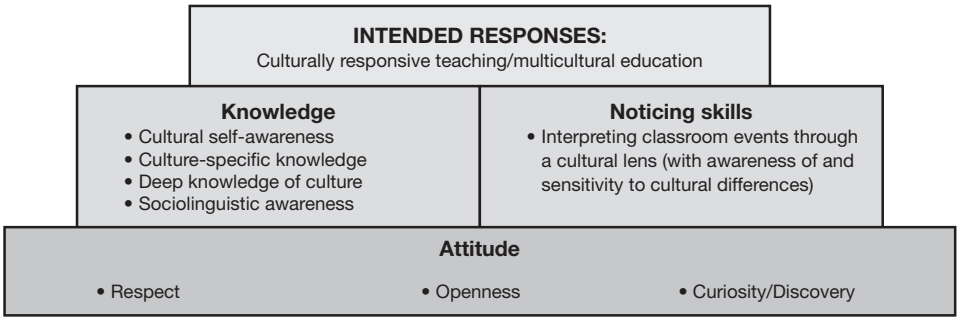

Figure 4.2
PMIC adapted for teachers' culturally responsive competence regarding teaching in a multicultural classroom context

Regarding the 'skills' component, we examined 'noticing through a cultural lens', which refers to noticing with awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences. In previous conceptualizations of noticing, the concept has been divided into identifications and interpretations (Sherin et al., 2011; Van Es & Sherin, 2002) but because noticing through a cultural lens is already a form of interpretation, the term noticing in this study only refers to interpretations.

The following research questions were examined:

1. How do teachers notice events in a multicultural classroom?
2. What attitudes and knowledge do teachers demonstrate when confronted with events in a multicultural classroom?
3. What intentions do teachers report to respond to events in a multicultural classroom?

4.4 Method

Expert teachers individually watched three Spherical Video-Based Virtual Reality (SV-VR) clips of multicultural classrooms viewed through a Head Mounted Display (HMD). These individual experiences were followed by focus group reflections. The SV-VR clips were used as stepping stones for the focus group reflections. The group reflections were primed by an opening question that focused on looking at events in a multicultural classroom through a cultural lens. Teachers' noticing, attitudes, knowledge and intended responses regarding events that were interpreted as culture-related were analysed.

4.4.1 Participants

The participants were 15 teachers teaching different disciplines in secondary schools in the province of South Holland in the Netherlands. Ten (5 females) were teachers in an urban context, of which nine were teaching at the same multicultural school. The other five teachers (2 females) were working in five different schools in a rural region. These five schools had less diverse student populations than the urban schools. All but two rural school- teachers had experience with teaching multicultural classes (see Table 4.1)

Regarding the urban schools, three female teachers had a Moroccan and Muslim cultural-religious background. The other teachers had a native Dutch cultural background. Teachers' ages ranged from 23-56 with an average age of 39. Most teachers (n=8) were in their thirties and only one teacher was in his twenties.

Five focus groups, each made up of three teachers, were formed for this study. The teachers in the first three groups had attended a professional development program at a large Dutch university to become teacher mentors. They were recruited through their teacher trainer, who is a colleague of the first author. The teachers in the fourth and fifth focus group were recruited by approaching the school coordinator of an urban school who the first author knows from her network as a teacher educator. Table 4.1 summarizes participants' characteristics by focus group.

Participants received an information letter about the study and actively consented to participate and to the use of video and sound recordings. The study was carried out with the permission of the ICLON ethics committee with number IREC_ICLON 2019-13.

Table 4.1
Participants' characteristics

Group*	School area	Gender	Age	Years of experience	Cultural-ethnic background
1 Dylan	Rural	Male	23	0	Dutch
Nel	Rural	Female	56	> 4	Dutch
Marc	Rural	Male	31	> 4	Dutch
2 Melanie	Urban	Female	49	> 4	Dutch
Chris	Rural	Male	35	0	Dutch
William	Rural	Male	32	> 4	Dutch
3 Paul	Urban	Male	34	2-3	Dutch
Helen	Urban	Female	52	> 4	Dutch
Ken	Urban	Male	36	> 4	Dutch
4 Rodger	Urban	Male	48	2-3	Dutch
Maryam	Urban	Female	35	> 4	Moroccan
Layla	Urban	Female	41	> 4	Moroccan
5 Bushra	Urban	Female	40	> 4	Moroccan
Frank	Urban	Male	37	> 4	Dutch
Luc	Urban	Male	35	> 4	Dutch

*The names are fictional names.

