



**Universiteit  
Leiden**  
The Netherlands

## **Culturally responsive teaching in Dutch multicultural secondary schools**

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### **Citation**

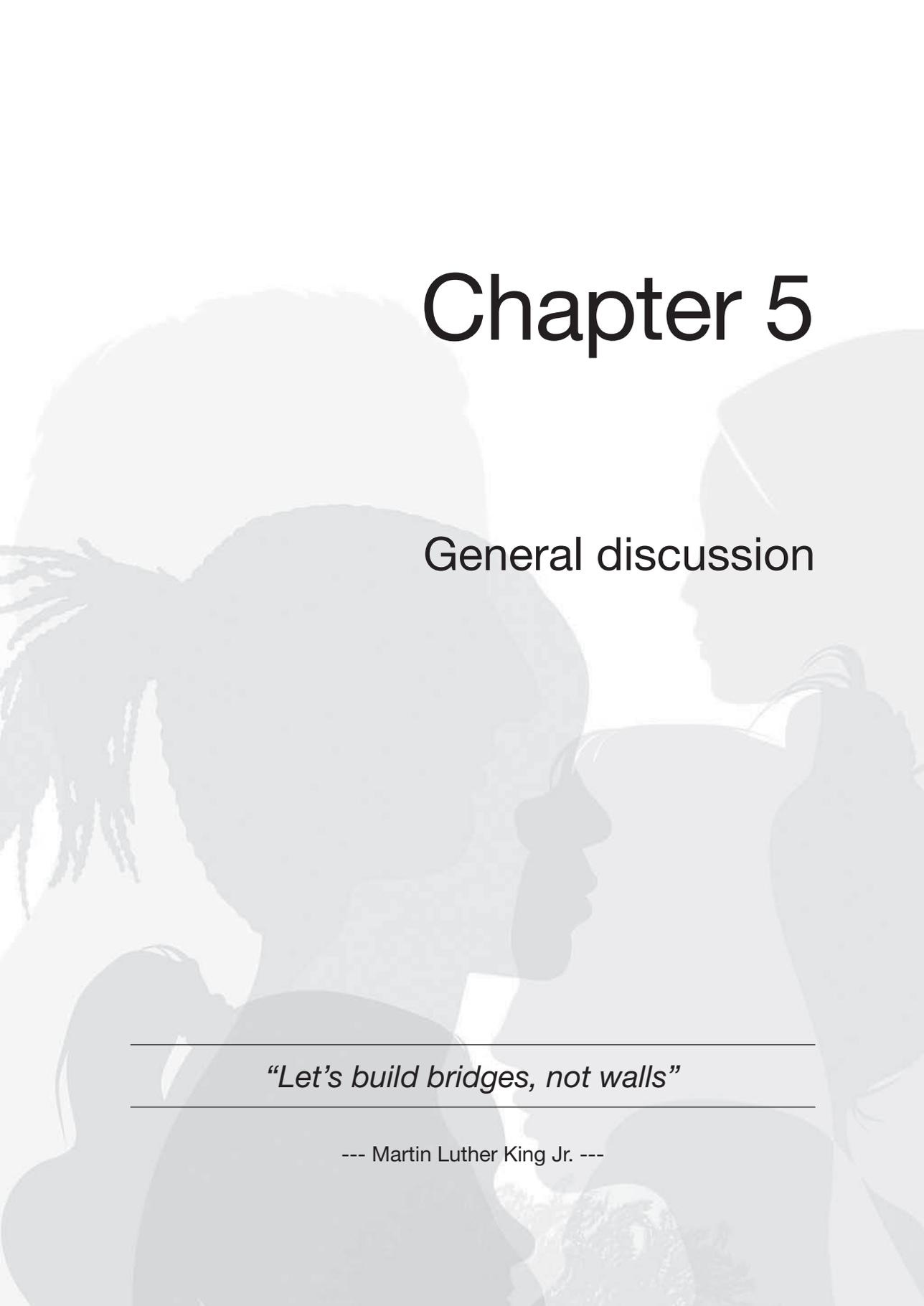
Theeuwes, B. C. (2024, May 29). *Culturally responsive teaching in Dutch multicultural secondary schools*. ICLON PhD Dissertation Series. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3754860>

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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

The background of the page features a collection of light gray silhouettes of people's heads and shoulders, facing each other in profile. The silhouettes represent a variety of ethnicities and hairstyles, including dreadlocks, a bun, and a beanie. The overall composition is centered and balanced.

