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## **Teaching for diversity: a literature overview and an analysis of the curriculum of a teacher training college**

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This article starts with an overview of the literature aiming to answer the question of what the knowledge aspect of teacher competence entails in urban schools. The conclusion of the overview identifies five areas of expertise as the most significant: (1) language development; (2) pedagogy; (3) social interaction and identity; (4) parental involvement; and (5) schools and community. In the second part of the article, we describe the results of an analysis of the curriculum of a teacher training college in one of the largest cities in the Netherlands. The vision document, teacher competences and course descriptions were analysed using the description of the areas of expertise. The results show the extent to which all five areas are covered. The article ends with recommendations regarding the curriculum, so that graduates will be better qualified for teaching for diversity.

**Keywords:** urban education; teacher competence; ethnic diversity; curriculum analysis; teacher training

### **Introduction**

Most European Union (EU) countries are facing increasing numbers of pupils from diverse backgrounds (OECD 2012). In a recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report on preparing teachers for the twenty-first century it is noted that ‘teachers are being asked to personalize learning experiences to ensure that every student has a chance to succeed and to deal with increasing cultural diversity in their classrooms’ (Schleicher 2013, 11). Similarly, one of the conclusions of an EU ‘Peer learning activity’ (EU 2007) was that a systematic approach is required in order to prepare teachers to teach effectively in culturally diverse settings (EU 2007). It was also concluded that initial training should raise teachers’ intercultural awareness, and provide core knowledge and intercultural skills.

This article describes a project that aims to answer the question on what teaching for diversity entails. It took place in 2010 and 2011 in a teacher training college in one of the largest cities in the Netherlands, where teaching in urban areas means teaching for diversity and dealing with student populations that are highly diverse in terms of ethnic–cultural backgrounds, family types and parental education levels and incomes. In view of the commitment of this college to deliver excellent professionals to teach in inner-city areas, the management of the teacher training college asked the authors of this article to provide a literature overview in the area of teaching for

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diversity, scan the curriculum on the basis of this overview and issue recommendations for a curriculum reform. The article presents the main results of this project. It starts with an overview of the literature to answer the question of what the knowledge component of teacher competence entails in inner-city schools. The second part of the article describes the method as well as the results of the curriculum analysis, in which a distinction was made between the curriculum as intended (on paper) and the curriculum as implemented (in practice) according to Van den Akker (2003). The article concludes with recommendations for a curriculum reform informed by the results of the analysis and the aim of the management to prepare their student teachers for teaching in urban areas.

### ***Part 1. Literature overview***

The main research question for the literature overview was: what expertise do teachers in urban areas need in order to be excellent teachers for classes of pupils with diverse backgrounds? The basis for this overview was established by a recently published book by the OECD that resulted from a project entitled ‘Educating Teachers for Diversity: Meeting the Challenge’ (Burns and Shadoina-Gersing 2010). This project aimed to address the increasingly multicultural societies and their impact on education and student achievement by focusing on teaching and teachers. Aside from reviewing the relevant contributions in this OECD book, the results of an additional literature search in the ERIC and SSCI databases were also included in the overview in this article. Given the large numbers of articles and book chapters, this search of additional relevant literature was limited to peer-reviewed reviews and meta-analyses from 2000 onwards. In this article we summarise the findings in five areas of expertise, focusing on the knowledge aspect of teacher competence. This decision was made based on the fact that student teachers are evaluated on graduation according to a set of required teacher competences (‘end qualifications’), which comprise a knowledge aspect, a skills aspect and an attitude aspect. This article describes the knowledge aspect in the area of urban education, while the skills and attitude aspects are addressed in the later stages of the project. For a detailed overview of the knowledge base and a description of the five areas of expertise, we refer to Severiens and Onstenk (2011).

#### *Language development*

Elbers (2010) wrote a review on learning and social interaction in culturally diverse classrooms, paying specific attention to language development in ‘language-diverse’ classrooms. Many children in large cities speak a different language at home from the language of instruction at school, with many different languages being spoken in classes in large cities. If children speak a different language at home, school is usually the only place where they learn the language of instruction.

