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Integrating Theory and Practice
- Learning to teach L1 language and literature

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1 Besides the authors, many others were involved in the discourse in which this teaching education program was constructed. Next to the many student teachers in Dutch language and literature of the graduate school of teaching, especially the one student whose work is reported in this article, two other names need to be mentioned, namely Peter Sleegers, and especially Jan Sturm, who both were involved as teacher educators.
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Abstract

Against the background of the central dilemma in teacher education of the relationship between theory and practice, this article reports a teacher education approach that strongly emphasizes the use of theory in learning to teach, assuming that teaching is also an intellectual activity. A main starting point is the subject pedagogy, the ‘Fachdidaktik’, in this case of Dutch language and literature, integrated as much as possible with educational theories. Furthermore, reflection is assumed to be based upon theory: Discourses concerning three different aspects of teaching and learning, resulting in instrumental, substantial, and critical reflection. The article presents a theoretical framework to use for student teachers to understand and examine their teaching. Furthermore, the pedagogy of this approach is reported and discussed. To illustrate this approach, the work of one student teacher is presented and analyzed.
Introduction

One of the central dilemmas in teacher education is the relationship between theory and practice. A common compliant was or still is that teacher education was either too theoretical and therefore not relevant for practice, or in reaction to this, too practical and hardly theory-based, reducing teacher education to just a simple training course (cf. Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). A strong assumption in the discourse on teacher education is the relevancy of educating student teachers in both theory and practice. Learning to teach requires a lot of practical training, learning by doing, and at the same time due to its complexity it needs to be theory-informed. However, questions that remain are which theories are relevant for practice? More specific, how to educate student teachers theoretically, or how to bridge the perceived gap between theory and practice?

In current teacher education literature, many attempts can be found to collect and categorize the knowledge base of teacher education (cf. Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Verloop, 2003). At the same time, a pragmatic orientation to teacher education still exists and is – in a new version - becoming increasingly dominant (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; van de Ven & Oolbekkink, 2008). Actually, this pragmatic orientation can be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice by educating student teachers practically instead of only theoretically. It is also based on Fuller’s (1969) notions of concerns, where student teachers in their learning to teach process are first focused on practical issues concerning their own functioning in and managing the classroom, making them less interested in theory. Reflection is in this respect the magic
tool used to make students teacher think about their practice, but often these reflections seem to be focused on only practical problems, and are hardly informed by theory. A characteristic of this pragmatic orientation is that the actual practice itself is often taken for granted. It is hardly ever disputed (van de Ven & Oolbekkink, 2008).

Next to this increasingly pragmatic orientation, there is also a growing tendency to focus on the person of the teacher. Due to its strong interactional nature, teaching itself is assumed to be an activity requiring a high personal involvement. Moreover, because it is also a highly moral endeavor, the personal convictions and qualities are assumed to play a very prominent role.

A last tendency in teacher education and in education policies in general seems that less attention is being paid to the subject and subject pedagogy in favor of a focus on more general teaching competences. Based on disputable interpretations of constructivist notions, teaching is perceived in terms of facilitating learning processes in which the subject content is less central, resulting in an emphasis on learning theories, reflection, communication and coaching skills. This is in line with the trend in secondary education to rather focus on teaching students learning skills instead of subject content. An underlying argumentation is that knowledge changes rather quickly and becomes obsolete. This argumentation might be true for some disciplines, but it does not serve disciplines within the realm of the humanities. Core concepts in language and literature (education) are constructed in ancient times (grammar, rhetoric) and are still valid.

Without denying the potentially positive sides of these tendencies, these pragmatic, personal and general orientations in learning to teach seem to reduce teacher education to a pragmatic training program with sometimes even therapeutic elements.
And despite the attempts to build a knowledge base for teacher education, many teacher education programs hardly succeed in providing their students with a robust theoretical framework, which at the same time is perceived as useful for understanding their practice (cf. Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). This is especially problematic for those teacher education programs that are situated at the university, and which are supposed to have high academic standards regarding content and products. The aim of the current paper is to report and discuss an approach to teacher education that focuses on providing student teachers with an explicit theoretical framework to understand and examine their teaching and practice. In the following, first the main principles and aspects of the program will be discussed. Second, an illustration and a short analysis will be given of the final product student teachers are asked to construct.

**Theoretical background of the program**

**General aim**

Main aim of our teacher education program is to educate student teachers to become secondary school teachers in Dutch language and literature or L1 by training them how to teach, and educate them in the social, theoretical and practical 'conversation' about their work. The term conversation in this respect comes from a quote from Michael Oakeshott (cited in Bruffee, 1984: 4-5), which contains a perspective on knowledge, knowledge construction, and how to educate student teachers into the knowledge base of teaching:

"As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of
information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation that goes on both in public and within each of ourselves.... Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation. And it is this conversation which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance".

Oakeshott views knowledge in terms of a conversation or as social constructions, and education aims to enable people to take part in this conversation, or to be able to understand the nature of those social constructions. Bruffee elaborates Oakshott’s argumentation, concluding in a next article that ‘learning is entering a discourse’ (Bruffee, 1986). A discourse is a way of talking, thinking and reasoning constructed by a particular group of people (a discourse community). A tacit agreement usually exists within the community about what counts as valid knowledge, a valid argument, a valid perspective, a valid example and so forth (van de Ven, 2001; Kress, 1985). Different discourse communities can have different viewpoints on reality and, in a similar vein, different disciplines can be construed as different discourses. According to Van Langenhove and Harré (1999), the social sciences can be distinguished from the physical sciences in terms of not only the object of study but also their discursivity.