# Chapter 5

## General discussion

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*“Let’s build bridges, not walls”*

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--- Martin Luther King Jr. ---



## 5.1 Introduction

Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that strives to meet the educational needs of all students and enable them to reach their full potential within the diversity of the multicultural classroom. It is argued that to achieve this, teachers must (1) cross cultural borders by building bridges between different cultures, and (2) use students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and cultural frames of reference in teaching (Gay, 2010; 2013; 2018). The first of these competences to be pursued is also known as intercultural competence (Bennett, 2004; Deardorff, 2006) and, together with the second one, which is also known as equity pedagogy and content integration (Banks, 2019), it forms the core of the intended outcomes of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018). However, culturally responsive teaching has scarcely been examined in a Dutch secondary school context. To gain insights into this competence within this specific context, I focussed on the components that make up a competence: attitudes, knowledge, skills and practices, with an emphasis on practices and noticing skills.

The main research question of this dissertation was:

*Which attitudes, knowledge, noticing skills and practices regarding the competence of culturally responsive teaching do teachers report with respect to teaching multicultural classrooms in a Dutch secondary school context?*

This main question was addressed in three studies reported in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Each of these studies addressed one or more components of culturally responsive teaching.

This final chapter first summarizes the findings of each study and discusses the key findings. Limitations and suggestions for further research are presented. Finally, suggestions for implications for practice are highlighted and concluding thoughts round off this dissertation.

## 5.2 Main findings

In the first study, described in Chapter 2, culturally responsive teaching practices of 13 expert teachers were examined through in-depth interviews. The main research question of this study was: ‘How can expert teachers’ reasoned practices with respect to teaching multicultural classrooms be characterized?’

I discerned 18 reasoned practices, grouped into five categories which could be divided into three dimensions of teaching: classroom management, citizenship education<sup>1</sup>, and pedagogy. From most to least mentioned examples per category the categories were: (1) fostering interpersonal relationships with students; (2) preventing and addressing disruptive behaviour; (3) fostering social cohesion; (4) fostering personal development; and (5) supporting students’ learning process. The first two categories related to classroom management, the third and fourth categories to citizenship education and the fifth focused on pedagogy.

Overall, it could be concluded that the expert teachers in this study mainly emphasized the importance of a good interpersonal relationship with their students. Several teachers indicated that this is important in every class but that it requires even more attention in multicultural classrooms. The reasoned practices mentioned under this ‘interpersonal relationship with students’ category emphasized the importance of knowing students well, by paying attention to their home situation and showing interest in their cultural backgrounds. This shows similarity with what is referred to as the ‘funds of knowledge/ identity approach’ (Moll et al., 1992; ‘t Gilde & Volman, 2021). Furthermore, the explicit awareness of a cultural lens throughout all the categories proved to be a particular factor which distinguished this from what constitutes ‘just good teaching’. Having teachers reason out their practices seemed to reveal this cultural lens and these explicit considerations also seemed critical to determining whether their statements regarding practices were culturally responsive.

In the second study, described in Chapter 3, I explored the cultural lens more specifically, in particular, student teachers’ and expert teachers’ noticing through a cultural lens. The research questions for this study were: (1) Which events do student and expert teachers identify in a multicultural classroom context? (2)

What culture-specific interpretations do they give to these identified events? and (3) How do student teachers and expert teachers differ in the way they identify and interpret events in a multicultural classroom context? Noticing was examined through participants' experiences of a multicultural spherical video-based virtual reality (SV-VR) classroom.

The results of this study were surprising. Neither student teachers nor expert teachers referred to a cultural lens in any event. It seemed that when teachers are not explicitly asked to interpret events through a cultural lens, they do not do so. This result prompted the third study in which I examined more broadly the competence of culturally responsive teaching and questioned noticing through a cultural lens more explicitly.

The third study, described in Chapter 4, explored the competence of culturally responsive teaching. The research questions were: (1) How do expert teachers notice events in a multicultural classroom? (2) What attitudes and knowledge do expert teachers demonstrate when confronted with events in a multicultural classroom? And (3) What intentions do teachers report to respond to events in a multicultural classroom? Five focus groups with three expert teachers each were asked to reflect on the same SV-VR clips as used in the previous study but this time the teachers were primed to consider a cultural lens in their reflections.

