

Perspectives of Dutch Teachers with Non-dominant Cultural Backgrounds on Effective  
Teaching in Culturally Diverse Classrooms

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### **Abstract**

Dutch classes become more diverse every year, yet the average teacher is unable to effectively teach all students, as shown by the lower academic achievement of students with a culturally non-dominant (CND) background. CND teachers are presumed to be better equipped to teach diverse classes because they are familiar with both dominant and non-dominant cultures. This qualitative study examined the perspectives of 14 Dutch teachers with culturally non-dominant backgrounds on effective teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. Drawing upon a social-constructivist research paradigm, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to examine how CND teachers define effective teaching. Interviews were analysed in an interpretivist way through iterative coding and the use of case descriptions. One central theme emerged: effective teaching is about making students feel seen. Teachers achieved this by using culturally responsive teaching practices (i.e., incorporate students' cultures and experiences in teaching), which they considered normal practice. As the average white Dutch teacher does not share this opinion, this study underscores the importance of integrating culturally responsive teaching in teacher education.

*Key words: Culturally Responsive Teaching, Diverse Classrooms, Feeling Seen*

## **Perspectives of Dutch Teachers with Non-dominant Cultural Backgrounds on Effective Teaching in Culturally Diverse Classrooms**

Classrooms in the Netherlands are becoming more diverse every year, making it imperative that teachers know how to effectively educate all students (Hogan & Hathcote, 2013). However, certain groups of students currently do not accomplish their educational objectives. For example, 21% of Dutch students with a culturally non-dominant background have not (yet) graduated secondary education seven years after starting, compared to 9% of Dutch students with a culturally dominant background (CBS, 2021a). These students also scored lower on reading, mathematics, and science compared to their native-born peers (OECD, 2019). This performance difference indicates an educational system with educators who are unprepared to teach a diverse student population, resulting in lower academic achievement for culturally non-dominant students and a higher drop-out rate (CBS, 2021a). In this study, the term “culturally non-dominant” is used to refer to individuals (students and teachers) belonging to cultural groups that can be visibly identified, differ in social practices and ideals from the majority group in a particular nation or region, and do not hold most of the institutional power (Carter, 2005; Hand, 2010).

Quality teaching is the biggest influence on student achievement, according to Alton-Lee’s (2003) synthesis of quality teaching practices for diverse students. Differences between students explain up to 59% of variance in student performance (Alton-Lee, 2003). One difference is teachers’ attitudes and beliefs regarding diversity. Attitudes heavily influence teaching practice, and reflect teachers’ own experiences and backgrounds (Cabello & Burstein, 1995; van den Bergh et al., 2010). A study on the beliefs of Dutch teachers found that up to 40% of teachers adhere to a view of cultural blindness, meaning they reject the idea that diversity influences student achievement (van Middelkoop et al., 2017). The remaining teachers either recognised or understood the influence of diversity, but did not necessarily

translate their beliefs into their teaching, claiming a lack of skills, knowledge, or time prevented them. Teaching with a view of cultural blindness can decrease the achievement of CND students, as diversity does influence student achievement and ignoring its influence will not solve the problem (Caldera, 2018).

A group of teachers who are presumably better equipped to teach diverse classes (>25% of students are CND) are teachers born and raised in the Netherlands with a CND background (Hawk et al., 2002). Having grown up with CND values and beliefs, but simultaneously having received their education and teacher training in the Netherlands, they are familiar with both dominant and non-dominant culture. This combination makes them uniquely qualified to teach CND students, as they have been one themselves (Hawk et al., 2002). Their experiences as a CND student possibly also influenced their views on diversity, and consequently their teaching practices. For example, research into Australian teachers found that all Indigenous teachers considered their teaching to be heavily influenced by their own student experiences and cultural heritage (Santoro, 2007). CND teachers are generally also more of the importance of taking ethnicity and culture into account in education (Subrahmanyam et al., 2000). However, scant research exists regarding Dutch CND teachers' perspectives on effective teaching. Therefore, this study will examine how Dutch CND teachers define effective teaching of diverse classes, while also exploring how their experiences as students influence their current practices.

### **Dutch Context**

Before examining the specifics of teaching, a brief overview of Dutch society and its school system is presented to contextualise the influence of and views on race, ethnicity, and culture. In the Netherlands a strong dichotomy exists between the white Dutch population and “the Others”, or people with a migration background (Ghorashi, 2020). Rooted in the historical idea of Dutch superiority, migrants have been framed as problematic, lazy, and

having deviant cultures (Ghorashi, 2020). Yet, the majority of white Dutch will deny the existence of racism in the Netherlands, instead describing a colour-blind meritocratic philosophy that awards everyone equal opportunities (Weiner, 2014). In doing so, they also deny racial inequalities and their own privileged access to important social resources such as education (Weiner, 2014).

In 2022, approximately 25% of the Netherlands had a migration background (CBS, 2022a), being either a first- or second-generation migrant. A distinction is made between so-called Western (11.6%) and non-Western (14.8%) immigration backgrounds, with the latter group consisting mainly of people coming from Turkey, Marocco, Surinam, and the Dutch Antilles (CBS, 2022a). This group specifically is often labelled as problematic in political and media discourse (Ghorashi, 2020), and experiences institutionalised racism and discrimination in multiple domains including education.

Dutch secondary education system is divided into three tracks. In ascending order of difficulty, they are: vmbo (pre-vocational), havo (pre-higher professional), and vwo (pre-university). Students with a non-Western migration background (hereafter grouped under CND students) are disproportionately recommended to attend vmbo by their primary school teachers (Weiner, 2014). Consequently, there is an overrepresentation of CND students in the lowest track with approximately 44% of them attending vmbo (excluding students in mixed-track classes), compared to 35% of white Dutch students (CBS, 2022b).

### **Theoretical Framework**

To create a clear overview, teaching practices will be divided into three categories, as described by Kennedy-Lewis (2012). This categorisation will hereafter be referred to as the three domains of teaching, namely; relationships, classroom management, and curriculum and instruction (C&I). An effective teacher should master all three domains, ensuring a wide range of excellent teaching qualities (Keely et al., 2016). The following will detail good

practice for each domain, their specific importance for CND students, and the different perspectives and qualities CND teachers bring in each.

### **Relationships**

The relationships domain entails sustained interactions between teacher and individual students, teacher and class, and students amongst themselves, in addition to any actions teachers or students take to initiate or maintain these relationships (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012). Good teacher-student relationships are characterised by high levels of caring (Muller, 2001), support (Liberante, 2012), mutual respect (Hawk et al., 2002), and low levels of criticism and conflict (Huan et al., 2012). They positively affect student outcomes such as motivation, academic achievement, social skills, and attitudes and connection to school (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013; Huan et al., 2012; Liberante, 2012; Muller et al., 1999). They also protect against negative outcomes such as disaffection from school, defiant behaviour and drop-out (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013; Huan et al., 2012).

Generally, teachers find a good teacher-student relationships important (Noguera, 1995), yet they do not have similar relationships with every student. Based on students' prior performance and behaviour, socioeconomic status, expectations, and ethnicity, teachers estimate whether investing in a relationship will pay off (Muller et al., 1999). Teachers tend to invest in students they expect to succeed (e.g., pass the class), which presents a problem for CND students, who are often most in need of the protective factors good teacher-student relationships bring, yet less likely to succeed in their teacher's eyes (Muller, 2001), especially when there is a racial or cultural mismatch (Hogan & Hathcote, 2013).

When there is a match, however, teacher-student relationships have a higher chance of success. In Milner's (2006) study of black professors' perspectives on the experience, impact and success of black teacher with black students, participants stressed the impact and benefit of minority teachers. According to the professors, the added value of CND teachers comes

from their ability to relate and connect to CND students. Their shared cultural backgrounds and experiences give them a deep understanding of their students' situations and needs, enabling these teachers to meaningfully impact students' academic and social success (Hawk et al., 2002; Milner, 2006). In addition, CND teachers help students visualise their future possibilities by being positive role-models (Atkins et al., 2014; Boser, 2014). In other words, teachers' first-hand cultural knowledge enables CND teachers to build better relationships with their CND students.