Applied to teacher education, one of the main aims is to enable student teachers to understand the different discourses on education, teaching, and learning as social
constructions, and even to enable them to de- and reconstruct these constructions. It means that student teachers should be able to understand the social constellation called education they are in as teachers. At the same time, it should make them aware that they are dealing with such complex phenomena, such as learning, of which our knowledge is limited. They should also learn to enter these discourses, to become a member of the discourse community/ties ‘education’. These three processes require an intellectual attitude or focus, which is aimed at carefully examining learning and teaching from many different theoretical perspectives, or rather, discourses.

*The centrality of subject pedagogy*

Another starting point of the teacher education program is that it aims to educate student teachers as teachers in the specific discourse of a school subject, in this case Dutch language and literature. The subject teachers teach is assumed, especially in case of secondary education, to be a core element of their professional identity in many ways (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1994; Siskin & Little, 1995; van Veen, Sleegers & van de Ven, 2005). For most teachers, the subject strongly affected their motivation to become a teacher, and still, affects strongly their job satisfaction. Furthermore, the subject and its academic background are assumed to have a strong impact on how people think and behave in their work. The nature of the academic subject as well as the nature of the school subject tradition are influencing teaching practices to a large extent. There appears to exist a strong relation to the epistemological basis of the subject and the subject’s pedagogy (Nystrand et al. 1997): The nature of the subject strongly influences the way the subject is taught. It strongly influences the way teachers prepare and plan their
lessons, teach, and communicate with their students. In sum, the subject and the subject pedagogy is assumed to be the core element of secondary school teachers and should therefore taken as central in the teacher education program. One may observe this relationship in the school subject L1 (in this case ‘Dutch’). It is a poly-paradigmatic subject. Each paradigm represents different discourses which can be distinguished by the different meanings they present for core concepts like ‘language’, ‘literature’, ‘writing’ and so on. They also present different (most times hidden) discourses on teaching and learning (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2007).

This centrality of the subject and subject pedagogy in a learning to teach program seems to be in contrast with the tendency in current teacher education programs and in education to rather emphasize general skills as social-communicative, problem solving, and reflection skills instead of subject content knowledge and subject pedagogical skills. To qualify students for future jobs, those general skills are supposed to be more useful. To teach students these skills, teachers should be rather facilitators of students' learning processes than as subject experts who focus on knowledge construction. Therefore, in many teacher education programs other aspects than subject pedagogy increasingly gain more attention, such as classroom management, learning and development psychology, being a member of the school organization, general reflection skills, personal and professional identity development, etc. The problem is not so much that student teachers are educated in other aspects than subject pedagogy, but that it is all separated from each other, offered in different courses, often taught by different teacher educators, and often dominated by an emphasis on practice. Our assumption is that it is artificial to separate most of these aspects, because they are strongly related to each other. For instance,
classroom management is often related to the choice of subject content and pedagogy. The psychology of student learning is also related to the nature and content of a subject. Last example, most secondary schools are still organized in subject departments, making teacher involvement in the school strongly subject related. Therefore, because of the strong relatedness of all those different aspects, and because of the centrality of the subject in teachers' work, subject pedagogy and other educational aspects should be strongly integrated in the curriculum.

Some practical implications of this curriculum integration of subject pedagogical and educational elements are that our meetings are integrated, meaning that the student teachers only have one meeting at the graduate school, in which everything takes place (subject pedagogy and all other aspects of the program). Furthermore, the topics are integrated as much as possible. For instance, when studying the discussion on grammar education, a written protocol of a grammar lesson is used. This protocol, showing a teacher explaining grammar to his students, is studied from different theoretical perspectives (L1-theories, educational theories about interaction in the classroom, etc), because the protocol does not only refer to the discussion on grammar education but also refers to teaching strategies, teaching interaction, classroom management, teacher expectations, students’ perspectives, etc. A last implication is that the meetings are organized and taught by both the subject pedagogy expert and educational expert. This team teaching potentially creates a learning environment in which student teachers are exposed constantly to different perspectives and discourses, creating together a new discourse on education.

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2 A consequence of having only two teacher educators in the graduate school, who are mentoring the student teachers the whole year together (instead of having many teacher educators involved due to the
Reflection

As in many current teacher education programs, reflection is perceived as a central tool to let student teachers think about their teaching. In our approach, theory is an integrated part of reflection. It is explicitly assumed and stimulated that teachers reflect on their practice using professional knowledge and rational decision skills. Furthermore, theory takes a central place in the way reflection is 'taught' and 'practiced'. The operationalization of reflection is based on the four 'versions' of 'reflective teaching', as distinguished by Zeichner & Tabachnich (1991, p.3), referring to Zeichner & Liston (1990), each with its own object for reflection:

- ‘an academic version that stresses reflection upon subject matter and the representation and translation of subject matter knowledge to promote student understanding (…)’;
- ‘a social efficiency version that emphasizes the thoughtful application of particular teaching strategies that have been suggested by research on teaching (…)’;
- ‘a developmentalist version that prioritizes teaching that is sensitive to students’ interests, thinking and patterns of developmental growth (…)’;
- ‘a social constructionist version that stresses reflection about the social and political context of schooling and the assessment of classroom actions for their ability to contribute toward greater equity, social justice and humane conditions in schooling and society (…)’.

many different topics in the curriculum, is that enables to establish a strong relationship with student teachers. Good teaching, as Watzlawick’s second axiome argues, is based on the quality of the relationship between teacher and student, and especially in the case of learning to teach, this relationship is very important due to the often very intensive nature of this learning process for student teachers.
Zeichner & Tabachnich state that: ‘None of these traditions is sufficient in itself for providing a moral basis for teaching and teacher education. Good teaching and teacher education need to attend to all of the elements that are brought into focus by the various traditions’ (p. 3). So, in the teacher education program, these different traditions are 'translated' into four 'levels' of reflection or bundles of discourses concerning four different aspects of teaching and learning, each representing a different perspective:

1. Instrumental reflection, which refers to the organization of the lesson, the effective application of methods, skills, and technical knowledge, the interaction, etc. It all refers to acting in the classroom, and relates to social efficiency as Zeichner and Tabachnich describe.