4.4.2 Procedure and data

First, the participants had an individual immersive experience (Ferdig & Kosko, 2020) in an authentic and realistic multicultural classroom via three Spherical Video-Based Virtual Reality (SV-VR) clips viewed through a Head Mounted Display (HMD). These SV-VR clips of approximately two minutes each were developed for this study and installed on 20 HMDs (Oculus Go). Each clip simulated a common multicultural classroom with students from different ethnic-cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. Events occur in the classroom that can be encountered in all classes such as students using their mobile phones, wearing a cap and/or jacket, leaving the classroom without asking permission from the teacher, a boy at the back of the classroom standing up, and joining another group, two girls with headscarves turning to another girl without a headscarf sitting in another group, a boy with an Asian ethnic background standing up to get a dictionary. Because of the multicultural context, all these events could potentially be interpreted through a cultural lens.

Use of the HMD and the teaching context were explained at the start of the research process. Teachers were told that they would see a 9th-grade class after an assignment on youth drug use had been explained to them. In the first clip, the students were assigned to the table groups by the teacher while in the second and third clips, the students were allowed to decide for themselves who they wanted to work with. The assignment involved reading, answering questions, and discussing the subject among themselves. The participants would be at the front of the class to observe the students while they were doing their assignment in their table groups.

Second, the teachers discussed their experience as a teacher in the SV-VR classes in their focus groups. We chose to use focus groups because we wanted the data to emerge from the interaction of the group to avoid interviewer bias (Cohen et al., 2011). Focus groups are useful to "gather data on attitudes, values and opinions" and to "empower participants to speak out" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 436).

At the start of the focus group reflections, the teachers were primed to look through a cultural lens at events they had identified in the SV-VR-clips by

addressing the question: Have you seen any events where it would be relevant to consider students' cultural background? They were also asked to think about two additional questions: 1) What do you think might be going on in this event? and 2) How would you respond to this event? These questions were intended as stepping stones for a deeper conversation about teaching in a multicultural context in which teachers' attitudes and knowledge would also emerge. The time scheduled for the group reflections was 20 minutes. The reflections were recorded.

4.4.3 Coding and analysis

To examine teachers' noticing, attitudes, knowledge, and response intentions when confronted with events in a multicultural classroom, the recordings of the five focus groups were transcribed verbatim. Based on the coding scheme shown in Table 4.2, component-level phrases, sentences, or paragraphs, within each speech turn of the participants were analysed. Subsequently, only coded units that were in some way interpreted as culture-related were selected.

The codes in the coding scheme related to attitudes, knowledge and intended responses, were derived deductively from the interpretation of and additions to Deardorff's PMIC as described in the theoretical framework. To structure teachers' elaborated interpretations of events that were noticed as culture-related, two codes were used that emerged inductively: *student learning* and *student interaction* (Table 4.2).

The events that teachers mentioned in answer to the question which events they had seen in the SV-VR-clips in which they found it relevant to consider students' cultural background were highlighted to indicate noticing of culture-related events. Next, teachers' elaborations on these culture-related interpretations were coded. These were triggered by the question: "What do you think might be going on?".

Regarding intended responses, teachers' statements referring to the question "How would you respond to this event" were coded and statements that referred to other explicitly mentioned intended responses, such as examples of how they respond to events in their own classrooms, were also coded.