One of the main findings of this study showed that although teachers were explicitly primed to look through a cultural lens, they initially indicated that it was irrelevant to consider culture in their interpretations because the events that occurred in the SV-VR classroom could occur in any classroom. However, as the group reflections progressed, they did mention events where culture could have played a role and some interpretations of those events were further elaborated. These elaborated interpretations referred to students' learning process and student interactions.

Another finding of this study referred to the role of culture-specific knowledge when teaching multicultural classrooms. This kind of knowledge was referred to as general knowledge about diverse cultural groups, such as knowledge about traditions, customs, and shared values. Different perspectives regarding general knowledge of cultural groups were found, and in several groups this general

knowledge about specific cultural groups tended to be stereotypical. However, what recurred in the conversations, and what teachers seemed to agree on, was the need to gain knowledge of their students' personal cultural backgrounds and their home situations. This corresponds to what teachers indicated in the first study and can be related to the concept of funds of Knowledge/ identity (Hogg & Volman, 2020; 't Gilde & Volman, 2021). Adopting a genuinely curious attitude was highlighted in this regard.

Regarding intended culturally responsive practices, the teachers in this study barely mentioned how they would respond to what they had noticed in the SV-VR clips, but instead, they discussed their own experiences with teaching multicultural classrooms. These practices mainly referred to how they cope with controversial subjects, students who speak their native language in class and students who bring street culture into the classroom.

Table 5.1 presents an overview of the main findings of the three studies.

### 5.3 Discussion of the findings

Disentangling culturally responsive teaching within the context of teaching multicultural classrooms in a Dutch secondary school context revealed insights but also raised questions. In the following sections some overall insights and remaining questions gained through the studies are discussed. These are: (1) a curious attitude in relation to acquiring cultural knowledge; (2) the cultural lens in relation to practices; and (3) the relevance of a cultural lens in noticing classroom events.

#### 5.3.1 A curious attitude in relation to acquiring cultural knowledge

Throughout the studies, the knowledge aspect of culturally responsive teaching appeared to recur. In contrast to what Banks (2019) argued, teachers indicated that specific knowledge about histories and cultures of diverse groups, by which they meant general knowledge about specific cultural groups, is not necessary

for teaching multicultural classrooms and that this kind of knowledge could even encourage stereotyping. Two Dutch-Moroccan teachers disagreed with that. They argued that beyond focussing on students' funds of knowledge/identity, teachers should also learn about habits and customs of specific cultural groups. According to them, this should already have been learned during teacher education. Yet, it remained unclear which cultural groups this knowledge should be focused on and what specific knowledge they had in mind.

What teachers emphasized throughout the studies was the importance of adopting a curious attitude towards students' backgrounds, including their cultural backgrounds and getting to know individual students well. In the first study, for example, this was reflected in the practices: 'Being genuinely interested in the students as individuals' and 'Being curious about the cultural background of the students in class'.

Emphasising a curious attitude towards the students' personal backgrounds, including their cultural background, forms the basis of the concept of 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 1992) and the resulting concept of 'funds of identity'. These concepts are clarified and compared in a review study by Hogg and Volman (2020). In short, funds of knowledge refer to students' knowledge and skills acquired out of school and funds of identity to the funds of knowledge that students themselves consider important aspects of their identity. By having a curious attitude, teachers can discover their students' funds that are less visible or relatable to their own. Drawing from these funds, teachers can build cultural knowledge but with awareness of the specificity of each personal situation. This is what is referred to as deep cultural knowledge (Banks, 2019; Barret et al., 2014; Deardorff, 2006). More specifically, this means that teachers should be aware that each student belongs to different groups at the same time, based, for example, on religion, social class, gender, nationality, etc. and that individual students can identify strongly or weakly with each group (Banks, 2019).

It was noticeable that, on the one hand, teachers indicated that they did not find it important to gain general knowledge of cultural groups because this could lead to stereotyping, but, on the other hand, they talked about cultural groups in generalising terms and reported unsubstantiated cultural trivia during the

**Table 5.1**

*Main findings of the three studies, presented under the components of culturally responsive teaching competence*

STUDY	ATTITUDES	KNOWLEDGE
1 (Chapter2)		
2 (Chapter3)		
3 (Chapter4)	<p>Expert teachers expressed:</p> <p>→ Attitude of <b>curiosity/discovery</b> regarding students' funds of knowledge/ identity</p> <p>→Attitude of <b>respect:</b> appreciating and valuing other cultures and cultural diversity but also limitations regarding what opinions can be tolerated were discussed</p>	<p>Expert teachers expressed:</p> <p>→ Cultural self-awareness</p> <p>→ Culture-specific knowledge, tending toward stereotyping</p> <p>→ Deep cultural knowledge</p> <p>→ Sociolinguistic awareness</p> <p>Most teachers who discussed the need for general knowledge of specific cultural groups (culture-specific knowledge) did not find this kind of knowledge necessary.</p>