Elbers explains that difficulties in understanding the language of instruction are seldom attributable only to a limited vocabulary, because many difficulties in communication are related to a number of ‘frames’ that apply in the classroom. The first is a culture frame, which refers to the background knowledge that is presumed within the classroom. The second is a discursive frame, which refers to differences in academic and daily use of the language. The third is an educational frame, which refers to the rules of interaction within the classroom and the specific rules that

apply in lessons of specific subjects. Communication problems may arise during class activities because the frame of the teacher and the frame of the pupil are not compatible. The frames formulated by Elbers are comparable with the distinction that Verhallen and Walst (2011) make between the language used at home and the language used at school. At home, other subjects are discussed, or subjects are discussed in different ways from at school and with a different intention.

Children for whom the language of instruction is not their mother tongue have to learn the language of instruction and subject matter simultaneously. Teachers of specific subjects, however, tend to pay less attention to language development. Gibbons (2002), Van Beek and Verhallen (2004) and Van Elsäcker et al. (2010) argue that this is a missed opportunity and give several examples of ways in which language teaching and subject-matter teaching can be integrated.

A recurring discussion is whether or not schools should encourage children to learn to read and write in their mother tongue. The dependency hypothesis of Cummins (1979) states that as languages have common underlying skills that include speaking, reading and writing skills, once these skills have been learned in one language they can easily be transferred to the second. Elbers (2010) concludes that research confirms this hypothesis as often as it disputes it, for three reasons. The first reason refers to the condition of transfer that continuous development takes place in both languages. If the development of the first language lags behind, it cannot be expected to have a positive effect on the development on the second language (the language of instruction). The second reason is that the transfer depends on the level of education of the parents. If the parents have low levels of language skills and do not often read to the children, little transfer is to be expected. The third reason is that transfer depends on the difference between the mother tongue and the language of instruction. For children whose first language is similar to the language of instruction, learning the language is a different matter than for children whose first language is dissimilar.

### *Pedagogy*

In the recent OECD book, two publications describe pedagogical issues in urban education. Gay (2009) argues that the context determines what is to be done and how differences can best be dealt with. She does, however, describe four general pedagogical principles that seem to transcend the context:

- (1) Ideas about diversity determine how someone teaches

If teachers see diversity as a positive, enriching and valuable source of learning, they will explicitly use it in their teaching ‘with an air of excitement, expectancy and adventure’ (264). If, on the other hand, teachers have negative ideas about diversity, it may result in avoidance, denial and stress (or even fear). Such feelings act as an obstacle to the ability to teach diverse classes successfully.

- (2) Teaching student teachers about diversity requires the use of different methods and different perspectives

The teacher should have a minimum amount of knowledge about the ethnic cultural backgrounds of their pupils. Possible topics for teacher training courses

include identity, culture, inequality and diaspora because these are relevant to everyone and every group in society to some extent. Another possibility is to give courses on diversity based on objectives that everyone agrees on, such as increasing the performance of marginalised groups, stopping racism and promoting citizenship within schools in poor neighbourhoods. Gay argues that it is important to demonstrate both the differences and similarities, not to simplify the matter and not to make the differences larger than they are.

(3) Variate and differentiate

This third general principle relates to the use of different types of instruction to achieve learning objectives in diverse classes. Pupils learn at different rates and at different levels and in different ways, depending on their social and previous experiences. By varying and differentiating (and using appealing content) it is possible to create more learning moments for different groups in the classroom.

(4) Cross the cultural border, create a link between what pupils already know and understand and the academic language used

New knowledge is easier to acquire if it builds on existing knowledge. This existing knowledge, which serves as a basis for learning new knowledge, may vary according to ethnic-cultural background.

The OECD contribution by Bishop (2009) also focuses on pedagogy and instruction. He describes six challenges for teacher training, one of which relates to pedagogy and the ‘discursive classes’, which are classes in which pupils in minority positions are invited to participate. In traditional classes teachers have all the power and determine what is true and what is not and what needs to be learned, while in discursive classes the power is shared and there is more interaction. Teacher educators should create such classes for their pupils, and then facilitate them to also apply discursive approaches in their own lessons with the pupils.