### **Classroom Management**

Classroom management includes “the variety of strategies teachers use on a daily basis to build a positive classroom environment that is structured, engaging, and productive, and encourages student learning and growth” (Gaias et al., 2019, p. 124). This includes establishing clear expectations, rules, and procedures; monitoring behaviour and compliance; and anticipating and reacting to students' needs (Brophy, 1986; Conroy et al., 2008). A key aspect of classroom management is the teacher-student relationship (Marzano & Marzano, 2003), which helps the teacher anticipate student needs (Brophy, 1986) and encourage engagement and participation (Gaias et al., 2019).

Classroom management affects student achievement mainly because it influences how long students spend engaged in learning activities (Brophy, 1986). To manage diverse classes, teachers have to consider cultural differences between students, which should result in culturally responsive management that focusses on equity, respect for identity, and incorporation of cultural background, creating a learning environment that is engaging and fair for everyone (Gay, 2006). Such an environment is especially important for CND students, as they are often the ones being treated unfairly. Skiba et al. (2002) found that CND students are punished significantly more and more harshly than their white counterparts. This difference is likely due to classroom management strategies designed by white teachers not

being appropriate for CND students (Grossman, 1995). Standards of appropriate behaviour are influenced by culture, and when this differs between teacher and students, conflict is more prevalent (Milner & Tenore, 2010; Weinstein et al., 2004). In contrast, Larson and Bradshaw (2017) found that CND teacher use more culturally responsive management, which could be explained by their better understanding of CND students' cultural behaviours and challenges (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Mixed findings exist on this topic, as Gaias et al. (2019) found that CND teacher do not use more culturally responsive techniques, which was attributed to a lack of training. More research is needed to ascertain whether CND teachers do indeed use more culturally responsive management and what motivates them to do so.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

The domain of curriculum and instruction consists of what is taught (curriculum) and how it is taught (instruction) (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012). Research prescribes that the curriculum is relevant and meaningful to students (Liberante, 2012), elicits a sense of purpose (Ritchhart, 2007), is contextualised within students' prior knowledge (Young, 2014), and that curricular goals are aligned with assessment and instruction (Alton-Lee, 2003). While curricula function as a roadmap of prescribed topics, facts, and skills to be learned, what students actually learn, the enacted curriculum, depends on the teachers' instruction (Ritchhart, 2007).

Instruction should promote student understanding, requiring teachers to thoroughly know their subjects and have clear learning goals in mind (Alton-Lee, 2003; Smittle, 2003). Instruction should also ensure time-on-task (Chickering & Gamson, 1987), and facilitate differentiation between students, scaffolding of learning, and feedback (Alton-Lee, 2003; Gurney, 2007). In addition, information should be presented in a way that makes sense to students and is easy to remember and apply (Slavin, 1995).

Achieving all this seems impossible in diverse classrooms. Students may vary in ethnicity, culture, belief system or learning preferences (Aydin et al., 2017), while curriculum



and instruction methods are designed mainly to fit white students. Consequently, the written curriculum does not reflect the experiences of CND students, and is thus less relevant and contextualised, leading to ineffective learning (Liberante, 2012). In addition, teachers themselves have been taught, and teach, with instructional methods that do not match CND students' needs (Aydin et al., 2017), resulting in an experienced curriculum that does not engage them. For CND students to learn effectively, it is therefore important that teachers incorporate students' backgrounds, for example by using personal story telling, examples featuring CND people, cultural artifacts, or other things that explicitly include CND perspectives or identities (Gaias et al., 2019).

Although more research is needed about which specific practices CND teachers employ in C&I, it is known that problems such as cultural mismatch or lack of understanding about instructional preferences are less prevalent in diverse classes taught by CND teachers (Hogan & Hathcote, 2013). Thus, it seems that CND teachers can adjust the written curriculum to bring forth an enacted curriculum that is more suited to CND students (Milner, 2006).

### **Interdependence between Domains**

For overview purposes, this study divided teaching practices into three domains, however, realistically the domains are interconnected to the point of interdependence. Teacher-student relationships are vital for classroom management (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Without a relationship and the information gained from it, anticipating needs will be challenging. Simultaneously, classroom management is needed for C&I and vice versa (Brophy, 1987; Gay, 2006). Classroom management facilitates time-on-task during which to convey curriculum, while both delivery of management and curriculum rely on instruction. C&I, in turn, should be informed by relationships to become more contextualised in students' experiences (Hogan & Hathcote, 2013).

To teach effectively, teachers need mastery of all three domains. As argued earlier, CND teachers are better equipped for this task when it comes to diverse classes. Because of mixed findings on how CND teacher achieve this, this study explores the following research questions:

How do Dutch teachers of non-dominant cultural backgrounds define effective teaching in culturally diverse secondary school classrooms?

- a. What teaching practices do they use and to what extent do they take diversity into account in their teaching?
- b. How do their past experiences as students shape their definition of effective teaching and their teaching practices?
- c. What overlaps between the three domains of teaching exist in their definition of effective teaching and their teaching practices?

### **Method**

This study uses a social-constructivist research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), meaning it is assumed that there are many realities, which are socially constructed. Consequently, the knower is inseparable from the known, because of their interaction. This knowledge construction is also bound by values individuals hold. Thus, data gathered were constructed through interaction between researcher and participants.

As a white Dutch female who attended vwo and university, the researcher recognises her position of privilege and her limited experience with CND groups. While aware of (possible) biases, this positionality may have led to biased interpretations of information given by participants (e.g., when estimating the impact of participants' student experiences on their current teaching).

## **Data Collection**

Data was collected in March and April 2022 in several large Dutch cities via convenience sample; participants were approached via existing connections of the researcher and colleagues. Participants were required to have the following characteristics: (1) belong to a CND group, (2) teach a diverse vmbo class, (3) have at least three years of teaching experience, and (4) have received primary and secondary education in the Netherlands. Classes were considered diverse when more than 25% of the students had a CND background (CBS, 2021c), which in the Netherlands mostly occurs in the vmbo track (CBS, 2021b). One participant currently teaches mbo (vocational education), but has recently taught vmbo as well. Participants were required to have three years of teaching experience because then they had moved past the induction stage, and developed more routine practices in their classroom (Pratt, 1989). The sample consisted of 14 participants (see Table 1).

**Table 1***Participant and Diverse Class Characteristics*

Participant Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Cultural Background	Years of Experience	Subject	Track(s) taught*	Non-Dominant Students	
							Percentage in Class	Ethnicities (aside from white Dutch)**
Amsah El Kaddouri	40	Female	Moroccan, Muslim	20	English	TL	70%	Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Egyptian
Emine Aslan	24	Female	Turkish, Muslim	4	English	MBO	>35%	Turkish, Moroccan, Eritrean, Congolese, Syrian, Afghan, UAE
Farida Benali	25	Female	Moroccan, Muslim	3	Economics	TL	60%	Turkish, Moroccan, Somali, Iraqi, Aruban,
Hakima El Moussati	27	Female	Moroccan, Muslim	5	Social Studies	TL	60%	Moroccan, Eritrean, Turkish, Somali, Gheneas, Antillean, Surinamese, Kurdish
Jasmin Sayid	32	Female	Afghan, Muslim	11	Design, Economics	TL	70%	Turkish, Moroccan, Syrian, Afghan
Matthew Jones	45	Male	Dutch/Afro-American	14	Economics	Havo	>25%	Moroccan, Syrian, Surinamese, Indonesian
Mia Doran	36	Female	Antillean	3	Social studies	B/K	>30%	Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean
Priya Martina	23	Female	Surinamese/Antillean	3	Social studies	TL/Havo	87.5%	Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese, Antillean
Rafa Karimi	30	Female	Afghan	6	English	TL	70%	Turkish, Moroccan, Curacaos, Spanish, Cape-Verdean Ethiopian
Ramesh Pinas	32	Male	Surinamese	9	Dutch	B/K	90%	Moroccan, Turkish

Rana Hassan	40	Female	Dutch-Iraqi	17	Social studies	B/K	>30%	Surinamese, Iraqi, Moroccan, Antillean
Samantha Chen	39	Female	Antillean	18	English	TL	33%	Surinamese, Antillean, Turkish, Moroccan, Afghan
Sinem Demir	25	Female	Turkish	3	English	TL	>30%	Uzbekistani, Iraqi, Indonesian
Sunan Kasem	34	Male	Thai	12	Economics	TL/Havo	30%	Moroccan, Somalian, Nigerian

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*Note.* \* Pre-vocational tracks in ascending difficulty: B – Basic, K – Middle Management, TL – Theoretical. Havo – Pre-higher professional education. \*\* As reported by participants.