Table 5.1 (continued)

NOTICING SKILLS	REASONED PRACTICES
<p>→ Neither student teachers nor expert teachers referred to culture when interpreting classroom events in a hypothetical multicultural SV-VR classroom context.</p> <p>→ Most events identified by both student teachers and expert teachers were students' use of cell phones and scripted events involving student movements.</p> <p>→ Expert teachers immediately assigned some events to a deeper layer of identification, which was already an interpretation.</p> <p>→ Both, student teachers and expert teachers interpreted identified events through a student learning or student interaction lens.</p>	<p>→ 18 reasoned practices, grouped into 5 categories under 3 dimensions of teaching:</p> <p><i>Classroom management</i></p> <p>(1) Fostering interpersonal relationships with students</p> <p>(2) Preventing and addressing disruptive behaviour:</p> <p><i>Citizenship education</i></p> <p>(3) Fostering social cohesion:</p> <p>(4) Fostering personal development</p> <p><i>Pedagogy</i></p> <p>(5) Supporting students' learning process</p> <p>The reasoned practices and examples are described in the Appendix.</p> <p>→ Main emphasis on fostering interpersonal relationships with students.</p> <p>→ Explicit awareness of a cultural lens throughout the categories</p>
<p>→ After being primed to look through a cultural lens at events in the hypothetical multicultural SV-VR classroom, teachers said that they had not identified events where it was relevant to consider culture.</p> <p>→ As the conversation progressed, 12 events were mentioned in which it might have been relevant to consider culture. A few of these events were further elaborated.</p> <p>→ Culture-related interpretations that were further elaborated referred to student learning (e.g. the student has poor Dutch language skills, there is a mismatch between the subject of the assignment and some students' cultural background) and student interactions (e.g. the girls sought classmates with similar beliefs; the boy is excluded because of cultural differences)</p>	<p>Teachers discussed their own teaching practices, which revealed:</p> <p>→ Examples of equity pedagogy</p> <p>→ Examples of knowledge construction</p> <p>→ Counter-examples of prejudice reduction</p>

group reflections in the third study. This was specifically regarding students with Turkish-cultural and Moroccan-cultural roots. It was difficult to distinguish statements based on knowledge from statements that indicated some form of stereotyping. Referring to Wolff et al. (2021), it could be that the teachers had built situated knowledge, known as *scripts*, through their experiences with teaching multicultural classes. For example, some teachers in this study shared their experiences regarding mastery of the Dutch language by students of Turkish and Moroccan origin. They indicated that the influence of home culture was greater among students of Turkish cultural origin, and because of this they spoke Dutch less well. These statements can be interpreted as stereotypical, but it might be that it is a script that they have built up through experience. This raises the question of whether such scripts might be hindering an ongoing open, genuinely curious, attitude regarding the individual students in their classrooms. It seems as if teachers fall back onto talking in generalized terms about cultural groups of students when talking about their own experiences and that they take little account of individual differences between students and thus show little deep cultural knowledge.

### 5.3.2 The cultural lens in relation to practices

In addition to the emphasis placed by teachers on adopting a curious attitude towards the funds of knowledge/identity of their students, in conversations about their own experiences, teachers highlighted that culturally responsive teaching is 'just good teaching' but with awareness of an additional cultural lens which gives common teaching practices a different flavour. They also indicated that the interpersonal dimension of teaching is always very important but in a multicultural classroom context, this is even more important.

It was not my intention to develop a list of culturally responsive strategies as the reality of a classroom context is too complex for this and thus each situation consists of a fabric of different factors in which teachers must make immediate decisions on how to act. What I aimed for was to discover patterns of culturally responsive teaching practices in multicultural classrooms. These would be reasoned practices which referred to 'how teachers think about what they do and

the values, attitudes, and interpretive perspectives they use to make sense of what happens in the classroom' (Cochran-Smith, Ell et al., 2016, p. 71).