Table 4.2
Coding scheme

PMIC component	Code	Definitions/ examples
Noticing skills	Student learning	Interpretations related to students' learning processes, e.g., understanding/not understanding the teachers' instruction; on/off-task behaviour.
	Student interaction	Interpretations related to the mutual relationships and interactions between students, e.g., Students not collaborating with each other; bullying; discriminating.
Attitudes	Respect	Willingness to listen to others and question each other, without the urge to bridge differences in opinions and beliefs. "Actions that violate the fundamental principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law should not be condoned on the grounds of cultural differences "(Barret et al. (2014, p. 17).
	Openness	"The experience of one's own beliefs and behaviours as just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities" (Bennett, 2004, p. 62).
	Curiosity/ discovery	"Being curious about and willing to learn from and about people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives from one's own" and "Being willing to question what is usually taken for granted as 'normal' according to one's previously acquired knowledge and experience" (Barret et al., 2014, p.19).
Knowledge	Cultural self-awareness	Being aware that one's worldview is not universal but influenced by life experiences, culture etc.
	General cultural knowledge	Knowledge of the histories, values, beliefs, practices, products, and discourses of diverse cultural groups.
	Deep cultural knowledge	Considering individual differences and understanding the internal diversity and heterogeneity of cultural groups.
	Sociolinguistic awareness	Teachers' knowledge regarding teaching non-Dutch native-speaking students. Positively valuing students' native languages and dialects.
Intended responses	Content integration	Using examples and content from a variety of cultures.
	Knowledge construction	Making students aware that knowledge is constructed and influenced by culture.
	Prejudice reduction	Helping students to develop positive racial attitudes and reduce prejudices.
	Equity pedagogy	Modifying teaching methods to enable students from diverse cultural groups to achieve.

Regarding the attitudes and knowledge components, we did not ask directional questions but relied on attitudes and knowledge components that emerged during the group reflections. These components were highlighted and then coded.

One reflection group conversation was analysed by the first author using the coding scheme and then discussed with the other authors until a consensus of all authors was reached. The rest of the group reflections were analysed and coded by the first author and the findings of these analyses were then discussed with the other authors.

4.5 Results

The results are described across the five focus groups, following the sequence of the research questions.

4.5.1 Teachers' noticing of events in a multicultural classroom

In all focus groups, teachers appeared cautious about explicitly interpreting classroom events as culture-related. They mentioned that all the events they had seen could also occur in more culturally homogeneous classrooms. They did, however, mention a total of 12 events where it might have been relevant to consider culture when interpreting the event. Table 4.3 presents these as potentially culture-related events and the elaborated interpretations that were given for these events.

Events 3, 7, 10, and 12 were only interpreted as culture-related but no further explanation was given. However, event 3, which referred to students who were not cooperating, was mentioned in three of the five focus groups as a possible culture-related event and event 7 (a boy walking out of the classroom) was mentioned in two focus groups.

Table 4.3
Noticing of culture-related events

Events that were noticed as culture-related	Group	Elaborated interpretations	Explanation of the interpretations
1. Two girls with headscarves left their table group and talked to students from another table group.	1	Student interaction	The girls were seeking out classmates with similar beliefs.
	3	Student interaction	Just friends chatting with each other. Gossiping?
	4	Student interaction	The girls just like to sit next to each other.
2. A boy picked up a dictionary from the teacher's desk.	2	Student learning	The dictionary is needed because the boy is not a Dutch native speaker.
	3	Student learning	Dutch-language deficiency because the boy is not a Dutch native speaker
	5	Student learning	It is probably an ISK[1] class and thus students have Dutch as a second language.
3. Some students did not cooperate.	3	--	--
	4	--	--
	5	--	--
4. Some students were off-task.	1	Student learning	The assignment topic does not interest some students with diverse cultural backgrounds.
	2	--	--
5. A boy at the back moved to another place.	2	Student interaction	The boy might be excluded because he has a different cultural background.
	3	Student learning	He had to move to equalize the size of the groups. Or something else?
6. A group of boys at the back were wearing caps and ear buds.	3	Student interaction	These are 'tough guys'.
	5	Student interaction	Street culture.
7. A boy walked out of the classroom.	2	--	--
	3	--	--
8. Drug abuse as topic of the assignment.	1	Student learning	The assignment topic does not interest some students with diverse cultural backgrounds.
9. Students with a non-native-Dutch background were ignoring each other.	1	Student learning	Because of their cultural background, the students were not allowed to talk about this topic.
10. A black girl with a red shirt at the back of the class seemed to be working alone while the other three students were busy working together.	3	--	--
11. Boys and girls were sitting separately.	4	Student interaction	Boys and girls do not mix because this is not allowed in their culture.
12. A girl was wearing a headscarf.	5	--	--

Teachers' Interpretations related to student learning

Interpretations of events 2, 4, 8, and 9 were related to student learning. Event 5 was interpreted as both related to student learning and student interaction.