Informed consent was obtained from each participant before the start of the interview, in accordance with university ethics board procedures (see Appendix A). Each interview was recorded, anonymised and transcribed. Recordings were uploaded to a password-protected folder and deleted from the recording device. Any personally identifying information was also stored in the secure folder, in case participants needed to be contacted for follow-up questions. This information was deleted after data analysis was completed.

The interviews took place via Microsoft Teams and were semi-structured, to allow the researcher to follow up on participants' responses and adapt questions to the participant and context (Mueller & Segal, 2014). Participants were asked to prepare for the interview by writing down a description of both the best and worst teacher they had as a student (see Appendix B). The interviews took approximately 60 to 90 minutes and detailed good teaching practices in each domain of teaching, what practices participants experienced as students, and their opinions on both. Example questions were: "How do you make decisions about the content you teach?" and "How would you characterise your classroom management?" (see Appendix C). When asked to provide examples, participants were instructed to keep one specific class in mind so teaching practices could later be linked to class diversity when relevant.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed an interpretivist approach, which assumes that the researcher's interests, knowledge, experiences, assumptions, and possible biases influence the coding process and emerging codes and themes (Charmaz & Smith, 2003). The steps of thematic analysis (Nowel et al., 2017) were followed. The data were coded inductively; codes were created based on the data during an iterative coding process, without an a priori hypothesis. The three domains of teaching were used as points of departure, as mentioned by Charmaz and Smith, to start organising and interpreting the data. The interview transcripts were coded

using Dedoose. The final code tree can be found in Appendix D. The coding process involved two cycles of coding, as described by Saldaña (2013). The first cycle employed descriptive and value coding where units of meaning (e.g., a sentence) were given codes to identify concepts and themes within the data. Descriptive codes showed topics such as “Being aware of being different”, while value codes showed norms, values, and opinions such as “Being open and tolerant”. Concurrently, memos were used to document theoretical and reflective thoughts about codes and themes, as described by Nowel et al.

In the second cycle, pattern and theoretical coding were used to code map existing codes into different categories (e.g., “Perspective on diversity”), identify relationships and form theoretical constructs, and develop major themes. During this process, non-saturated codes were set aside to be used as counter examples where possible. Codes were considered non-saturated when they were coded fewer than 10 times, or when they overlapped with or could not be related to other codes (e.g., “Classroom management: most important domain”). Case descriptions, or overviews, were created to compare participants’ teaching practices and connect them to their past experiences (see Appendix E).

### **Limitations and Trustworthiness**

This study has several limitations. First, all data were analysed by one researcher belonging to the culturally dominant group. Future studies would benefit from including researchers with varied cultural backgrounds. Second, no observations were carried out to confirm whether descriptions of teaching practices given by teachers were accurate. Possibly participants have presented more socially desirable versions of their teaching (Grimm, 2010). Third, this study only divided between culturally dominant and non-dominant groups, while great variety also exists within CND groups. Regardless of these limitations, several steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of this study.

Trustworthiness of qualitative studies can be assessed through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility, or recognisability, is promoted through member checking. Participants could inspect their transcript for misrepresentations of their words and make objections; none were made. Transferability is ensured through thick description (e.g., quotes and interpretations) providing naturalistic generalisation, as described by Stake (1995). Also, a clear positionality statement of the researcher and their involvement in data construction allows readers to judge transferability. Dependability is achieved through clear documentation of the research process, in this case via the method section and appendices. Confirmability, establishing that findings are derived from the data, is realised when the other three criteria are met.

### **Findings**

The following details the teaching practices of the 14 interviewed teachers and how they used the three domains of teaching to make their students feel seen. Participants' secondary school experiences and how these influenced their current teaching are also discussed. Specific attention is given to participants' experiences of race and racism. Research question c, exploring overlaps between the domains of teaching, has largely been abandoned as the data did not lead to substantial new insights, except for a ranking of the three domains.

#### **Teaching Practices: Making Students Feel Seen**

The teachers in this study agreed that effectively teaching diverse classes is about making *all* students feel seen. Effective teachers tell and show their students: I see you. This seeing goes further than merely viewing students. It is about making students feel recognised and accepted for who they are. It is about being understood without too much explanation. It is a feeling of identification with someone or something that reflects students' own experiences back to them (Singer et al., 2021). Not all participants described this phenomenon



as directly or clearly, but in their explanations of their teaching practices, “making students feel seen” was the main theme.

The theme was immediately visible when participants were asked to rank the three domains of teaching in order of importance. Nine participants put relationships on number one, because “relationship is the prerequisite from which you can learn”, in Rana’s words. Participants called relationships the “foundation” of teaching and often called their students the best part of their job. They also felt that good relationships improved both one’s classroom management and C&I. Without a relationship, participants reasoned, students would not care to listen to their teachers’ instruction and rules because “children don’t learn from people they don’t like”. Teachers would also not know their students well enough to adjust pedagogy or curriculum to fit students’ needs. Classroom management was ranked closely below relationships as participants considered the domains to be intertwined, while C&I came last. Three participants found all domains equally important. Mia explained how the domains simply need each other to work:

I think all of them have to be really good, you have to be able to pull it all off. And then just look closely at the class, what do they need at this moment in the lesson. Is it more classroom management, is it more relationships, is it more that they just want to get into the material? You have to be prepared for everything.

### ***Relationships***

Participants strove to make students feel seen especially in the domain of relationships. They considered relationships to be good when students felt safe, seen and heard in class. Samantha described it as “lead[ing] them to a point, where they can experience peace, where they feel at ease with you in the classroom, that they feel seen and heard in the classroom, loved”. Such relationships were built on equality, interest, and availability. Equality meant that teachers did not abuse their position of power. Instead, participants

emphasised mutual respect, where students respected teachers' authority, and teachers respected students' identity, opinions, and rights. Being "genuinely interested in students" was also crucial, for example by enquiring about students' out-of-class endeavours, and bringing these topics up in later conversations. Six participants also established some form of contact with each student before class, for example greeting students at the door. Being available for questions, help, or a friendly chat also benefitted relationships according to participants. Lastly, participants felt that teachers should always reflect on their own behaviour first, before blaming a student when the teacher-student relationship goes sour.

Regarding diversity, few participants mentioned changing their approach to relationships when teaching a diverse class. They stated not to take ethnicity or culture into account explicitly, instead looking at individual characteristics (which still includes both). Based on these characteristics, participants might change how they talk to students or how they interpret their behaviour. Meanwhile, participants did admit that having broad cultural knowledge tremendously helped teacher-student relationships if they incorporated it in their teaching. Sunan explained:

You have to remember that people from different ethnic backgrounds also have different customs and values. And that means that if you want to have a good relationship with someone, you have to ... know about it. And if you have knowledge of that, and you show it, then you often get appreciation back.

Sunan could make his CND students feel welcome, safe, and seen because he has made an effort to familiarise himself with other cultures. Accordingly, participants found it was not their own ethnicity per se that helped them connect with students, but their knowledge about different cultures. Still, eight participants mentioned that their own ethnicity did matter to the students. CND students preferred teachers who were "not Dutch and white" and were more open towards them. They could identify better with non-white teachers and

saw them as role-models. It gave CND students a “piece of understanding and the feeling that you’re just not different”, according to Farida.