When teachers had the opportunity to talk about their own practices, including their considerations (Chapters 2 and 4), it was possible to discern some patterns of practice and how they involved the cultural lens in these practices. Culturally responsive practices were found for the teaching dimensions of classroom management, citizenship education and pedagogy. However, teachers' considerations were required to determine whether a practice was culturally responsive or not.

### **5.3.3 The relevance of a cultural lens in noticing classroom events**

Whereas the cultural lens surfaced when expert teachers talked about their own experiences with multicultural classrooms, this proved to be more difficult when interpreting identified classroom events in the hypothetical SV-VR multicultural classroom context which was used in the second and third studies. In the second study, student and expert teachers were not primed to look through a cultural lens and the cultural lens remained invisible. In the third study, teachers were primed to look through a cultural lens, but they initially said that they had not seen any events in which looking through a cultural lens was relevant. However, as they interacted with each other, they mentioned some events where culture could have played a role but only some of these interpretations were further elaborated. When the teachers related their own experiences to what they had seen in the SV-VR clips, culture-related interpretations of the events emerged.

Although with the design of the second study, I expected that expert teachers would interpret events through a cultural lens based on the scripts they had built in their own multicultural classrooms, they did not. It might be that they were uncomfortable about expressing themselves explicitly about possible culture-related events because they did not know the students. Regarding cultural differences in the SV-VR classroom, teachers could only rely on external features that could refer to ethnic and religious differences such as skin colour and wearing a headscarf. They were probably conscious of the fact that it is not desirable to make interpretations based on solely external features, thus in an 'image-driven'

way (Wolff et al., 2016; 2021). However, when they related the events happening in the SV-VR classroom to experiences in their own classrooms, they seemed to feel freer to activate a cultural lens, probably because they knew what and who they were talking about. Thus, it seems that available scripts regarding classroom events are not enough to interpret events through a cultural lens in a hypothetical classroom. Besides those scripts, teachers need specific information about their own students to be able or willing to make interpretations through a cultural lens or to consider the relevance of culture in the event.

Not referring to culture when interpreting events in the SV-VR multicultural classroom could also indicate that the cultural lens was not considered the most relevant factor to mention. As the results from the first study showed, teachers appeared to experience teaching in multicultural classrooms mainly as ‘just good teaching’ with awareness of an additional cultural lens. The interpretations that the teachers mentioned remained fairly superficial. It could be that the cultural lens would have become visible if deeper questions were asked about the interpretations, such as with respect to the interpretation of the boy taking a dictionary from the teachers’ desk. An interpretation of this event was: ‘The boy does not understand a word’. By asking a follow-up question such as: ‘Why does the boy not understand the word?’, it could be that a culture-related interpretation would be given.

Finally, it could be that the teachers in the second study had a culture-blind perspective regarding student diversity and thus did not perceive differences between students. However, this seems unlikely as in both the first and third studies teachers did mention cultural differences between students and took those differences into account in their teaching.

## **5.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research**

This dissertation examined the different components of culturally responsive teaching using different qualitative research methods. This section reflects on some methodological limitations of the research that require the results to be interpreted with some caution. Suggestions for future research are discussed.

First, the results are based on both real-life experiences and experiences with a hypothetical SV-VR multicultural classroom. Teachers' reflections on their real-life experiences with multicultural classrooms elicited the complexity of a real classroom context, while through the hypothetical classroom a similar situation was created for participants that made it possible to compare the data (Denessen et al., 2022). However, the hypothetical classroom context has limitations. I chose not to give participants any background information about the students in that hypothetical classroom because I thought this information would steer them to a specific interpretation of the situation and I suspected that, by doing so, stereotypes would be activated. However, more knowledge of students' funds of knowledge/identity is essential for culturally responsive teaching. I probably paid too little attention to this when I set up the research with the hypothetical classroom. In follow-up research with SV-VR classes, a short biography, related to students' funds of identity, might be given for each student to give the teachers more basis for their noticing of situations. These biographies should include a full and broad description of their background that do not trigger easy stereotypes.

Second, most of the teachers participating in these studies were of Dutch origin. It could be that with a more diverse teacher population, teachers' considerations regarding required attitudes, knowledge and noticing skills for culturally responsive teaching would be more varied. The example in the third study, where two Dutch-Moroccan teachers had different views on what knowledge teachers should have when teaching multicultural classrooms, may suggest this. It would be interesting for follow-up research to explore more broadly these different views on, for example, required cultural knowledge between teachers with different cultural roots.