2. Substantial reflection, which refers to the use of subject pedagogical and educational theories to understand the content, the underlying principles and mechanisms of teaching and learning, and the implications of certain teaching strategies and curricula. It all refers to the use of theory or literature in the reflection process, and related to Zeichner and Tabachnich's academic perspective.

3. Critical reflection, which refers to moral, ethical, and esthetical reflections and other normative criteria to think about the social function of education, the consequences of one's teaching for the well-being of others, etc. This level of reflection corresponds with social constructionist version, as distinguished by Zeichner and Tabachnich.

4. Reflection on one's professional identity and development, which refers to a growing understanding of the student teacher into her identity as a teacher, and insights into one's
development as a teacher in the three other levels of reflection. This level relates to Zeichner and Tabachnich developmentalist version.

As mentioned, reflection on one's practice aims to bridge the by many perceived gap between theory and practice. However, theory and practice are often unjustly perceived as unrelated and or at least their relation as strained. In our approach to learning to teach, theory is perceived as very relevant to help student teachers understand their practice. As Scholes argues: “Theory is not the superego of practice, but it self-consciousness. The role of theory is not to lay down laws but to force us to be aware of what we are doing and why we are doing it. Practice without theory is blind….” (Scholes, 1985, p. 88; cited in Sørensen, 2002, p. 90). Practice needs theory, as theory needs practice. Phelps (1991) argues that practice needs theory so that it does not deteriorate into a closed system of routines. Reflecting on experience alone is not enough to arm such a closed system against routine, boredom and despair, and against growing incoherence and atomisation. Reflection needs an injection of theory: “Theory galvanizes and disrupts the system, changing its very questions, undermining long-held beliefs, introducing ambiguities, revealing complexities, setting new tasks, forcing risks” (Phelps, 1991: 883). Theory helps one to analyze and understand practice and it opens up new possibilities. Phelps (1991: 883) pointed out that practice also has a great deal to offer theory. Practice functions as a laboratory where theory is subjected to experiments, in which objectives, forms of work, learning activities, attitudes and evaluations are put under the microscope. Theory is interpreted in the practical laboratory, and then it is tested, refined, adapted and criticized. It is also important that practice lives up to the moral promises of theory, as theory only means anything when it is put into practice. In
Phelps’ words: “practice is more than knowledge: practice humanizes theory” (1991: 883). Phelps pointed to the fact that practical wisdom must be resistant to theory, in order to avert the risk of a theoretical diktat: “Practical wisdom reminds us that theoretical systems are never exhaustive or adequate to phenomena, and thus it undercuts their totalizing tendencies. This is the humbling discipline that practice has to offer theory, in return for its freedom” (ibid.: 884).

It is assumed that all four levels of reflections need to be supported and stimulated by both the teacher educators and the mentor in the school. Most student teachers are focused on instrumental reflection, which is understandable in the light of learning to teach, and they need more support to reflect in substantial and critical ways. Hardly no one will really disagree with the importance of these levels of reflection, the disagreement, however, seem to be about the moment these levels are introduced in the teaching education program. Most programs gradually introduce these levels, and as a consequence, most attention is paid to the instrumental level and less to the substantial and critical levels. One rationale for this, is based on Fuller's notion of teachers' concerns (Fuller, 1969), stating that a development in concerns can be distinguished in the learning to teach process, starting with a focus on oneself and issues of survival and control to a focus on students and their learning processes. However, this development does not per se imply that student teachers are not open yet to substantial and critical reflections in the beginning of the program. Especially our student teachers, with an academic background, are used to read literature and theory. Furthermore, and more relevant, they are actually in great need of a theoretical framework to understand the situation they are in. Based on their apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), most student teachers have hardly a
well-informed conception of the goals and the nature of teaching and learning, and often
are biased by their subjective theories (Kelchtermans, 2002), which might involve
misconceptions and personal assumptions. Finally, a major risk of not introducing them
to theory in the beginning of the program is the possibility of confirming the common
sense perception that teaching is just a matter of practical issues and hardly an intellectual
matter. This risk is increasing due to the tendency in many teacher education programs to
focus on personal and general competences or core qualities, often accompanied with the
use of communication and reflection methods derived from psychotherapeutic settings.
So besides suggesting teaching to be only a practical and non-intellectual matter, it also
seems to be a rather 'soft' matter.

The question, however, that follows from this discussion, is how to let student
teachers reflect in both instrumental, substantial and critical ways through the whole
program? And which theory to use? This last question will be discussed first, followed by
the design of the program, the pedagogy to support these levels of reflection, illustrated
by a student teachers' final assignment.

Theoretical frame provided in the program

It should be noted that a theoretical framework or a frame of reference as the term is used
here, refers to a rather eclectic collection of theoretical and empirical notions about
subject pedagogy, teaching, student learning, and educational goals from different
theoretical domains as L1 language, psychology, sociology, and educational studies.
Main characteristic is that it all refers to academic literature and research. It is a collection that is still growing and sometimes changing through time, due to new insights. We are very aware of the lack of a common theoretical frame in teacher education and the many divergent perspectives in this field (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Reis, 2005). As will be shown, this approach to use theory to reflect on one's teaching practice can be situated in an interpretative research tradition (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In general, three theoretical frames are used as a lens to understand and examine teaching and learning in the program.