This entrance into CND students’ world of life mainly came from participants’ own experiences in secondary school. Past teachers greatly influenced participants’ current teaching, as participants copied practices they liked as students, and avoided those they did not like. According to participants, good practices were paying attention to students, motivating them through compliments, and making them feel safe. Good teachers were approachable, open to conversation, and interested in other cultures. In short, good teachers saw their students. In Mia’s words: “But she did see you and that’s what I liked about her. She saw me. And that was the first teacher in my whole school career who saw me”.

In contrast, bad teachers were described as having no relationship with their students. They were quick to judge, uninterested, prejudiced and in some cases even racist. Mia described how she was made to feel “like [she] was nothing” and not a “full-fledged Dutchman” simply because of her skin colour. She felt otherwise “super Dutch”, having been raised by her white Dutch single-mother.

Participants also disapproved of having low expectations of students. Six participants described how their primary and secondary school teachers expected little of their academic success. These participants felt they had been given a track advice that was too low (i.e., vmbo), despite having good grades. Even Amsah, who rightfully attended vwo, was underestimated and talked out of becoming a surgeon. She stated:

You are doubted more often: “Oh, should you do that? And are you sure?” Because I wanted to become a surgeon ( . . . ) But I was talked out of it, so much so that in the end I didn't want to do it anymore. ( . . . ) if you are told day in and day out: “That is too ambitious, don't do it”. At a certain point I thought: ( . . . ) well, you know what, never mind, it's not going to work out.

This example illustrates how low expectations can impact CND students academically. Consequently, Amsah became a teacher herself specifically to support and encourage her students to realise their ambitions. Similarly, Matthew instils a “growth mindset” in his students, teaching them to focus on what they can achieve, instead of where they are now.

### *Classroom Management*

The domain of classroom management was more subtly connected to the main theme of making students feel seen. Participants described their classroom management mostly in terms of rules and structure, which seem to stand apart from students and their feelings. However, as the end result of classroom management is a positive class environment, making students feel seen was definitely a priority.

To start with, rules were generally about listening to the teacher, having the necessary materials ready, and being respectful towards others. Two participants determined these rules together with their students to give them “a say in class and the class situation itself”. This way, students felt listened to and more comfortable in class. Once rules were established, consistency was key; students should know what to expect. Participants used a standard class structure to remain consistent, often first establishing contact with students through a handshake or chat. In participants’ experience, this helped maintain students’ attention during the lesson and also boosted teacher-student relationships. Participants considered the latter beneficial if they needed to address misbehaviour, as students who liked their teacher tended to accept correction more easily.

To further promote the acceptance of rules (or punishments), some participants explicitly explained why they deem certain behaviours unwanted. They also explained to students “that I disapprove of the behaviour, I do not disapprove of the student”, in Farida’s words. A punishment is nothing personal, and participants made sure their students knew this. Matthew added: “[Students] don’t like it when there is a conflict either. You as a teacher can

solve it by saying something nice the next time, then the student also knows; ( ... ) What was yesterday, was yesterday. We're moving on again".

To actually address misbehaviour, three participants used an "escalation ladder"; they warned a couple of times and then gave increasingly severe punishments if the student reoffended. Five participants also engaged in one-on-one "solution-focused conversation" with misbehaving students, instead of calling them out in class. Lastly, non-verbal communication (e.g., a [dis]approving look) was used to keep students in line.

When asked if they deviated from their normal management if they taught a more diverse class, most participants said they did not. Sunan and Farida were the exception. Both mentioned taking the ethnicity of certain boys (mostly Moroccan and Turkish) into account when addressing misbehaviour. In their experience, these boys were "more sensitive to peer pressure" and would feel attacked or humiliated if they had to concede to a teacher in front of their peers. According to Farida, it is better to instead "let it rest for a while, then they are often out of their emotions as well and we will do the talking, one-on-one". Otherwise, these students may feel the teacher ruined their reputation, negatively affecting their teacher-student relationship.

Some participants acknowledged that their own background and student experiences heavily influenced their current classroom management. Mia found she could handle misbehaving CND student better because she understood their main reason for acting out. She explained:

It's just a prejudice that [teachers] have about coloured children. They'll probably have a language deficiency, or behavioural problems. But often it is just that they're not heard, or not seen. And of course, they're going to make trouble, that's every kid, no matter what colour.

Mia found that CND students mostly misbehaved if they felt they were treated differently. She herself had similar school experiences, where she was “allowed less mistakes than the rest”. She stated: “if I spoke, I was already being thrown out of the classroom, so to speak. And if a white person next to me spoke, he got three chances”.

### ***Curriculum and Instruction***

In the domain of curriculum and instruction, participants made their students feel seen by connecting the mandatory and predetermined curriculum to their students’ world of life with their instruction. The quality of this connection also determined whether participants considered the curriculum to be good. Instruction was generally regarded as good when it was clear, concise, and interactive.

All participants used a standard instruction format, starting with an overview of the lesson program and learning objectives, or with a review of the previous lesson. They then explained new material, focusing on key terms or difficult topics, and introduced assignments for students to do. Meanwhile, participants were available for questions. Lessons ended with a plenary closing, either discussing or testing the achievement of learning objectives.

Regarding the manner of instruction, participants found that merely “sending information”, i.e., direct instruction, was ineffective nowadays, with Farida commenting: “And that’s not strange, because you don’t achieve much with just hearing”. Instead, participants emphasised (inter)active work formats to motivate and engage students, and to let them construct knowledge themselves. Popular formats were discussions, experiments, and group projects. These were also used to encourage student to learn from each other, too.

Participants connected the curriculum to their students’ life world by taking into account their backgrounds, including language, culture, and interests. Participants found this necessary to make the material meaningful, with Mia stating: “If it’s not made meaningful,

you don't absorb anything". To do this, participants used examples that reflected students' own experiences, or they discussed cultural or religious topics (e.g., Keti Koti or Ramadan).

Participants saw the need for a more diverse curriculum because of their own experiences with ignorance and prejudice. Emine described how her teachers and peers "didn't know how to deal with someone like [her]" because they "didn't know anything about the person they were facing". Other participants also recognised how prejudice and ignorance was perpetuated by teachers. Curricula allowed no room for diverse topics, and when CND students gave input, it was either ignored or labelled as incorrect. Amsah and Emine both described similar situations in which a teacher bombarded them with questions about their culture or religion, only to have their beliefs or customs vilified or belittled. Emine described the impact of such teacher behaviour: "the only counter-reaction I could have given, or did give, at that moment was really just frustration and anger. I really just screamed at her then, you know, "Why are you doing this?!"". Consequently, Emine and Amsah both avoid posing religious or cultural topics directly to students belonging to such groups, to ensure students do not feel cornered or attacked like they did.

There were also participants who did not change their curriculum or instruction, however. Ramesh, who worked himself up from vmbo to acquiring a teaching degree, did not see the benefit of adapting his curriculum to this CND students. Instead, he wanted the students to adapt, saying: "I want it to be the other way around, I want you to integrate". Two other participants also did not differentiate, but for practical reasons; they claimed their subject (e.g., economics) was unsuitable, or they simply lacked time or energy.

### **Perspectives on Diversity**

Mentioned throughout the previous section, participants' experiences with feeling different or discriminated against also played an important part in how they teach now. It

specifically influenced insofar they found it necessary to discuss diversity, culture, and religion in class.

Feeling unseen and unheard made participants vow to do better by their own students. Mia explained that she became a teacher “for all the coloured kids who go through these kinds of things. You’re welcome here, you’re not a foreigner, you’re also supposed to be here, and you too can do anything”. With this philosophy in mind, Mia tries to teach her students about various cultures as much as possible, stating: “Much more about different cultures should be brought out and used in lessons, because they are Dutch too”. This way, she hopes to counter ignorance, prejudice, and racism in schools but also later in society. She explained how feeling “like a part of the Netherlands” starts at school. When children feel unseen and unheard in school, they are also likely to lose faith in society and the government: “Why should I vote? They won’t listen to me anyway”, in Mia’s words.