Third, the SV-VR clips represented only one lesson phase, namely the application phase (Merrill, 2002) with collaborative groupwork, and the teacher taking a central position to oversee the class. However, in a real-life context, a lesson consists of more phases. For example, Merrill (2002) distinguished, in addition to the application phase focused on in this study, the activation, demonstration, and integration phases. Moreover, for each lesson phase different learning activities can be chosen, and each activity has a specific program of action, which refers to a

pedagogical choice with expectations about how the teacher and students behave (Doyle, 2006). In the SV-VR classroom, the students worked in small groups which can be conducive to relationships developing between students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Banks, 2014; 2019; Doyle, 2006). When working in small groups, students are expected to interact with each other and the teacher is expected to track how students are doing and monitor their learning process (Doyle, 2006). This could be the reason that student and expert teachers mainly mentioned interpretations related to student interactions and student learning. Moreover, in the SV-VR clips, the teacher's action and thus also the teachers' interaction with students, was not visible because the participants were acting in the role of the teacher themselves. It is plausible that this led to little focus on the teacher-student relationship and maintaining classroom order. To get a broader understanding of the noticing skills component of culturally responsive teaching, follow-up research could focus on noticing skills related to different dimensions of teaching and during different teaching phases and learning activities.

Finally, the openness of the research designs could be a limitation. The designs of the second and third studies did not involve in-depth guided questions, which could potentially have produced interesting results. For example, in the third study four events were mentioned as possibly culture related but these were not further explained by teachers. Because no further questions were asked, interesting results might have been overlooked here. It would be interesting in follow-up research, to examine culturally responsive teaching competence among teachers with different cultural roots and teaching in different multicultural classroom contexts by, for example, sampling their individual heuristic goal systems (Janssen et al., 2013; 2014) regarding teaching in a multicultural classroom context. The heuristic goal system is a procedure that enables teachers to specify their own teaching practices and why they consider them important. The practices are divided into a set of lesson segments and then related to personal goals and values (Janssen et al., 2013; 2014). A heuristic goal system can easily be constructed through a laddering interview (Janssen et al., 2013). With a slight adjustment, for example, by examining only one lesson segment rather than successive ones, these goal systems could be used in combination with the SV-VR clips. The

teachers could first experience the SV-VR classrooms with the HMD and then they could be asked what they noticed, how they would react to a comparable event in their own classrooms, and then more in-depth questions could be asked about why they would react that way. This method would allow a similar starting situation to be used without erasing the complexity of the classroom with the aim of drawing out teachers' practical knowledge regarding teaching multicultural classrooms. However, to enhance comparability between teachers, it would be valuable to enrich the SV-VR simulation with more information about the goals of the lesson to be achieved and the learning activities intended to lead to achieving these goals.

## 5.5 Implications for practice

Although diversity in the classroom is a topic that is given attention in teacher education programs, too many teachers are or feel inadequately prepared for teaching in multicultural classrooms (Gay, 2002; Herzog-Punzenberger et al., 2022; Vervaet et al., 2018). This is despite the fact that a relatively large amount of research has been done on how to prepare teachers for teaching diverse learners, as reflected, for example, in the review by Cochran-Smith, Villegas et al. (2016), which showed that most research on this topic focuses on the development of positive beliefs and attitudes regarding diversity and culturally diverse learners. A smaller number of studies have looked at the development of culturally responsive practices. For both types of studies, this review revealed learning opportunities in coursework and/or field experiences. Regarding the development of positive attitudes, the review (Cochran-Smith, Villegas et al., 2016) also indicates that coursework included a variety of reflective activities such as writing cultural autobiographies, analysing literary work from the perspectives of different characters in the story, and playing games designed to make privilege and oppression visible. Examples of field experiences aiming to develop positive attitudes regarding diversity were internships and acting as researchers at multicultural schools. Regarding the development of culturally

responsive practices, coursework also referred to reflective activities but these focused on analysing vignettes on controversial topics and situations and watching and analysing video fragments of teachers teaching multicultural classrooms. In a recent study on professional learning communities aiming to enhance culturally responsive teaching (Alhanachi et al., 2021), teachers developed practices through joint work. Despite this, the participating teachers continued to find it difficult to implement these practices in their own teaching, though participating in the professional learning community did seem promising for changing attitudes and beliefs.