First, the interpretations that referred to the boy picking up a dictionary from the teacher's desk (event 2), were all related to a Dutch language deficiency due to the student's native language being other than Dutch. A reference was also made to possibility that the class in the SV-VR clips could be an International Transition Class (ISK class[1]).

Second, students' off-task behaviour (event 4), and students with non-Dutch-native backgrounds ignoring each other (event 9), were interpreted by Nel as a mismatch between the subject of the assignment and students' cultural backgrounds. According to her, students from certain cultural groups are not allowed to talk about drugs and alcohol and therefore did not get down to work.

Finally, the event where the boy moved to another place (event 5), was interpreted by a participant in group 3 as the teacher wanting to equalize the size of the groups because that table group had one more student than the group in front. The other teachers wondered if there might be another reason.

Teachers' interpretations related to student interactions

The interpretations of the event where two girls wearing headscarves talked to students from another table group (event 1) were related by focus groups 1, 3, and 4 to student interactions. In reflection group 1 an explicit culture-related explanation was reported, namely that the girls sought classmates with similar beliefs. In focus groups 3 and 4, the teachers mentioned that the girls were friends and were chatting with each other. A possible option of gossiping was also given.

Regarding the event where a group of boys at the back were wearing caps and ear buds (event 6), the interpretation of tough macho and self-profiling behaviour was mentioned. The teachers in group 5 referred to this behaviour as street culture. They indicated that they recognized this behaviour from the training on street culture they had had the week before.

Maryam (group 4) interpreted the separate seating of boys and girls in the clips where students were allowed to decide for themselves who they wanted to

work with, as because their cultural background did not allow them to sit next to someone of the opposite sex.

Finally, the event where the boy moved to another place (event 5), was interpreted by reflection group 2 as that the boy might be being excluded by the boys in his table group because of cultural differences between them.

4.5.2 Teachers' attitudes when confronted with events in a multicultural classroom

Referring to the codes mentioned in the coding scheme (Table 4.2), attitudes of respect and curiosity/ discovery were only discussed in focus groups 1 and 4. The attitude of openness was not made explicit during the conversations.

Respect

In reflection group 1, the attitude of respect was revealed in response to the discussion regarding teaching controversial topics. Dylan used firm, authoritarian language such as 'manipulating', 'influencing', and 'forcing students' to express his rejection of certain cultural worldviews and his view that students should adopt the mainstream worldview. He indicated that he felt it was his duty as a biology teacher to change 'deficit' worldviews when these came up in his classroom and force students to discuss topics that they did not want to talk about because of, for example, their religion. He stated, for example: "*It is not even informing; it is literally manipulating students… I really feel that it is my duty to adjust students' deficit worldviews*". This could be interpreted as a disrespectful attitude with a sense of superiority regarding other cultural worldviews than his own. However, throughout the conversation, Dylan explicitly indicated that he did not think that his own opinion was always the best: "*My opinion is not always the best, but with some cultures, I think some opinions are not OK…. For example, in some cultures, homosexuality is punishable by death. I am against that opinion and then I will really try to influence the students, I will do my best to do that*". With this statement, Dylan seemed to refer implicitly to respect but with limitations regarding what opinions can be tolerated.

In contrast to Dylan's statements, Marc and Nel's statements explicitly revealed a respectful attitude toward cultural perspectives other than their own. For example, Marc said: "*I think it is important to leave everyone to their own values. Everyone has his own opinion, whether it is right or wrong. Everyone reasons from his own cultural perspective*". Nel even went a step further. Her statements referred not only to having respect for other cultural perspectives but also to adapting to students' cultural perspectives when necessary. She gave the example that teachers should think about what topics can and cannot be discussed in class, depending on their students' cultural backgrounds.