Other participants also acknowledged the prevalence of racism and discrimination in the Netherlands. Sunan described it as “starting 1-0 behind”, while Matthew talked about “invisible barriers” CND students have to break through. Matthew also called the Dutch ideal of giving everyone equal opportunities flawed, illustrating his point with a metaphor:

If you ( ... ) put a bin at the front of the class and ( ... ) say... “If you throw the ball in the bin”, everyone has the chance to throw it in, to throw the ball in the bin. But the students sitting at the back on the left of the class have to throw much further. They can throw it in, it's possible, but they have certain barriers to overcome.

Participants’ views on this problem were noticeable in their teaching. Participants who sought to change education and society, such as Mia, addressed diversity-related issues more extensively and frequently than participants who sought to prepare students for Dutch society as-is, such as Ramesh. According to Ramesh, this meant adapting to Dutch norms and values and working hard to succeed in life. Sunan shared this view up to a point, advising his



students to “conform to the situation you’re in now” and not emphasise their culture too much in order to find a job, while still promoting awareness of different cultures and perspectives in class.

All of the experienced described here are specific to CND students’ experience of school, now and in the past. Because of their shared experiences, participants knew how to make their students feel seen, as they themselves know how their teachers made them feel either seen or overlooked. Either way, participants felt that what they experienced because of their background helped them to better teach diverse classes. Nevertheless, the majority of participants considered white Dutch teachers to be just as capable of teaching diverse classes. Provided they were aware of any prejudice or bias they might have against CND students and worked to eliminate them. In addition, participants advised their white counterparts to immerse themselves in their students’ backgrounds and cultures. Rana also suggested that teacher training should pay more attention to “intercultural education”, especially in cities with larger CND populations. Some participants felt they would also benefit from such education, as being from one non-dominant culture does not automatically grant you understanding of all non-dominant cultures. Amsah experienced this first-hand and stated: “I also had to get to know the foreign children, while I was one myself”.

### **Discussion**

This study examined how Dutch teachers with a non-dominant cultural background define effective teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. Fourteen teachers were interviewed about their teaching practices in the domains of relationships, classroom management, and curriculum and instruction, and about how they took diversity into account. In addition, they were asked about how their past experiences in secondary school contributed to their current teaching practices. One central theme, summarising the mindset and teaching practices of CND teachers, was identified.

## **Feeling Seen Instead of Overlooked**

CND teachers defined effective teaching of diverse classes as making every student feel seen. This approach encompassed teaching practices of all domains, with the focus being on relationships. This assessment is in accordance with previous research on the central role of relationships, specifically empathy, in effectively teaching diverse classes (McAllister & Irvine, 2000). High empathy was linked to sensitivity to different cultures and ability to take various cultural perspectives, enabling empathetic teachers to modify their pedagogy and curriculum to fit students' needs. Good relationships, cultural knowledge, and adaptability combined should result in a class environment where students are validated, treated equitably, and are given the opportunity to have their voices be heard.

The impact of feeling seen on student outcomes has scarcely been researched. However, school belonging, a similar concept, has been found to positively influence academic achievement, motivation, and self-esteem (Booker, 2004). As school belonging deals mainly with insofar students feel important and respected, it seems likely that feeling seen has a comparable effect on student achievement.

The relevance of feeling seen as a core concept of effective teaching becomes apparent in psychological literature, which states that individuals have an inherent need to be seen and understood (Simpson, 2016). Being seen is central to the development of the self (Winnicott, 1960), and when someone instead feels overlooked or misunderstood, their well-being can suffer (Lun et al., 2008). Feeling seen is especially important in adolescence, when students start to explore who they really are and how they fit in this world (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Individuals who deviate from the norm (may that be in looks, culture, or ability) tend to feel overlooked or misunderstood more often. As such, CND students are a group that routinely feels overlooked (e.g., Chesler et al., 1993) by the average teacher. The question remains why

CND teachers seemed to have an aptitude in making their students feel seen. Simply put; they are not the average teacher.

The average teacher in the Netherlands is a Dutch middle-class white woman in her forties (OECD, 2021). She has, on average, less cultural knowledge than a CND teacher and is less likely to see and fulfil the need for culturally responsive teaching (Flores & Smith, 2009), because of her typical Dutch egalitarian and meritocratic views on education and society (Mijs et al., 2022). CND teachers, contrarily, have experienced first-hand that these ideals do not ring true in practice. They know how it feels being overlooked and discriminated against. It is no wonder, then, that CND students gravitate towards them and not their “average” colleague. This combination of shared experiences and identity enables CND teachers to intuitively know CND students’ needs and teach accordingly (Flores & Smith, 2009).

However, the teacher in this study saw no reason why white Dutch teachers would be unable to connect with or effectively teach CND students. They may still have other commonalities with their CND students, such as music taste, hobbies, or political standpoints. As any similarity between two people can boost their relationship (Gehlberg et al., 2016), it may be crucial for white teachers to learn what they share with CND students to form that initial connection, something the teacher in this study also advise.

### **Culturally Responsive Teaching as the Norm**

The CND teachers described effective teaching in ways reminiscent of culturally responsive teaching (CRT). Ladson-Billings (1995) describes CRT as a student-centred teaching approach that understands the importance of students’ cultural backgrounds and experiences, and includes them in teaching. CRT promotes the achievement of all students by embracing diversity and playing to CND students’ strengths (Richards et al., 2007). To teach culturally responsively, teachers need a positive attitude towards cultural diversity, knowledge

about different cultures, and didactic and pedagogical skills to put this attitude and knowledge into practice (Alhanachi et al., 2021).

Despite never mentioning CRT and claiming not to differentiate based on ethnic or cultural background, the CND teachers described multiple teaching practices consistent with CRT. They were reflective of how their own background influenced their teaching and tried to confront their biases (Richards et al., 2007). They were open-minded towards diversity and interested in students' home life, culture, and interests. They also tried to incorporate this knowledge into their lessons, validating students' experiences (Gay, 2002). CND teachers also set clear rules and boundaries, emphasised respect, and asked for student input to avoid misunderstandings or conflict (Samuels, 2018). Furthermore, they encouraged the discussion of diverse topics and diversity-related issues to have students learn from and about each other. Thus, the CND teachers promoted understanding, acceptance, and open-mindedness (Edwards & Edick, 2013; Zaccor, 2018).

There are, however, also components of CRT these teachers did not practice. Ladson-Billings (1995) also stresses the importance of cultural competence (using students' culture as a "vehicle for learning") and developing a critical consciousness that allows students to critique societal aspects that maintain social inequality. While some teachers did show signs of critical consciousness themselves, they gave little indication of teaching it. Cultural competency was not a priority either. Teachers' first concern was teaching about different cultures, before utilising aspects of cultures to teach the curriculum. This suggests that teachers predisposed to CRT would also benefit from additional CRT education.

Some have argued that the above-described practices are simply good teaching and not necessarily specific to CRT (Samuels, 2018). Ladson-Billings (1995) made a case for CRT by studying eight exemplary teachers and their practices in a predominantly African-American school. She described the teachers as passionate, encouraging and equitable towards students,

and focused on ensuring all students succeeded by incorporating and validating students' experiences. The teachers in the current study pursue or uphold similar practices. This would explain why they generally did not consider their teaching to be culturally responsive; they regarded it as "just good teaching" and therefore felt they did nothing special to take diversity into account.

The question then remains why the CND teachers unintentionally adopted several culturally responsive practices. Findings suggest that they were more amenable to CRT because of their backgrounds and past experiences. They have accumulated cultural knowledge through encounters with various ethnicities, cultures, beliefs and biases. They have experienced being different, and some have endured racism or discrimination. Furthermore, they have taken teaching practices that worked for them and made them feel seen as a CND student and incorporated them into their own teaching. Together, these experiences seem to have made CND teachers more likely to consider CRT normal or a necessity. Yet, a CND teacher does not equal a teacher that makes their students feel seen through CRT. Whether or not teachers find CRT necessary seems to depend on how they view Dutch society and its educational system. Teachers adhering to the ideal of equality, such as Ramesh, seem more likely to dismiss the importance of CRT (van Middelkoop et al., 2017). Instead, they believe everyone has the same opportunities, meaning that academic failure of CND students is simply a sign of not working hard enough (Mijs et al., 2022) rather than institutionalised discrimination. On the other hand, teachers who recognise or have experienced that society is not equal, are more likely to advocate for CRT.