The strategies mentioned above offer some ideas for working on student teachers' culturally responsive attitudes and practices. In this study we examined culturally responsive competence using a variety of components: in addition to attitudes and practices, we also examined knowledge and noticing skills. The findings of this research, classified under each component in Table 5.1, could be used as goals during teacher education and the above-mentioned strategies could be ways to achieve some of these goals. Besides these strategies, the studies reported on in this dissertation provide some insights that may be useful when developing programs to prepare student teachers for teaching in multicultural classrooms. I present some of these insights in the following paragraphs.

First, the categories of reasoned practices that were found in the first study could be used as a reflection tool for student teachers. For example, student teachers could be asked to analyse their practices on different dimensions of teaching by discussing recorded lessons with each other and examining in which dimensions cultural responsiveness is already visible and in which it needs to be given more attention. The examples in the Appendix could prepare student teachers for what they might encounter in multicultural classes and how they might react in these situations. The examples could also prompt them to think for themselves about how they would react to the situations that were mentioned by the expert teachers.

Second, it seems that teachers need to develop a curious attitude regarding their students' cultural background, rather than just gaining general cultural knowledge. An attitude of curiosity can help teachers to learn about students' funds

of knowledge/identity. One way to achieve this is to invest in communication with students to learn about their funds of knowledge/identity. Besides the practices described in the first study, Hogg and Volman's review (2022) provides interesting examples of how students' funds of identity can be elicited.

Third, the acquisition of deep cultural knowledge of individual students seems to be a goal that could be pursued during teacher education. A curious attitude and seeking funds of knowledge/identity from students could form a strong basis for this. Deep cultural knowledge might be further developed by creating awareness among student teachers that every individual belongs to different social groups to which they have weaker or stronger affiliations. It might also be interesting to make student teachers aware of the variety within the body of multicultural classrooms, such as classrooms with many newcomers and classrooms with students whose parents' country of origin is outside the Netherlands but who themselves were born and raised in the Netherlands. Such experiences could be gained through internships or observation exercises in different multicultural school contexts. It is conceivable that developing deep cultural knowledge will reduce stereotyping because student teachers learn to look at the identities of individual students and classrooms from different perspectives rather than only focusing on culture (Banks, 2019).

Fourth, to avoid culture-blindness (Hachfeld et al., 2011; 2015) culture should also be included as a lens through which to look at students and events in the classroom. It seems reasonable to expect that it should be considered as one of many other lenses through which to look. For example, at the ICLON Graduate School of Teaching where I work as teacher educator, one of the assignments requires student teachers to look at students' behaviour through different pedagogical lenses. To find out students' educational needs, student teachers are asked to look at student behaviour through different lenses, such as through the lenses of identity development, family and parenting, emotional development, cognitive development and moral development. Based on the concept of funds of knowledge/ identity (Hogg and Volman, 2020), student teachers could be explicitly asked to look through a cultural lens within certain themes, such as identity development and family and parenting.

5 Student teachers need to be given the opportunity to gain experience with interpreting classroom events through a cultural lens where relevant. However, this is difficult to achieve for those student teachers who do not have internships at multicultural schools. It might be that the SV-VR clips could provide opportunities to gain experiences regarding learning to notice through a cultural lens but, to practise this, it is important to prime student teachers to look through a cultural lens and then engage in conversation about what they have noticed. Indeed, in the second study it was found that looking through a cultural lens without being primed, did not make the student teachers' cultural lens explicit. Moreover, to ensure that they consider looking through the cultural lens alongside other lenses and to avoid stereotyping, student teachers could be asked to look at the clips from a different perspective each time, for example: from an interpersonal perspective, a social cohesion perspective, a personal development perspective or a student learning perspective. Then they could be asked to look at the clips again and to consider the cultural lens from each of these perspectives. It is important with such exercises to have a follow-up discussion with the teacher educator as facilitator so that it becomes clear when the cultural lens tends to become a stereotyping lens and the teacher educator can intervene. Indeed, the third study found that this appeared to happen when a group conversation was not guided.

In conclusion, developing cultural responsiveness seems to require a multifaceted approach that cannot be developed in a single or a few course days. I suggest that cultural responsiveness should be given attention throughout the teacher education program and in all courses as a perspective that should be considered alongside other perspectives that student teachers use to develop their competencies as teachers. Furthermore, I suggest that developing cultural responsiveness should continue beyond teacher education. Indeed, there is no cut-off point for cultural responsiveness because there are many different multicultural contexts and educational dimensions in which cultural responsiveness is relevant. In order not to lapse into stereotypes and prejudices and to offer equal opportunities to all students, it is important that cultural responsiveness continues to receive attention throughout teachers' continuing professional development.