A first one refers to the many divergent knowledge elements or schemes needed to teach, which together illustrate the complexity and multidimensionality of education. Clift (1991) provides an extended example of how these integrated knowledge elements or schemes are present in one lesson. Possible elements are in case of teaching Dutch language and literature:

- subject content knowledge within the field of the academic discipline related to the school subject, e.g. linguistics, literature studies;
- knowledge within the field of educational studies, e.g. knowledge about teaching and learning, designing lessons, classroom management;
- subject pedagogical knowledge: How to deal with poetry in the classroom? What kind of questions to ask in an assignment of reading abilities? This kind of knowledge relates content, learning activity and ways of working. The core question is how to teach students to use a subject specific perspective for dealing with language and literature;
- Knowledge about the school subject, especially knowledge about the specific topics of the school subject and the different opinions on those topics, e.g. the differences between
an analytic or holistic perspective on language, a Saussurian dyadic or a Bakhtinian triadic perspective? Literature seen as ‘High’, elite literature, or also children and youth literature? Is literature ‘books’ or are other forms of fiction involved? Top down and bottom up approaches to reading, product oriented or process oriented – cognitive process, social process approaches to writing, etc.;

- knowledge on learners and e.g. learning styles;

- knowledge on educational contexts, the importance of socialization, socio-economic background, migrant children, etc.;

- Knowledge on educational aims and values, and their historical and ideological background: personal development, Bildung, reproduction of cultural heritage, development of competence for economic growth, promoting equality between groups of people (cf. Immesen, 2000);

- Views and beliefs about interaction with students, about the school subject, about moral and ethic discourses concerning education and society.

A second theoretical frame used to understand the complexities of teaching, and especially to reflect on the different layers and actors involved, is Goodlad's distinction in curriculum domains. From our interpretative point of view we perceive Goodlad’s distinction in curriculum domains as distinctions between more or less independent discourses with its own text conventions, concepts and argumentation. The ideological and the formal curriculum formulate ‘oughts’ and ‘shoulds’. The perceived curriculum represents what teachers think that the curriculum should be. The operational curriculum is what actually goes on hour after hour, day after day in school and classroom. This
curriculum is difficult to grasp. It is the complex and passing interaction between teacher and students, and between the students. The *experiential* curriculum is what students actually experience. The gap between rhetoric (‘theory’) and practice can often be situated and examined in the relation between the formal and ideological curriculum, and the operational curriculum.

A third theoretical framework is the school subject itself. Content and function of L1 education (the school subject Dutch in The Netherlands, English in the UK, etc.) are object of ongoing debate. This debate can be perceived as a paradigmatic discussion. Each paradigm differs from other paradigms by an own entity of subject topics, teaching- and learning activities, and legitimating topics and activities. Each paradigm is sustained by certain social groups. Each paradigm can be characterized by most times hidden perspectives on teaching, learning and educational objectives.

This paradigmatic discussion can be understood from the history of L1 teaching. Different paradigms arise in different periods and strive for dominance. Old paradigms are never replaced totally by new ones. The old ones maintain a status of strong alternatives. The school subject L1 shows a debate between a literary-grammatical, a developmental, a communicative and a utilitarian paradigm.

The paradigmatic battle for dominance must be understood from more general, social-economic and political debates on social and scientific power. Matthijsen’s (1982) theory on rationalities and Englund’s (1996) concept ‘metadiscourse’ are suitable for understanding these debates. They reveal which kind of cultural capital is dominant during a certain period. Using Matthijsen’s concepts these cultural capitals can be formulated as a literary-religious, a technocratic and a communicative rationality.
Englund distinguishes between a patriarchal conception of education, a scientific-rational and a communicative one. Dominant school subject paradigms represent the dominant cultural capital, at least on the level of rhetoric (cf. Van de Ven, 2005; Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2007).

These different theoretical frames are summarized in Figure 1, which is a tentative conceptual framework, originally designed by XXX, one of our colleagues in the program, and therefore called XXX's bins. The authors slightly modified the frame.

Design and pedagogy of the program

To understand the teacher education approach, it is useful to give some context information of the specific program. The program is part of a graduate school of teaching of a Dutch university, and aims to train secondary school teachers. The duration is one year, and the student teachers already have a master's degree in a particular subject (which is an official requirement).

The program exists out of weekly meetings at the graduate school (each Monday), and two or three days ideally of teaching in secondary schools. Due to teacher shortage

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3 The term bins comes Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 28), who write "(...) bins containing a lot of discrete events and behaviors. When we assign a label to a bin, we may or may not know how all the contents of the bin fit together, or how this bin relates to another one. But any researcher, no matter how inductive in approach, knows which bins to start with and what their contents are likely to be. Bins come from theory and experience, and often from the general objectives of the study envisioned. Laying out those bins, giving each a descriptive or inferential name, and getting some clarity about their relationships is what a conceptual framework is all about".
problems, many student teachers already have a teaching job. The others, who don't have a teaching job yet, are gradually introduced to teaching and after a half a year have their own classes to teach. All student teachers have mentors at their schools, who coach and supervise them, and support them especially regarding how to teach and organize a classroom.

In the first two weeks of the program, we introduce a frame of reference or theoretical frame by letting student teachers study five main discussions in the literature on teacher education in the subject of L1 (including our pedagogical approach in learning to teach; the content of the school subject related to the current reforms; moral and social aspects of teaching; student learning theories; and L1 subject pedagogy).

During the year, the framework is elaborated when studying subject pedagogical and educational topics. Crucial in this, is the pedagogy used to let student teachers study theories and apply them their classroom practice. Each of those topics is studied with the use of literature (theories, empirical studies, about 80 pages for each meeting), the use of student material, in relation to their classroom practices. We discuss this literature at weekly meetings. At the graduate school, these meetings are scheduled on Monday and last two to four hours. Each meeting is prepared by the student teachers. They have read some theoretical and/or empirical literatures, sometimes also documents on daily practice like interaction protocols or products by students. These documents approach the topic at hand (e.g. grammar teaching) from different and sometimes contradictory perspectives, thus causing some cognitive frictions. The reading of these documents results in a handout, which is emailed to all student teachers involved, before the meeting starts. Their handouts contain interpretations, questions, evaluations, etc.
At the beginning of the meeting the student teachers formulate their most important concerns, thus setting the agenda for the meeting. The meeting itself is to a large extent characterized by collaborative dialogue, in which the student teachers are entering the respective discourses presented in the literature. In many meetings, we also deal with the classroom experiences, trying to clarify these experiences from the theoretical framework.