Curiosity/ discovery

In both focus groups, the attitude of curiosity/ discovery emerged based on a conversation about teachers' attitudes toward the need for cultural knowledge when teaching multicultural classrooms. Three different attitudes could be distinguished across groups 1 and 4: (1) students' cultural backgrounds need not be discovered; (2) it is important to have a curious attitude regarding students' cultural backgrounds; and (3) it is important to learn about/ discover different cultural orientations and perspectives.

At one extreme of the continuum, Dylan (group 1) mentioned that he did not see the added value of considering students' cultural backgrounds. At the other extreme, Maryam and Layla (group 4), who both have a Moroccan-Islamic background, were adamant that teachers should learn about different cultural perspectives and norms in order to better understand their students. Maryam stressed that student teachers should be taught about those different cultural perspectives during teacher education. Rodger disagreed with her. In his opinion, pursuing this kind of generic cultural knowledge is not desirable because it could foster prejudices.

However, all teachers except Dylan, emphasized the importance of having a curious attitude regarding the cultural backgrounds of the students in their classrooms. For example, Layla mentioned that teachers should ask students about their habits and traditions at home and about the reason for some behaviour that does not conform to the teacher's norms.

4.5.3 Teachers' knowledge when confronted with events in a multicultural classroom

Cultural self-awareness

Nel (group 1) mentioned an example in which it became clear that she realized that her perspective on what she labels as "normal" is culturally determined and therefore not universal. She reported: *"In our culture, open-mindedness and negotiation are highly valued, while in other cultures a more reserved attitude can be seen as valuable, and negotiating is not done".*

General cultural knowledge

Dylan (group 1) and Chris (group 2), who both had no experience with teaching multicultural classrooms, explicitly indicated that they knew little about cultural diversity. Dylan stated: *"I live in a white neighbourhood and teach in a white school. I do not know the group well".* Chris mentioned that he does not experience the diversity in the SV-VR class in his own classes.

In contrast, in focus groups 3, 4, and 5, which consisted of expert teachers from the same urban school, teachers' expertise on this issue became apparent. For example, Paul and Helen (group 3), and Rodger (group 4) mentioned that students with the same native-language background often group together. Another example referred to the taboo regarding alcohol and drug use in some cultures and that these subjects are therefore too fraught to be discussed in a classroom context (Nel, group 1 and Layla, group 4). Moreover, Frank (group 5) mentioned that the students in his classes have different interests from those in classes with mainly students from a Dutch background. For example, his students show a strong interest in the history and current affairs of the Middle East.

In group 3, teachers' cultural knowledge tended toward generalizations. For example, Moroccan and Turkish students were stereotyped. This was prompted by the conversation regarding the situation with the dictionary that triggered a discussion regarding Dutch language deficits. For example, Paul and Helen stereotyped by saying that Moroccan students speak Dutch better than Turkish students and that the influence of the culture of the country of origin is stronger among Turkish students than among Moroccan students.

Deep cultural knowledge

In focus groups 1, 4, and 5, examples were provided of deep cultural knowledge. For example, Nel (group 1) used an example to illustrate that situations should not be judged from a cultural perspective only. She reported: "*Regarding homosexuality, there are also children with a native-Dutch cultural background who do not accept it*". Rodger (group 4) acknowledged intersections within cultures and weak or strong affiliations regarding each of these intersecting variables. He mentioned to Maryam and Layla: "*I know that you are Muslim, but I do not know how you interpret Islam and how strict you are in it*". Frank (group 5) was aware of the importance of looking at culture from a broader perspective than just an ethnocultural one. He indicated that street culture should also be involved in the conversation about cultural differences in the classroom.

Sociolinguistic awareness

Melanie (group 2) and Bushra (group 5) gave examples where it became clear that they were aware that many students in multicultural classrooms have Dutch as a second language and need adequate tools, such as a dictionary, to learn well. Bushra also referred to differences between students in communication styles. Helen mentioned that she was learning Papiamentu, the language that many of her Antillean students speak. By learning the language of many of her students, Helen is showing respect for her students' native language. Moreover, it possibly helps her empathize with her students, many of whom are having to learn Dutch as a second language.