## 5.6 Concluding remarks

The results from this study show that expert teachers working in multicultural secondary classrooms in the Netherlands do consider students' cultural backgrounds in five teaching domains: (1) fostering interpersonal relationships with students; (2) preventing and addressing disruptive behaviour; (3) fostering social cohesion; (4) fostering personal development; and (5) supporting students' learning process. By far the strongest emphasis was placed on having good interpersonal relationships with students. To be able to take students' cultural backgrounds into account, it is important to adopt a curious attitude and show interest in students' funds of knowledge/identity. Such knowledge is also needed to notice relevant classroom events. However, having knowledge about specific cultural groups was not considered necessary by most teachers in our study. From the literature we can conclude that learning about different cultures comes naturally when more knowledge is gained about individual students' funds of knowledge/identity. It is conceivable that having this knowledge might reduce stereotyping, as teachers learn that every personal situation is unique. Thus, it is about teachers really 'seeing' students for who they are, recognising that they belong to different groups and considering the extent to which and how they relate to these different groups. To achieve this, it is important that teachers look at students and their behaviour from different perspectives, including through a cultural lens. From there, teachers can connect to their students' educational needs so that they can develop to their full potential.

### Note

<sup>1</sup>The article was originally published in Dutch. The term: 'pedagogisch' is difficult to translate. The closest term to what we mean by 'pedagogical' are the goals related to 'citizenship education'.



## Epilogue

In 2015, before I started this PhD project, I was asked to teach an elective module on diversity to our student teachers. It involved two two-hour meetings. I searched in the literature to find out what it might be important to discuss and decided to focus mainly on raising awareness of one's own worldview and attitudes regarding diversity and to provide students with some theoretical frameworks. Students participated enthusiastically but I still did not have a good feeling about this module. I had the idea that after a few days, student teachers would resume their education focusing mainly on other concerns that were more important to them. As well as not having enough time to reinforce what they had learned, I also found it difficult to search through the cultural diversity literature to find out what was most urgent to prepare student teachers for teaching in a multicultural classroom context.

When I got the opportunity to research this topic, a difficult search began regarding what I should focus on. There were so many issues that could be relevant: implicit bias, intercultural communication, teaching sensitive topics, developing cultural sensitivity, et cetera. As I initially could not see the wood for the trees, I started questioning experienced teachers about their practical experiences. This approach gave me more insight into what they considered essential when teaching multicultural classes. Teachers indicated that it was about 'good teaching' while also considering an additional cultural lens. From this broad-brush approach, I started focusing on the idea of a cultural lens that proved not to be easy to grasp. Then, I positioned this cultural lens as a skill component within a broader framework of culturally responsive teaching as a competence.

After these years of investigating, sweating, but certainly also enjoying, delving deeper into this topic, I feel that this PhD project has given me a glimpse of what culturally responsive teaching entails and what we could focus on during teacher education. However, I am still left with many questions: How can the cultural lens be made more explicit and practised without becoming a stereotyping lens? What knowledge should we impart to student teachers? How can teacher

educators respond to student teachers who have inappropriate attitudes towards cultural diversity? Moral questions have also emerged, such as: To what extent do we, as teacher educators, have a normative role with regard to the attitudes and beliefs of student teachers? For example, can a teacher with negative attitudes and inappropriate beliefs regarding diversity be considered a good teacher? Should graduate schools of teaching take a normative stance that is propagated by teacher educators?

I look forward to engaging further with my fellow teacher educators in the coming years on how we can prepare student teachers to give all students a sense of being seen, a sense of belonging and fair educational opportunities. Looking back at the physics teacher that I mentioned in the Preface, I hope that teachers will no longer have to ask for photos of their students at parent-teacher evenings because they do not know who they are, but that they will engage with the parents and the student out of genuine interest to learn about the student's funds of knowledge/identity in order to relate this knowledge to all dimensions of their teaching. I would like to strive to prepare student teachers to engage in culturally responsive teaching by fostering their consideration of an additional cultural lens, encouraging a genuine curiosity and interest in their students' funds of identity, including their cultural backgrounds, and helping them to develop deep cultural knowledge. I also hope that more research will be conducted on how to prepare student teachers for culturally responsive teaching within a Dutch secondary school context so that we can reach a broad and rich knowledge base together. Who knows, I might even be able to contribute to this further myself.