### **A New Way of Training Teachers**

All teachers regardless of background would benefit from more education on CRT. For new teachers, it is imperative that CRT becomes integrated in teacher education, with faculty conveying a shared vision on the importance of diversity (Sleeter, 2008). The

curriculum should allow pre-service teachers to develop a cultural knowledge base detailing the characteristics and contributions of different cultures (Gay, 2002), and teach them to use cultural aspects in conveying their own curriculum. While CND individuals presumably start their education with more cultural knowledge, findings show that they, too, could improve in this area. Significant attention should also be paid to the development of critical consciousness. Egalitarian and meritocratic ideals should be discouraged (van Middelkoop et al., 2017). To develop a positive attitude towards diversity and CRT, teachers need to recognise that society and school do not treat everyone equally. Additionally, they need to be aware of and combat their own prejudice and biases.

For teachers already at work, similar topics need to be addressed but in a different format. One way would be to establish professional learning communities within schools where teachers of all backgrounds can work together to make their teaching more culturally responsive. A recent study has found that such communities can result in more positive attitudes toward diversity and new knowledge and skills (Alhanachi et al., 2021).

### **Conclusion**

Teaching is more than just delivering content to students. Teachers in this study agreed that to teach diverse students effectively, you have to make students feel seen. In order to do this, one needs to understand their students and be culturally competent. In other words, teachers need to teach culturally responsively. The teachers in the current study had an unconscious tendency to do so, because their experiences with different cultures, discrimination, and not feeling seen led them to see culturally responsive practices as just good teaching. With the number of diverse classes in the Netherlands rising, it is imperative to get the average white Dutch teacher up to par. Therefore, the recommendation to prioritise CRT in teacher training is made once more. By educating our teachers on the use of culturally responsive teaching, we can make academic achievement a reality for *all* students.

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## Appendix A

### Study Information Letter and Informed Consent

[Datum]

Beste Participant,

Met deze brief willen we u uitnodigen om mee te doen in het onderzoeksproject *Perspectieven van Etnisch Niet-Dominante Leerkrachten*. Het doel van dit onderzoek is het verkennen en verklaren van de ervaringen van docenten en leerlingen met een non-dominante etnische achtergrond om meer inzicht te krijgen in hun perspectief op hoe cultuur lesgeven en leren beïnvloedt in de context van de steeds diverser wordende Nederlandse klas. We hopen de resultaten van deze studie te publiceren en de uitkomsten te delen met andere geïnteresseerde belanghebbenden.

#### **Wat wordt er van u verwacht als Participant**

Als u instemt te participeren, vragen we u om één interview af te leggen van ongeveer 60-90 minuten. Tijdens het interview zullen we u vragen naar uw etnische/culturele achtergrond en naar uw perspectief en mening over lesgeven en leren.

#### **Vertrouwelijkheid van de Data Verwerking**

Er wordt op de volgende manier omgegaan met persoonlijk identificeerbare gegevens: De interviews worden met alleen audio opgenomen om te worden getranscribeerd. Alle persoonlijk identificeerbare gegevens zullen worden verwijderd van de transcripten en de audiobestanden zullen worden vernietigd zodra deze getranscribeerd zijn. De sleutel die uw identiteit of andere identificeerbare gegevens, zoals de naam van de school, linkt aan het pseudoniem dat gebruikt wordt in de dataopslag wordt bewaard op een wachtwoord-beveiligde universiteitsserver tijdens de data-analyse. Deze sleutel wordt vernietigd zodra de studie afgerond is. Geanonimiseerde interview transcripten zullen worden bewaard op wachtwoord-beveiligde servers voor ten minste 10 jaar. Dit is in overeenkomst met de richtlijnen van de VSNU Associatie van de Universiteiten in Nederland. Andere onderzoekers hebben in de toekomst mogelijk toegang tot deze geanonimiseerde data. Toegang tot de data wordt alleen verleend wanneer de onderzoekers ermee instemmen de vertrouwelijkheid van de informatie te waarborgen zoals beschreven staat in deze brief. Eventuele toegang tot de data vereist ook toestemming van het originele onderzoeksteam.

#### **Risico's, Voordelen, en Vrijwillige Participatie**

We verwachten dat er geen risico's zijn verbonden aan deze studie. We verwachten ook geen directe voordelen voor u persoonlijk. Uw participatie is volledig vrijwillig en u mag op ieder moment besluiten om te stoppen met de studie. Hieraan zijn geen negatieve consequenties verbonden en u bent de onderzoekers geen verantwoording schuldig. Als u besluit uw participatie te beëindigen zullen wij de data die tot dat moment verzameld is over u gebruiken, tenzij u expliciet aangeeft dit niet te wensen. Als u een officiële klacht wilt indienen over de studie, kunt u een e-mail sturen naar de klachtenfunctionaris op het e-mailadres: [klachtenfunctionaris-fetcsocwet@uu.nl](mailto:klachtenfunctionaris-fetcsocwet@uu.nl).

Als u instemt te participeren, vragen wij u dit ondertekende formulier *binnen twee weken* op te sturen naar een van de onderzoekers betrokken bij dit onderzoek. Indien u verdere vragen heeft kunt u contact opnemen met de hoofdonderzoeker op het e-mailadres: [b.l.kennedy@uu.nl](mailto:b.l.kennedy@uu.nl).

Met vriendelijke groet,

[Naam, handtekening, contactgegevens]

### Toestemmingsverklaring

Ik verklaar hierbij dat ik de informatiebrief over het onderzoek [Naam Project] heb gelezen en stem hierbij in te participeren in dit onderzoek.

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Naam

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Datum

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Handtekening

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Protocol**

The purpose of this interview is to gain an understanding of how culturally non-dominant teachers' backgrounds and experiences as students played a role in their current teaching practices of diverse classrooms.

#### *Before the interview:*

1. Ask participants to prepare the following:
  - a. Think back to when you were a student in secondary education. Bring to the interview a description of both the best and worst secondary school teacher you ever had. Think about:
    - i. Their personality and other characteristics;
    - ii. Their cultural background and ethnicity;
    - iii. What made this teacher so good/bad (write down examples);
    - iv. How this teacher compares to other teachers you've had;
    - v. How old you were when you had this teacher and where your experiences with them took place.
2. Make sure the consent form is signed and returned.
3. Make sure the recording device is fully charged and ready to record.

#### *During the interview:*

This interview is semi-structured, meaning the researchers may ask questions out of order or ask follow-up questions to clarify certain points, to keep the conversation flowing smoothly.

#### *After the interview:*

1. Enter the interview information into the pseudonym sheet.
2. Upload recording files to secure YODA file, and delete the recordings from the recording device.

## Appendix C

### Interview Tool

#### Introduction

1. This part is to get to know you.
  - a. What is your age and educational background? How long have you been teaching?  
What subject do you teach currently?
  - b. How would you describe your cultural and ethnic background?
  - c. What aspects of your personal or cultural history do you think have been important in shaping your educational experiences?

#### Educational Experiences

1. How do you think your own cultural experiences and ethnic background have played a role in your educational experiences?
2. How do you think your teacher's cultural and ethnic backgrounds have played a role in your educational experiences?
3. Could you describe the best secondary school teacher you have ever had?
  - a. What was this teacher like in terms of personality, and any other characteristics you think are important?
  - b. What made this teacher so good? Could you give an example?
  - c. How old were you when you had this teacher and where did this take place?
  - d. Please compare this teacher to other you have had. How do your experiences with this teacher compare to your experiences with other teachers?
  - e. How did this teacher's cultural and ethnic background compare to yours?
4. Could you describe the worst secondary school teacher you have ever had?
  - a. What was this teacher like in terms of personality, and any other characteristics you think are important?