Additional sources for pedagogical issues can be found in the literature by Banks (Banks 1993; Banks et al. 2001) and the theory of the multidimensional classroom by Cohen and Lotan (2004). These sources offer more detailed descriptions of teaching, learning and assessment practices that refer to the general principles described above (see also Severiens and Onstenk 2011 for a description).

### *Social interaction and identity*

Research from the perspective of social psychology has brought to light various processes that are relevant when it comes to learning in diverse classes. In this section, we describe three relevant processes: stereotyping, teacher expectations and ethnic/cultural identity issues.

The theory of ‘stereotype threat’ by Steele (1997) describes how groups of pupils who are stereotyped as performing poorly often confirm this negative stereotype when the stereotype is made overt (for example, because teachers mention it). The long-term consequence is often that school and performing well no longer contribute to the self-esteem of these pupils. They start showing avoidance behaviour and, in the long term, disidentification (see also Massey et al. 2003).

The classic study by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) shows that low expectations by teachers have a negative effect on the performance of pupils. Teachers who have low expectations of pupils are inclined to ask non-challenging questions and to give non-challenging lessons. The result is that these pupils perform less well (see also Bruin and Van der Heijde 2007). Jussim and Harber (2005) published a review of 35 years of research on teacher expectations. One of their conclusions is relevant for diverse classes. They found that powerful self-fulfilling performances are selective and are more common among groups with a stigma. In other words, pupils from immigrant backgrounds may suffer more from negative teacher expectations than native pupils. A second conclusion is that expectations of teachers may be more predictive because those expectations are accurate rather than self-fulfilling.

In the review by Severiens and Wolff (2009) on study achievement among ethnic minorities, the ‘maintenance of cultural or ethnic identity’ appeared to be one of the most robust success factors. This conclusion was based on research using the three types of identity distinguished by Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001), asserting that pupils with a ‘transcultural’ or ‘bicultural’ identity (or a ‘hyphenated’ identity) who manage to combine home and the dominant culture are the most successful pupils. Research using the acculturation model of Berry et al. (2011) also supports this conclusion.

### *Parental involvement*

Payne (2008), who describes family involvement as one of the five fundamentals for school development in an urban context (46), concludes that parental involvement is one of the relevant areas of expertise in urban schools which serve pupils from diverse backgrounds. In his review about school improvement, Muijs et al. (2004) concludes that parental involvement is one of the most relevant yet difficult areas for school development in poor neighbourhoods in urban areas.

Lewis, Kim, and Bey (2011) provide a review of research on parental involvement. In the 1980s and 1990s much research was conducted on the role of parents when it comes to school performance and behaviour problems. The focus of that research was primarily the deficiencies of parents, suggesting that single-parent families and parents with a low socio-economic background support their children less than two-parent families and parents with a high socio-economic background. From 2000 onwards, however, more research was conducted into ways of increasing parental involvement and the role of the school leader and teachers. This research shows, for example, that parents participate more if they are personally addressed by teachers.

### *Community and school*

The literature suggests that children in poor communities are more confronted by circumstances that hinder rather than encourage their development (Bucx 2009; Roest, Lokhorst, and Vrooman 2010). For example, children in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are more likely to be socially excluded, because they participate less in social activities, are less affiliated with prevailing norms and values, have parents who have fewer financial resources, and are more often deprived of proper basic services such as education and health care.

The question, then, is how schools and teachers can contribute to improving circumstances in their pupils' neighbourhoods. Schutz (2006) argues, in his review on the effectiveness of school–community relations, that it is important to strengthen the relationship between school and neighbourhood for two reasons. The first reason is that schools in poor neighbourhoods often lack the capacity to develop because of continuously changing political and administrative contexts. One way to achieve more sustainable development of schools in poor neighbourhoods is by involving community organisations in the development, meaning that the whole neighbourhood is involved in the development: 'reforms have to start in and with the community, if they are to have any real hope of long-term success' (Schutz 2006, 692).

The second reason is related to the traditional focus on the individual achievements of pupils. The idea is that if pupils perform well at school, their chances in the labour market will also be good. While it goes without saying that performance is important, a degree held by a child from a poor neighbourhood is not a guarantee for a good place on the labour market. Increasing opportunities only really works when it applies to the whole neighbourhood: 'the transformation of the individual lives of inner-city residents cannot be disentangled from the transformation of their communities' (Schutz 2006, 693). Schutz argues that without more substantial involvement of the neighbourhood in the school (and vice versa), it is difficult for schools to let go of their current individual performance focus.