4.5.4 Teachers' intentions regarding how to respond to events in a multicultural classroom

Teachers mentioned a few responses to the culture-related events they identified in the SV-VR clips, which were mostly general comments such as "I would ask what is going on". However, the identified events also triggered other events that they encountered in their teaching practice. Regarding these events, teachers gave more specific responses. These responses could be categorized under the multicultural education dimensions of knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, and equity pedagogy.

Knowledge construction

In reflection group 1, teachers discussed teaching controversial topics in the multicultural classroom. The discussion focused on exposing students to multiple perspectives when discussing such topics. The three teachers seemed to approach this in different ways.

Nel reported that she finds it important that students with a non-Dutch-native background become informed about the mainstream perspective which might be different from the perspective that they get from home so that they can form their own opinion. However, she did not address exposing native-Dutch students to other cultural perspectives than the mainstream to broaden their perspectives on which they can form their opinions. Marc's statements referred more to what Banks (2014; 2019) is aiming at with the dimension of knowledge construction because he explicitly mentioned that he would expose all students to different worldviews. Dylan reported that he would not pay attention to other cultural perspectives on a topic like evolution. He would say to his students: *"This is my story, this is just biology that has been investigated, you may know it differently. You need to know it for your exam, but what you believe is fine"*. This approach gives little room for multiple perspectives and could be seen as contradictory to the goals of multicultural education.

Prejudice reduction

In focus groups 2 and 3, examples were mentioned that contradicted the examples presented by Banks to develop students' positive racial attitudes and behaviours and reduce prejudices (Banks, 2014). For example, in reflection group 2, William reported a response to the event where the boy at the back moves to another place. He mentioned that he would first ask the boy about the reason for his move. Then, if the boy said that he felt left out, William would allow him to change places. In reflection group 3, the tendency for students of similar cultural backgrounds to group together was discussed. Paul reported that he allows this in his classes.

Equity pedagogy

Examples that could refer to equity pedagogy were mentioned in three focus groups (groups 1,3 and 5).

In reflection group 1, all three teachers mentioned that they would consider students' cultural backgrounds when discussing controversial subjects, but they did this in different ways. Marc would address the topic but would approach it indirectly. He would adjust his teaching method so that all students remained engaged. For example, regarding the topic of drug use or misogyny, he suggested presenting propositions regarding these topics or showing a video clip of a rapper who promotes drugs and uses misogynistic language and images after which students could discuss this with each other. Dylan would like to lead a group discussion in class regarding the subject and Nel would avoid these subjects to prevent cultural conflicts in class.

In reflection group 3, in response to the dictionary event, the participants discussed how they deal with students whose first language is not Dutch and who are not proficient Dutch speakers. In particular, they discussed whether students should be allowed to speak their native language in class. Helen and Paul both reported that they generally do not allow this because this can feel unsafe for the other students who do not understand them and allowing it would not help them to improve their Dutch. However, they did make exceptions, for example, when students with the same language background can help each other. Paul also reported that he sometimes decides to speak English with a student because students often understand English better than Dutch

The teachers in reflection group 5 addressed 'macho-behaviour' in the classroom, which they related to street culture. They mentioned for example that students enter the classroom with coats, caps and ear buds. Bushra reported that she would tackle this at the door: no one enters the classroom with caps, coats and ear buds or phones. If she saw this again during class, she would repeat the instructions very clearly.

4.6 Discussion and Conclusions

4.6.1 Discussion

The aim of this study was to gain more insight into components of culturally responsive teaching and make this concept more practical for a multicultural classroom context. We examined how teachers noticed, what attitudes and knowledge were revealed in the focus group discussions, and how they would respond to events in a multicultural classroom.

Teacher noticing in a multicultural classroom

Teachers in this study initially did not interpret classroom events through a cultural lens when explicitly asked to mention culture-related events. They indicated that these events could occur in all classrooms and that they thought it irrelevant to consider culture. These teachers appeared to have a culture-blind attitude regarding cultural diversity (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Hachfeld et al., 2011, 2015; Hahn et al., 2010; Milner, 2006). However, during the group reflections, when they were not being asked specifically to consider it, the teachers did mention events that they related to culture. Some interpretations of these events were further explained but some were not. When further elaborated, the teachers considered culture in interpretations related to students' learning and students' interactions. Thus, it seems that the expert teachers in this study were aware of and sensitive to cultural differences regarding these dimensions of teaching. However, because the participants were observing students in the SV-VR classroom, no interaction with students was possible. No conclusions can therefore be drawn regarding teachers' awareness of cultural factors in the interpersonal relationships between their students and themselves.