- b. What made this teacher so bad, in your opinion? Could you give an example?
  - c. How old were you when you had this teacher and where did this take place?
  - d. Please compare this teacher to others you have had. How do your experiences with this teacher compare to your experiences with other teachers?
  - e. How did this teacher's cultural and ethnic background compare to yours?
5. What other teaching practices that we have not discussed so far do you think make a teacher good?
- a. Teacher-student relationships?
  - b. Classroom management?
  - c. Curriculum and instruction?
  - d. What characteristics does a teacher need to be able to use these good practices?
6. Do you think a teacher's cultural and ethnical background would influence their teaching? In what way(s)?

### **Teaching Practices**

We will now look at your own teaching practices. To do this, we use a framework called the Three Domains of Teaching. These domains are: relationships, classroom management, and curriculum and instruction. I will first tell you how we define each domain and then ask you your perspectives about each one.

7. The domain of relationships is defined as the relationships that exist between teacher and students any actions teachers or students may take to initiate or maintain these relationships.
- a. How would you characterise your relationship with individual students in your class?
    - i. Are there students that you have a very good/bad relationship with? Why? Could you give an example (without naming the student)?

- b. How would you characterise your relationship with the entire class? Could you give an example?
8. The domain of classroom management is defined as the strategies (such as rules and routines) teachers use to build a positive classroom environment that facilitates teaching and learning.
  - a. How would you characterise your classroom management? Could you give an example?
  - b. Do you use the same strategies for every class/student? Why? Could you give an example?
  - c. Would you use the same practices if you taught a less diverse class?
9. The domain of curriculum and instruction is defined as what is taught (curriculum) and how it is taught (instruction). First, we will talk about curriculum.
  - a. How do you make decisions about the content you teach?
  - b. Do you teach each class the exact same content?
  - c. Would you teach a less diverse class different content?
10. Now we will talk about instruction.
  - a. What sort of instructional activities do you use? Could you give an example?
  - b. Which instructional approaches do you prefer to use? Why?
  - c. Which instructional approaches do you prefer not to use? Why?
  - d. If someone would be observing a typical class of yours, what would be the instructional format of the class period? Why do you use this format?
  - e. Would you use the same instruction practices in a less diverse class?
11. Do you feel that you are stronger in one of these domains than the others? If so, which one?

12. Do you feel that one of the domains is more important than the others? If so, which one?
13. You currently teach a diverse classroom. Do you find it challenging to address diversity in the classroom? If so, why? Could you give an example of something you find challenging?
  - a. What barriers exist in addressing these challenges?
14. Now that we have talked about all these different effective teaching practices in diverse classrooms, how would you define effective teaching of diverse classrooms?
15. Is there anything else you want me to know before ending this interview?

## Appendix D

### Final Code Tree

The following table gives an overview of all the codes used in this study. The letter preceding a code in parentheses indicates the type of code, with (D) meaning descriptive, (V) meaning value, (S) meaning structural, and (P) meaning pattern. The levels of indentation represent child codes.

Main codes are underlined. These codes and their corresponding excerpts relate directly to the research questions and form the base of the study. Some codes are used for organisational purpose, such as quickly finding the location of a piece of information (e.g., the description of the diverse class participants use as an example). These codes are presented in italics.

**Table D1**  
*Description of All Codes Used*

Code	Description
(D) <i>Best part of teaching assignment</i>	What participants like most about their current teaching assignment
(D) <i>Worst part of teaching assignment</i>	What participants like least about their current teaching assignment
(D) <u>Definition of effective teaching</u>	How participants describe effective teaching as a whole
(D) <u>Description of classroom management</u>	Participants describe their classroom management practices (what, how, why)
- (D) Standard structure CM	Participants use a standard structure in their classroom management
- (D) Differentiation in classroom management	Participants use different methods/strategies for different (groups of) students in their classroom management
- (D) Goal of CM	Participants describe what they want to achieve with their classroom management
- (D) Clear rules CM	Statements about the use of clear/standard rules, examples of rules, reasoning behind rules
- (D) Successful classroom management example	An example of a time where participants felt very successful in their classroom management



- (D) Unsuccessful classroom management example      An example of a time where participants felt very unsuccessful in their classroom management
  - (V) Classroom management: most important domain      Participants show they find classroom management the most important domain (direct statement or implication)
- (D) Description of curriculum and instruction      Participants describe their curriculum and instruction (what, how, why)
- (D) Successful curriculum and instruction example      An example of a time where participants felt very successful in their curriculum and instruction
  - (D) Unsuccessful curriculum and instruction example      An example of a time where participants felt very unsuccessful in their curriculum and instruction
  - (D) Goal of instruction      Participants describe what they want to achieve with their instruction
  - (D) Differentiation in curriculum and instruction      Participants use different materials/instructional methods for different (groups of) students
    - o (D) Differentiation – Language deficiency      Participants differentiate based on students’ language deficiency
    - o (D) Differentiation – Interests/World of life      Participants differentiate based on students’ interests or world of life
    - o (D) Differentiation – Culture/Ethnicity      Participants differentiate based on students’ culture or ethnicity
    - o (D) Differentiation – Level/Understanding      Participants differentiate based on students’ level or understanding
  - (V) Direct instruction (only) is not effective      Participants show they find that direct instruction (alone) is not an effective way of conveying information
  - (V) Getting students to think for themselves      Participants show they find it important that students learn to think for themselves, become critical thinkers
- (D) Description of relationships      Participants describe their relationships with their students (what, how, why)
- (D) Successful relationship example      An example of a time where participants felt very successful in their relationships
  - (D) Unsuccessful relationship example      An example of a time where participants felt very unsuccessful in their relationships

- (D) Best at relationship	Participants consider themselves to be the best at relationships, compared to classroom management and curriculum and instruction
- (D) Differentiation in relationships	Participants use different approaches/strategies for different (groups of) students
- (D) Good relationships with class	Participants state they have a good relationship with their example class
- (D) Good relationships with individuals	Participants state they have a good relationship with individual students from their example class
- (D) Active fostering of relationships	Participants are proactive in the fostering and maintaining of good relationships with their students
- (D/V) Supporting students	Participants make statements about finding supporting students important and/or describe situations in which they supported students, also elaborating on how they did so
- (V) Making students feel seen	Participants make statements about finding it important to make students feel seen and/or describe situations in which they made students feel seen, also elaborating on how they did so
- (V) Paying attention to students	Participants make statements about finding it important to pay attention to students and/or describe situations in which they paid attention to students, also elaborating on how they did so
- (V) Relationships: most important domain	Participants state or imply they find relationships the most important domain compared to classroom management and curriculum and instruction, also elaborating on why
- (V) Respect	Participants make statements about finding respect important and why
(D) <i>Diverse class description</i>	Participants describe their example diverse class (number of students, male/female, ethnicities, cultures, religion, etc.)
(D) Factors of a good relationship	Participants describe factors that contribute to having a good relationship with their students
- (D) Good/pleasant communication	Participants describe having good or pleasant communication as a factor of a good relationship
(D) Importance of classroom management	Participants describe why they find classroom management important

- (D) Advice for white teachers Participants describe what advice they would give to a white teacher teaching a diverse class and why
- (D) Other influences on learning Participants describe what factors (other than ethnicity/culture) influence students' learning
- (S) Domain overlap Participants perceive an overlap between two or all three domains
- (D) Overlap: Relationships & Classroom management Participants perceive an overlap between the domains of relationships and classroom management
  - (D) Overlap: Classroom management & Curriculum and instruction Participants perceive an overlap between the domains of classroom management and curriculum and instruction
  - (D) Overlap: Relationships & Curriculum and instruction Participants perceive an overlap between the domains of relationships and curriculum and instruction
  - (D) Overlap: All three Participants perceive an overlap between all three domains of teaching
- (S) Past experiences Participants describe any past experiences they had as a student or early in their teaching career that may have influenced their current teaching
- (D) Past teachers influencing current teaching Participants describe instances where (behaviour of) one of their past teachers influenced their current teaching practices
  - (D) Best/good teacher description Participants describe the best teacher they have ever had (sex, ethnicity, subject, attitudes, teaching style, etc.)
  - (D) Worst/bad teacher description Participants describe the worst teacher they have ever had (sex, ethnicity, subject, attitudes, teaching style, etc.)
  - (D) Encounter with discrimination/racism Participants describe instances wherein they encountered discrimination and/or racism, and how they dealt with it
  - (D) Facing ignorance and prejudice Participants describe instances wherein they encountered ignorance and prejudice, and how they dealt with it
  - (D) Other influences on teaching Participants describe influences on teaching other than ethnicity and culture
  - (D) Being aware of being different Participants describe instances wherein they were (made) aware of being different, and how they felt about it