An example:
The student teachers get a classroom protocol on grammar teaching at the beginning of the school year in the first grade of secondary education. The teacher in this protocol is blaming a student for presenting a wrong answer on a question on parsing. The answer is wrong seen from the definition of the constituent at hand in the schoolbook. But the student’s answer can also be evaluated as a right answer, if we use the definition of the constituent as it might be presented in schoolbooks for primary education. In advance, the student teachers do read on the pros and cons of grammar teaching, including empirical studies on the effects of grammar teaching on e.g. writing and reading skills. They read some text on the hidden definition of language in the tradition of grammar teaching. From these perspectives, and from perspectives on classroom interaction, they are asked to discuss the protocol and to create their own opinion on grammar teaching.

Regarding the pedagogy to stimulate reflection, and especially to use the theoretical frameworks, the program has a very strong narrative component. Reflection starts with a description of what happened in the teaching-learning situation, e.g., a classroom
protocol. The current discourse on teacher education emphasizes the power of the narrative (see e.g. Kelchtermans, 2002; Denning, 2000; Haugen 1996). Pratchett (1999:10) poses: “Narrativum is powerfull stuff. We have always had a drive to paint stories on to the universe. When humans first looked at the stars, which are great faming suns an unimaginable distance away, they saw amongst them giant bulls, dragons and local heroes”. In this quote Pratchett refers the narrative as a means to construct a worldview. This function of the narrative leads to what Habermas (1971) characterized as the interpretive knowledge interest.

Methodologically the narrative is operationalized in transforming the operational curriculum into text. As Sturm (1990: 32), referring to Gordon (1988) states: “A text is a good paradigm for the study of meaningful action, c.q. classroom activities. In doing so, four characteristics of written discourse (...) are applicable to classroom activities:

1. Meaning can be separated from the activities as event; it can be fixated, inscribed.

2. Activities can be separated from their actors: they develop consequences of their own, many of which actors did not intend.

3. The importance of an activity goes beyond its relevance to its initial situation. It develops meanings that can be actualized or fulfilled in situations other than the one in which this activity occurred.

4. Judges of an activity are not necessarily in any privileged sense the people who originally witnessed it.”

By transforming, or rather by reconstructing education – the interaction between teacher and student - into text (a narrative), education becomes accessible for reflection and
analysis. The analysis is based upon the method of key incident analysis and the metaphor of the ‘iceberg’.

**Key incidents and the iceberg metaphor**

The key incident analysis has its roots in the ethnographic research tradition. "The analysis of qualitative data in which incidents or events have been recorded in extensive descriptive detail. Analysis of the data leads the researcher to focus on certain incidents as key incidents, or concrete instances of the working of abstract principles of social organization” (Wilcox 1980, 9). A 'key incident' "is key in that the researcher assumes intuitively that the event chosen has the potential to make explicit a theoretical 'loading'. (...) A key event is key in that it brings to awareness latent, intuitive judgments the analyst has already made about salient patterns in the data. Once brought to awareness these judgments can be reflected upon critically" (Erickson 1985, 108).

Herrlitz (1994) pays attention to the metonymical nature of possible incidents. He refers to Anderson-Levitt (1987), who studied initial reading education in France. She aimed at stimulating American readers to scrutinize the American culture of education by presenting them this perspective from abroad – trying to make the familiar strange. She draws the conclusion that "'Knowledge for teaching', (...) means whatever a teacher has to know or know how to do in order to teach. It does not refer to teachers' familiarity with scientific theories of reading instruction. Nor does it refer to teachers' behaviour per se (...). Rather, this report concerns teachers' practical professional knowledge, their savoir faire or 'know how': neither what they think nor what they do but *what they think as they are doing what they do*. Knowledge, then, is a shorthand term for the beliefs, values, expectations,
mental models, and formulas for doing things which the teachers use in interpreting and generating classroom events" (Anderson-Levitt 1987, 173-174, italics by A-L.).

Herrlitz accepts Anderson-Levitt's conclusion on the comparative potential of this analysis of practical-professional knowledge. But he evaluates the diversity of beliefs, values, expectations, mental models and formulas to be too incoherent. In an analysis of a key incident, he clarifies that such an incident not only reveals the teacher’s actualized know how. An incident also offers the opportunity to reconstruct the conceptual basis of that know-how; to reconstruct the conceptual basis of the teaching-learning situation. Furthermore, key incident analysis illuminates more general principles of language pedagogy. According to Herrlitz, an incident is an iceberg, the top of it functions as a pars pro toto for its under the surface hidden layers (cf. Herrlitz, 2007)

An incident analysis might focus on revealing its metonymical nature. A metonymy has a "referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to stand for another" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 36, italics by L. & J.). An incident analysis presents us the universal in the concrete' (cf. Erickson 1977, 61). An incident represents the professional-practical actions by a teacher; incident analysis reveals the metonymical nature of the incident and illuminates hidden cultural-educational models, which have been constructed in educational traditions, models in which teachers and students have been socialized (Tripp, 1994). An incident analysis offers the possibility to reveal "the deepest - and most uncertain - level of analysis (...) those 'taken-for-granted' assumptions which, although rarely or never explicitly invoked or discussed by participants, nevertheless define the process of 'doing education'. We have called these kinds of assumptions 'educational ground-rules" (Mercer 1991,51).
In our program, we try to confront the student teachers with their own educational-ground rules, by confronting them with other and sometimes contradictory rules. We stimulate them to make their ‘familiar strange’. For that purpose, their ‘final task’ is rather important.