Teachers' culturally responsive attitudes

Teachers' attitudes of respect and curiosity/discovery emerged in two group conversations. Regarding respect, one teacher seemed to have a disrespectful attitude, whilst also providing explicit examples of a respectful attitude toward cultural perspectives and orientations other than his own. However, as the

conversation progressed, it became clear that he did respect other cultural perspectives but that he rejected certain cultural beliefs that violate human rights. This corresponds with the definitions of tolerance formulated by Thijs et al. (2021) and Barret et al. (2014), which set limits to respect.

In line with the essential attitude of curiosity mentioned in the concept of culturally responsive classroom management (Brown, 2004; Carter and Darling-Hammond, 2016; Theeuwes et al., 2019; van Tartwijk et al., 2009; Wubbels, den Brok, Veldman & van Tartwijk, 2006), almost all teachers who discussed attitudes mentioned the importance of being curious and willing to discover more about their students' backgrounds, including their cultural backgrounds. In other words, they emphasised the importance of being curious regarding students' funds of knowledge/ identity (Gay, 2018; Hogg & Volman, 2020; 't Gilde & Volman, 2021). However, two teachers with a Moroccan cultural background expressed the view that this curious and discovering attitude is important but that teachers should also learn about different cultural perspectives and norms in general. According to them, teachers should learn about different cultural groups during teacher education, although, according to another teacher, this kind of general knowledge might lead to prejudices.

Teachers' cultural knowledge

Regarding the knowledge that teachers mentioned concerning being confronted with events in a multicultural classroom, all knowledge aspects mentioned in Deardorff's model (2006) were discussed. However, the general cultural knowledge that was mentioned tended toward stereotyping. For example, generalized comparisons were made between Turkish and Moroccan students regarding Dutch language proficiency and degree of integration into Dutch society, insinuating that Moroccan parents and students are better integrated than Turkish parents and students and that they speak better Dutch.

Teachers' response intentions regarding events in a multicultural classroom

Finally, with respect to teachers' intentions regarding how to respond to events in a multicultural classroom, participants mostly reported intentions based on their

own classroom practices. These examples mainly focused on equity pedagogy but also examples of knowledge construction were given and counter examples of prejudice reduction.

First, examples of equity pedagogy arose from a conversation regarding how to deal with controversial topics in a multicultural classroom. An example referred to modifying the teaching method, by relating the content to students' funds of identity so that all students in the class could participate. This is a clear example of what Banks (2014; 2019) means by equity pedagogy. However, some examples did not fit equity pedagogy. A teacher for example reported that she takes students' cultural backgrounds and differences into account by not addressing sensitive topics. Equity pedagogy, however, is about adapting teaching so that all students can learn from it. By avoiding controversial subjects, students are being deprived of a learning opportunity. Likewise, another teachers' example of leading a class discussion to discuss a controversial topic is not necessarily an example of an adjustment being made so that all students feel included. When a teacher for example is not open to cultural perspectives other than his own, the class discussion can be pushed in a direction in which students' perspectives are not taken into account.

Second, equity pedagogy examples were mentioned regarding how to respond to students who speak their native language in class. All teachers that discussed this topic said that they did not allow this in their classes. This seems at odds with equity pedagogy which implies that teachers should show respect for students' native languages and dialects and use these as vehicles for learning the mainstream language (Banks, 2014; 2019; Snyder & Varghese, 2019). The reasons the teachers gave for not allowing this were to enable them to monitor a safe classroom climate and to encourage the students to learn Dutch. They felt that, if the students did not understand each other, it would be easy for them to gossip about each other and speaking their native languages in class would not help students to improve their Dutch. Teachers also reported that they made exceptions: students were allowed to speak their native language to help each other. Thus, it seems that these teachers do respect students' native languages and let them use it where appropriate.