- (P) Perspectives on diversity
  - Participants describe their perspectives on diversity (opinions, attitudes)
  - (D) Ethnicity/culture influencing learning
    - Participants show they think ethnicity and/or culture influences learning
  - (D) Differences in teaching more/less diverse classes
    - Participants describe differences between teaching more and less diverse classes
  - (D) Disadvantaged because of language deficiency
    - Participants describe instances wherein they were disadvantaged because of their language deficiency
  - (D) Disadvantaged because of minority status
    - Participants describe instances wherein they were disadvantaged because of their minority status
  - (D) Ethnic teacher as role model
    - Participants describe how CND teachers (should) function as a role model for CND students
  - (D) Ethnicity as a label
    - Participants describe how ethnicity is used as a label to categorise people
  - (D) Colour-blind treatment of all students
    - Participants claim to treat all their students the same, ignoring ethnicity and/or culture
  - (D) Ethnicity/culture influencing teaching
    - Participants describe how ethnicity and/or culture influences their teaching or teaching in general
      - (D) Better understanding because of ethnicity
        - Participants describe how they are better able to understand their CND student because of their own ethnicity
  - (D) No (little) influence of own ethnicity/culture
    - Participants find their own ethnicity and/or culture does not influence their teaching or teaching in general
  - (D) Students like same-ethnicity teachers
    - Participants find that students like it when their teacher has the same ethnicity as them
  - (V) Being open and tolerant
    - Participants describe finding it important to be open and tolerant towards all students (except from general delinquent behaviour)
  - (V) Students learning about each other
    - Participants find it important that students learn about each other (personality, culture, religion, etc.)
- (V) Being reflective
  - Participants find it important to reflect upon their own behaviour and how that might impact their students
- (V) Flexibility
  - Participants find flexibility an important quality for a teacher

- (V) Teachers should show love for their work
- Participants find that teachers should show love for their work, be enthusiastic

Great quotes

Collection of quotes that can be used as illustrative statements in the findings section

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## **Appendix E**

### **Example Case Description**

To illustrate the use of case descriptions in this study, here follows the case description of Sunan Kasem.

#### **Background and Past Experiences**

Sunan is Thai but was adopted by Friesian parents and grew up in the Netherlands. Therefore, he hasn't really experienced Thai culture, but has experienced being different because of his skin colour.

Sunan went to a very white school and was one of the only non-white kids. He only had white teachers, but generally wasn't treated very differently from his white classmates. His parents had taught him the Friesian language, something that made the Friesians accept him. He appreciated being treated the same a lot, and took that philosophy of origin or background not mattering with him in his own teaching.

Both of his parents were teachers, so he grew up with many teacher values, such as being supportive and the idea that achieving something together is more fun. He incorporates this in his own teaching by being very supportive of all his students, regardless of ethnicity.

Sunan's best teacher was a Dutch male history teacher who made his lessons interesting and fun for his students. He also shocked his students with strange histories. He had knowledge of many cultures and faiths and knew all his students very well. He could anticipate reactions and diffuse escalating situations by showing understanding. He also helped his white students understand his ND students. Sunan took these practices with him, also trying to shock his students to make lessons stick, and trying to get his students to understand each other. He adheres to the idea that students should learn from and about each other and does this by facilitating discussions about culture and faith. He also has these discussions in less diverse classes, specifically to have students learn about different cultures and prepare them for society.

Another good teacher of Sunan was his Dutch male PE teacher, who was very supportive and complimented his students' smallest achievements. He also made sure everyone was included. Sunan does the same by offering extra support for students that seem to fall outside the group.

Sunan's describes his worst teachers as people who didn't realise, they had a role-model position. They didn't present themselves in a desirable or respectable way. They also showed no passion and gave kids the feeling they didn't want to teach them. They generally had no relationship with the class and very dictatorial managing styles. Some of them blamed the ethnicity of students for their bad teacher-student relationship. From these experiences, Sunan learned to always look presentable and respectable. He also makes sure he is enthusiastic in his lessons, doesn't take his personal frustrations out on the students, and makes sure the kids know he likes to teach them by also being interested in their lives.

Another experience that influenced Sunan was a language teacher that didn't seem to understand why Sunan had trouble with languages. Sunan now makes sure he supports the growth of every struggling student instead of belittling them. He also makes sure his own language and instruction is understandable for students with language difficulties.

Regarding diversity, Sunan has a colour-blind philosophy (see above). He also feels like white and ND students have comparable ambitions, but that ND students have to work harder to achieve them, partly because of prejudice. Therefore, he feels that as a ND teacher, you need to act as a role model and show the ND students that they can achieve certain things. Sunan also feels like materials shouldn't be fitted to ethnicity, but to the needs of individual students.

Sunan finds it important that ND students do integrate with Dutch culture to some degree, because it can help them in life (e.g., getting a job). Students should still be proud of

their own culture though. He also finds that if you teach ND students, you should know about their cultures. It improves your relationships with them if you know and show.

About the influence of his own ethnicity, Sunan states it is little. He does find that ND students can see themselves in him and therefore connect more easily with him. He feels like he has an advantage because of his non-native Dutch background.

### **Teaching Practices**

Sunan has a very good relationship with most of his students, and an okay one with the rest. He works on a basis of mutual respect, clear communication, and genuine interest in his students. He explicitly makes room in his classroom for culture and ethnicity, to make all students feel welcome and at ease. In addition, he gives extra attention to any students that seem to feel not included. He also makes himself available for both academic and emotional support, both of which he is taken up on by students.

Sunan is very strict in his classroom management, but also fair. He is consistent in his application of class rules and has a clear escalation ladder. This makes his classroom management predictable and calm for students. By explicitly naming things in his class that should change, he makes expectations very clear. This leads to students not being angry when he calls them out, as they understand the reason. He also differentiates how he corrects his students on ethnicity, specifically the boys.

Sunan uses instruction mainly to introduce complex new material, after which the students work on it. His explanation is purposefully kept brief and to the point. He uses a stencil or a YouTube video (of himself) that also have the explanation for students who forget instruction quickly. He is also available when students have more questions. His instruction is generally interactive, and he lets the students construct their own knowledge as much as possible. He takes diversity into account by adapting his examples and stories to his students and their world of life, and by translating difficult terms into simple language, specifically for



the ND students with language deficiencies. For this reason, he also tries to avoid long textual pieces in his instruction.

### **Perceived Overlaps Between the Three Domains**

Sunan feels he is the best at relationships, with classroom management a close second. He says this quality combination makes him a favourite teacher of students. He also thinks relationships is the most important domain, stating: ‘No performance without relationship’.

Sunan mentions domain overlaps mainly between relationships and classroom management. He states that a good and fair classroom management helps the relationship, because students understand better that their behaviour was wrong and accept the consequences. They also don’t take it personal, which also helps the relationship. In turn, Sunan needs a basic relationships aspect, a point of contact at the beginning of the lesson to ensure classroom management goes smoothly. Without it, he needs to be much harsher and stricter, leading to a worse relationship.

Sunan also mentions an overlap between relationships and C&I, stating that a teacher is both pedagogue (rel.) and SME (C&I). He himself is mostly pedagogue, finding knowing the students more important than knowing the subject.