**Final task: exploring one's own teaching and teaching beliefs**

The final task student teachers are asked to do refers to an examination of the student teacher's own teaching practice and underlying perceptions. This task serves as a good illustration of the approach discussed in this article because all central elements of the approach are combined. The aim is to understand one's own teaching behavior, professional identity, and one's teaching and learning context and the different discourses. The task requires explicitly reflecting instrumentally, substantially, and critically. It is a task that brings together practice and the theory studied all year.

Concretely, the student teacher is asked to audio record about ten lessons and to choose, based on a motivation, one of those lessons as a unit of analysis. The recording is transcribed to a written protocol of the lesson. The recording and the written protocol are one of the sources for the analysis, next to other sources such as lesson preparations, a report and evaluation of the lesson, students' reports and evaluations of the lesson, etc. Furthermore, the student teacher is asked to first analyze the knowledge sources used in this lesson, similar to the analysis of used and needed knowledge Clift (1991) provides of a young teacher called Lesley, who is learning to teach secondary school English (an
article already studied and discussed in the first week of the teacher education program). Secondly, the student teacher is asked to discuss and analyze the choices she made regarding classroom management, subject content, and subject pedagogy, etc. The subject content is expected to be analyzed using Goodlad's distinction in curriculum domains, and the relevant literature that was studied during the year regarding the specific content. Regarding the subject pedagogical choices, the student teacher is expected to discuss the specific subject pedagogy in relation to other possible choices. Thirdly, the student teacher is asked to discuss and analyze the problems or incidents, related to content, pedagogy, and other educational aspects. With both the analysis of the choice and the problems, the student teacher is asked to illustrate this with fragments out of the written protocol, and if possible, to combine this with the other data sources. Ideally, but not always possible, the student teacher tries to search and select a key incident, which represents her way of teaching and thinking, using the iceberg method to analyze the different meanings. Finally, the student teacher is asked to describe herself in terms of her professional identity, so how she perceives herself as a teacher in Dutch language and literature (self-image, task perceptions, motivation, self-esteem, etc.), and how she perceives her own further professional development, using the previous analysis to illustrate her perceptions. This description of one's self as a teacher can be both using educational concepts and subject pedagogical concepts. In addition, evaluations and feedback of students, colleagues, mentors, school administrator, etc., are reported and reflected on. The complete analysis is discussed with the teacher educators and, ideally, with the other student teachers and the mentor of the school.
Jennifer's analysis of her teaching: an example.

To conclude, the analysis of one student teacher will be presented here. Jennifer is a student teacher of 26 years, and joined the graduate school of teaching after she got her master in Dutch language and literature. What follows is a summary of her final analysis, starting with her reasons for choosing the specific lesson, followed by her reflections on her choices, problems, goals, her own behavior and perceptions, and finally her role in the subject department. This summary is self-evidently an interpretation of the authors, but they tried to stay as close as possible to the original report of Jennifer's final analysis, which was 8731 words and written in Dutch.

As a starting point of her final analysis of herself as a teacher and her teaching, she selected a lesson in Dutch literature. Her reasons to choose this lesson for her analysis are related to her ideal images of a teacher in Dutch language and literature and her changing relationship through the year with this group of students. Inspiring lessons in Dutch literature in secondary education constituted her ideal image of being a teacher, and made her at the end choose to study Dutch literature at the university. By now, she is very ware that teaching L1 is much more than only literature. Actually, it is only a very small part of the curriculum these days, which made her aware that those few hours of teaching Dutch literature are very precious. Her reflection after the lesson on her teaching made her wonder whether she actually really saw those lessons as so precious. Her second reason for choosing this lesson was related to a change in working climate in this group

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4 The name is a pseudonym. The student teacher gave permission to the authors to report and discuss her work in this article.
due to a different pedagogical approach. A few months ago, she perceived the working climate in this group as negative, which impacted her functioning as a teacher. In response, she reorganized her lessons, and used methods that stimulated students’ active and self-regulated learning processes. It seemed that the working climate improved, which again also affected her teaching behavior. Both reasons made her curious to examine this lesson in this group.

The main aim of the lesson was a group discussion about a novel of a Dutch author, Leon de Winter, called 'De hemel van Hollywood' [The heaven of Hollywood]. It was part of a task, as formulated in their instruction book on literature analysis. Because the students had to finish their reading report of the book within two weeks, in which they especially had to express their own opinions about the novel, she decided to have a group discussion about the book. The decision to read this book was made by the subject department, based on that it was one of the books all students bought at the beginning of the year (a special offer of the publisher), and the author is known as a writer relatively easy to read, though nobody of the subject department had actually read the book yet.

The class was a group of 21 students (11 girls and 9 boys), about 16 years in age, at the 4th grade of pre-university education. The lesson took place one Wednesday morning, from 10.50 AM to 11.35 AM, after the first break. To improve the learning climate, Jennifer had made concrete agreements a few weeks ago with some students, who constantly misbehaved in terms of not paying attention, talking too much, and so disrupting her lessons. Two of these students are two girls called Milou and Marlon.

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Teacher: Ok, today we would talk about the book you all read, 'The Heaven of Hollywood'. We would talk about it today, if you had any questions about it...

Milou & Marlon: (are talking with each other)

Teacher: Milou and Marlon, do you still have our agreement in your mind?

Milou & Marlon: Yes

Teacher: So, I would say, let’s start! Who would like to say something about the book?

Martijn: (raises his hand)

Teacher: Martijn?

Martijn: Yes, about the last part, then suddenly they turn the whole story up side down again, stating this is possible, and this is possible…

Teacher: You say: they turn the story up side down. What do you mean exactly? It sounds rather negative…

What follows is a conversation between Martijn, the teacher and some other students about who exactly is the main character. Because the main character gets different names in the story and after the last part it is not clear at all anymore who the main character is. The teacher starts to change her questions, asking the students about the title and the structure of the book because it looks like a movie script.

Teacher: What’s the book’s structure actually?