Third, a classroom management example regarding equity pedagogy was mentioned. Bushra's response about how she addresses students wearing jackets and caps corresponds to a principle mentioned in the literature regarding dealing with street culture (El Hadioui et al., 2019). In interviews with students who bring street culture into the classroom, El Hadioui et al. (2019) found that students can switch to school codes most easily when teachers not only name the normative frames but, more importantly, maintain and protect them. Thus, it can be argued that Bushra's response is a form of equity pedagogy from a classroom management perspective.

Examples regarding multicultural education dimensions other than equity pedagogy (Banks, 2014; 2019) also came up in a few conversations but not many. The examples given regarding prejudice reduction were not in line with strategies mentioned by Banks (2014; 2019) to curb prejudices and foster positive attitudes and behaviours regarding other cultures. According to Banks (2014; 2019), for example, organizing cooperative learning activities in which students of different cultural backgrounds can work together could contribute to reducing prejudice among students. However, some teachers observed a tendency for students of similar cultural backgrounds to group together. They reported that they allow that in their classes. This might be a missed opportunity for prejudice reduction.

4.6.2 Limitations and directions for future research

Although we pursued ecological validity by immersive HMD experiences and focus group reflections, gained more insight into different perspectives per component of culturally responsive teaching competence, and found some interesting frictions between and within different components, this study still has some limitations.

First, the results cannot be generalized because of the limited number of participants and because teachers' group reflections occurred at one moment and in one group composition. The group composition may have influenced the conversation. Future research could consider this limitation by including individual teacher reflections or reflections at multiple times or by varying the group composition when teachers reflect in groups.

Second, the openness of the research design could be a limitation. Because no explicit questions were asked regarding teachers' attitudes and knowledge, these components of culturally responsive teaching competence could have remained underexposed. In addition, regarding teacher noticing, four events were mentioned as possibly culture-related but were not further explained by the teachers. Because we did not intervene as researchers, we could not ask them to explain these interpretations, so potentially interesting results did not emerge. In follow-up research, a chairperson could be appointed for the focus groups to monitor the group reflections and ask in-depth questions where necessary.

4.6.3 Conclusion and implications for practice

The theme of prejudice and stereotyping recurred in all group conversations. Teachers in this study seemed more likely to adopt a culture-blind perspective and thus not to want to emphasize students' cultural backgrounds because they felt this could encourage prejudice and stereotyping. Nevertheless, several teachers did use generalized or incorrect knowledge due to bias regarding some cultural groups when interpreting events in a multicultural context or they did not seem actively focused on preventing prejudice between students.

General cultural knowledge and stereotyping seem to be closely associated. This raises a dilemma: what cultural knowledge is relevant to consider regarding events in a multicultural classroom, and how can teachers be prevented from stereotyping based on this knowledge? The answer to this question may be found in Deardorff's PMIC (2006).

According to Deardorff's PMIC (2006), attitudes of respect, openness, and curiosity/discovery are a fundamental starting point for enhancing the other components of culturally responsive teaching competence. Teacher education programs could focus on teachers developing these attitudes toward their students' whole background, rather than on gaining general cultural knowledge. Fostering these attitudes could help teachers to perceive each student as a complete individual, with cultural background being an essential part of their identity but still just one of many characteristics related to their identity. Teachers must learn to look through a cultural lens at students' behaviour and classroom

events but at the same time look through other relevant lenses such as students' socio-emotional and cognitive development and their social position within the classroom. This touches on the knowledge component of deep cultural knowledge, which refers to considering individual differences and understanding the internal diversity and heterogeneity of cultural groups.

Besides, to make teachers aware of their own perspectives and possible cultural biases, teacher education and professional development programs could focus on the knowledge component of cultural self-awareness. The use of SV-VR clips of multicultural classrooms, viewed with an HMD could be a valuable tool to initiate reflection on these attitude and knowledge components.

Note

[1]An *Internationale schakelklas (ISK)* is a special program in secondary education in which pupils get additional lessons in Dutch for one or two years before moving on to regular classes.
(https://www.thehagueinternationalcentre.nl/government-funded-dutch-schools)