Frank: There are a lot of flash backs

Teacher: Yes, is it one big flash back? Or…uh… how many parts does the book have?

Frank: (is silent)

Teacher: What’s the first part about?

Frank: About the robbery and so on

Teacher: Yes, about how the robbery on that group of the casino is being done… But does the structure of the first part remind you of something? It looks pretty much like a movie script, doesn’t it? How can we know that?

Frank: (is silent)

Teacher: Who remembers the first sentence of the book?

Frank: (whispering) who remember a first sentence anyway?

Teacher: The book starts with the sentence (teacher takes the book)... Nicole, can you please read the first sentence out loud

Nicole: (reads out loud) If this was a movie, then...

Teacher: Exactly… What is actually described in chapter 2 till chapter 31? Who
remembers? Susanne?

Susanne Also about the robbery…

Teacher Yes, something is told about that robbery but what else is being told?

Susanne It is a flash back, about how they met and how they will do the robbery

Teacher Yes, exactly, it is one big flash back to the time before the robbery

(\textit{the conversation continues like this for a while})

Teacher Why actually is the book called ‘The heaven of Hollywood’ and not… uh… for instance ‘The heaven of New York’?

Jacky Because it is the name of that script from that woman…

Teacher What actually can you tell about that woman and the main characters? What do they have in common?

Jacky They are all actors

Teacher Yes, indeed, they all had a career as actor, and just to return to the title, why Hollywood? What is Hollywood?

Jacky That’s where they make movies

Teacher Hollywood is the world of glamour and glittering, isn’t it? That’s where it happens. There, you can become famous and it is indeed the place where they make movies. It’s actually a fictional world, isn’t it? There, things happen that don’t happen in real life… What is truth? That’s the theme of the story. You were just talking about a movie script… but.. uh… are there other things in the book that refer to movie scripts?... There a few in the book… (\textit{Teacher takes the book})... Let’s see, where was it again? Do you remember? Just take the book and look it up… uh… Simone?

SimoneUh…

(\textit{Bobby is one of the few who takes the book})

Teacher Bobby?

Bobby On the last page, it says ‘fade out’

Teacher What is a fade out?

Bobby That it slowly disappears

Teacher Yes, that’s something you see quite often at the end of a movie, don’t you? That the screen slowly turns dark… that’s a fade out…
Jennifer's analysis starts with some instrumental reflections about her choices regarding the previous knowledge of her students (she assumed everybody had read the book already, which was not true), and the pro's and con's of the method of group discussion. Reflecting on the dialogue between her and the students, she observes that she plays a central role by repeating and paraphrasing everything the students say (even trying to say the same thing in three ways, making it less clear at the end), and by asking questions to the students who said something, and also to the ones who remain silent. In her view, she is mainly the one talking, making the dialogue almost a monologue. It gave her the feeling she was playing squash: playing the ball (question) against the wall (student) and immediately the ball returns.

Wondering whether she took the students actually serious, she starts to analyze her goals during her teaching. She thinks she reacted to everything that is said because she wanted to stimulate the silent students to join the discussion. Furthermore, she wanted to show that is allowed to have different interpretations of a novel, and that is also allowed to express your own interpretation. Another goal, somehow contrary to the previous one, was that she wanted them to see that the structure of the story was related to the content, and that she assumed that the students would not have noticed this relationship, making her formulate closed questions to get the, according to her, right answer. The intened group discussion changed into an interactive teaching moment, where she wanted to teach them something. Her intention was also to list the opinions of the students about the novel, but she did not succeed. Her way of asking questions was very closed, so she was not to loose control over the conversation. She assumes that this was probably also the reason that at the end she actually tells the students all 'answers'.

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Afterwards, she does not know whether the students really understood the novel. She did not check this because she expected to read this in the final reports.

Another reason she asked so many questions and hardly answers any questions from the students, is, according to Jennifer, related to the content of the book: the book itself hardly gives any answers. The book itself was more complicated than expected (by her and her subject colleagues), and discussing such a book, or discussing novels in general, turns out to be rather complex. In her perception of literature interpretation, you cannot say that an interpretation is good or bad, but she noticed that both the students and she herself have this need. She realized now that she actually should not have given that many answers, but she should have asked more open questions that would have stimulated her students' thinking.

Reflecting on her urge to provide the right answers, in this lesson and in other lessons, she concludes that she likes to please the students. Especially when they started to react in annoyed way, asking for the right answer after she said that many interpretations were possible. In her perception, she failed in explaining this point of view to the students. She is aware that this urge of her students is typical for their age. Moreover, she realizes that she actually cannot stand students being upset with her, that she often perceived their comments in a personal way instead of professional way. It makes her concluded that her feelings of insecurity (as the student evaluations seem to confirm, stating that she often acts insecure), make her talk so much. She also realizes that this was actually her first lesson in which she discussed a novel, and that she somehow underestimated the complexity of it. Moreover, she hardly used the method of group discussion before. But despite all this, she notes that the students behaved as they
usually do in her lessons. In addition, her analysis contains an extended description and discussion of her own teaching behavior in general, the change in learning climate and the way she handles students who misbehave, based on students' and her own evaluations, using the QTI-questionnaires on teacher interaction (Brekelmans, Wubbels & Créton, 1990; cf. Wubbels, Brekelmans, den Brok & van Tartwijk, 2006). Her analysis also contains some critical reflections of these questionnaires. Both will not further reported in this summary.

Regarding her main goals of the lessons, she wonders what the contribution was to the general development of her students. Her intentions were that her students would become familiar with this novel, more in general with fiction and the particular problem this novel discusses, namely the friction between the fictional and the real world, to stimulate their cultural development, and to let them reflect individually and together. Her analysis makes her conclude that she probably did not really accomplish these goals, that her lesson actually might have been counterproductive, though one student wrote his final report that especially this lesson helped him to understand the novel and helped him making his report.

Another set of conclusions she draws at the end refers to the impact of the conversation with her students on her own perceptions of the novel. She reveals that she actually did not like the novel at all (the decision to read this book was a subject department decision, which will be discussed later on). She did not like the genre, and she thought the structure was too artificial. However, as she reports, some of students' interpretations made her actually appreciate the novel more.
In her final analysis, she does not reflect on her dislike of the novel in relation to the lesson, though in discussing her analysis with her teacher educators and colleague student teachers, she started to understand that it impacted her teaching behavior and the interaction with the students strongly. Her dislike impacted her enthusiasm and motivation, her initial reaction to the students' answers, and also her urge to control. The lesson would have been very different if she would have chosen a book she (and the majority of the students) would have liked.

That brings her at the end of her analysis to the decision taken by the subject department, and her own role as a colleague. She was present when the decision was taken, but she did not dare to object. Initially she agreed with her colleagues. As mentioned, the novel was chosen because all students had bought the novel in the beginning of the year, and the author was assumed to be a good one and easy to read for the students, though nobody had read the novel yet. After reading the novel, however, Jennifer was in despair, because as she writes in her analysis: "the book is really horrible (for many reasons)". However, she did not dare to disagree. As a student teacher, she tries to adapt to the subject department as much as possible, and she felt too unexperienced to state that the novel was inadequate. Another reason to go along was that lately so many subject department decisions were changed. She did not want to confront her students with another change in decisions, also out of fear for her own credibility in the eyes of her students. However, as she tells in her analysis, a few weeks after the lesson, she raised the question in a meeting of the subject department why the novel was chosen. This discussion, initiated by her, lead to the conclusion of all colleagues that the novel was not a good choice. Moreover, considering the aim of lessons in literature, it actually
is unnecessary to let all students read the same book. Furthermore, they discussed the general aims of their literature education and how they actually define story analysis and interpretation. They concluded that they were too strict in following the instruction book on literature analysis. Their general aim was that students should enjoy reading novels, that they should discover that literature is a complex expression of emotions, and that many different interpretations can play a role. And especially that literature education always should be a dialogue. Jennifer writes that she completely agrees and that a group conversation was indeed a good choice.

Above we summarized Jennifer’s analysis. In general, this analysis of her own teaching behavior illustrates how she uses different theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning. She shows an awareness of how her biography influences her image of being a teacher in L1. She is also aware of different aims of literature education. She experiences in some sense the role of the book market in establishing a school canon of texts. She understands the problems students may experience with the literary repertoire of a text. She recognizes the possible conflict between ‘the teacher’s text and the students’ text. Concerning the classroom interaction she knows the differences and the different functions of open and closed questions, she is aware of the distinction between monologic and dialogic interaction and the role of students in these forms of interaction, and the relation to the objective (and the possible result) of the lesson. She also perceives the position of a student teacher in a subject department, and her own role as a starting teacher in a classroom of students, which ask for certainty. Her initiative to discuss the
choice of the novel in the subject department meeting, which can be seen as a micro-political action, shows her growing professional awareness.

**Concluding remarks**

The strength of our approach providing a theoretical framework is that student teachers become more aware of the constellation of which they are a part of, of the many ongoing and changing discussions in L1 language and literature, subject pedagogy, and educational theory, of how much and how little there is to know about learning and teaching, etc. In other words, it provides them a frame to understand and examine their practice. Another advantage of this approach is that student teachers are becoming familiar with using theories and research literature related to teaching and education.

In the light of the gap between theory and practice, the main pedagogical elements in this approach are that a theoretical framework is used that is explicitly introduced, and consists of recent and relevant theories and research. Furthermore, that it is introduced in the beginning of the program, and used throughout the year. Finally, in all tasks the student teachers are challenged to rethink their practice using theory. So, all theoretical notions are brought in strongly related to the daily classroom and school practice.

A possible criticism remains that the focus is too much on theory and research, which, in a one-year program, goes at the expense of preparing teachers adequately to teach and organize learning environments. In our experience, such a criticism can only be avoided if the program at the graduate school keeps a strong focus on student teachers'
practice, and is strongly integrated with and attuned to the teacher education program in the schools, where the schools are largely responsible for training the student teachers in the daily teaching practice and supporting them in their daily teaching problem.

A source of such criticism seems to be that many teacher educators seem to have a fear for theory and a too strong practical orientation. This fear is perhaps based on their experiencing teachers’ skepticism towards theory, who are frustrated by theory, especially theory in terms of top down innovations in which theoretical concepts are functioning as prescriptions for teachers, instead of theory supporting teachers to understand their own practice (cf. van Veen, 2008).

One condition for this approach is teacher educators to have a familiarity with and a focus on theory. Beyond that, it actually assumes a particular conception of what teachers are or should be. Many conceptions of teachers’ professionality can be found, such as being educated practitioners, artists, autonomous professionals, intellectuals, change agents, etc. In our view, teachers, especially the ones with an academic education, should be considered as academics in the sense of having an intellectual orientation to teaching and learning. Self-evidently without neglecting the most important element in teaching, namely the relationship with students.

More specific, and perhaps very obvious, teacher educators should be experts in both theory and practice, having a deep understanding of both. Moreover, they should be expert in the pedagogy of the relationship between both: being able to explain theory to (student) teachers and apply theories to their practice, and the other way around, show how teachers’ practice can be understood using theory. The gap between theory and practice might be non-existent if the right pedagogy is used.
A final remark refers to the quality of student teachers’ theoretical framework. It is assumed that an elaborated framework is needed to understand all complexities of teaching and learning. However, after completing an one-year teacher education program, student teachers are often not such ‘connoisseurs’ (Eisner, 1991) yet. Due to their often still limited knowledge and experiences, they might not see everything there is to see. However, we believe that our approach provides them a start of an intellectual inquiry that can last a whole teaching life long.

References


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