Schutz's main conclusion is that projects that were initiated by neighbourhood organisations are more effective (i.e. they promote sustainable and strong relationships) than projects initiated by the school.

The five areas of expertise described above can be considered as an elaboration of the different groups of skills and competences as described in an EU project on teacher education curricula (EU 2010). In this project, eight groups were distinguished: subject competences, pedagogical competences, integrating theory and practice, cooperation and collaboration, quality assurance, mobility, leadership, and continuing and lifelong learning. It can be argued that the first area of expertise (language) belongs to the subject competences, the second area (pedagogy) and third area of expertise (social interaction and identity) to the pedagogical competences, and the fourth and fifth areas (parental involvement and school and community) would belong under the heading of the cooperation and collaboration group of competences.

## ***Part 2. Curriculum analysis***

In the second part of this article, we present the results of the analysis of the curriculum of the teacher training college based on the five areas of expertise.

### *Method*

In the analysis we distinguished between two levels of the curriculum: the intended and the implemented curriculum (for a description of the different levels of curricula, see Van den Akker 2003). The intended curriculum refers to the curriculum on paper and was analysed using documents that describe the vision of the institute, the teacher competences that student teachers are supposed to develop during the course of their four-year study programme (the 'end qualifications') and the course descriptions. The intended curriculum analysis was conducted using six groups of search

terms drawn from the areas of expertise. The curriculum committee (see below) provided feedback on the first set of search terms for each group, after which the set of search terms was revised. The search terms in group A referred to diversity itself (i.e. educational inequality, socio-economic backgrounds, cultural diversity, heterogeneity, Muslim, Islam, exclusion, urban areas, migration), group B reflected language development (i.e. second language, mother tongue, language and content-integrated learning), group C reflected pedagogy (i.e. connecting to prior knowledge, cooperative work, collaboration, differentiation, variation), group D reflected social interaction and identity (i.e. stereotypes, Pygmalion, teacher expectations, ethnic identity, bicultural identity, acculturation), group E reflected parents (i.e. participation, involvement) and group F reflected the school in the community (i.e. extended schools, community, school–community relationships).

Syntax containing the search terms was written to scan all the relevant documents. In the event that the scan resulted in a hit, the content of the vision document, competence or course was explored in further detail to identify how ethnic–cultural diversity or urban issues were described. A course matrix was then constructed for each year to depict the extent to which the areas of expertise are covered in the curriculum.

The implemented curriculum refers to the curriculum as it is in practice. It was investigated by analysing a focus group session with the teacher trainers from the curriculum committee. One of the tasks of this committee is to monitor the alignment of the curriculum. As this task requires a good overview of the curriculum, the members are relevant informers for the purpose of our study. The focus group session lasted for about two hours. During this session, two topics were discussed extensively. The first topic concerned the results from the curriculum analysis on paper. The participants in the focus group reflected on these results and gave their views regarding the validity of the results (did they recognise the conclusions as stated by the researchers?). The second topic concerned possible disparities between the intended and implemented curriculum. The participants described the curriculum as it is put into practice and clarified differences from the intended curriculum. The session was chaired by the first author, recorded and transcribed.

### *Results of the analysis of the intended curriculum*

*Vision document:* The key message of the vision document is that the college trains teachers to have an understanding of the diverse (ethnic–cultural) backgrounds of pupils as well as the competence to deal with these differences. It is explicitly mentioned that the college finds it important that teachers have intercultural competence. The core values include an urban as well as an international component: it is stated that the college strives for active learning and development-oriented education that involves ‘sharing of culture, communicating about culture and participating in culture’ (p. 4). It is also stated that international knowledge and experience results in a better understanding of pupils from a variety of cultural backgrounds (p. 5). Finally, the document describes an ideology where an ‘understanding of diversity of cultures’ is one of its main objectives.

*Competences:* The competences document describes seven basic competences that pupils are expected to acquire during the course of their study. Four of the seven competences refer explicitly to ethnic–cultural diversity: ‘interpersonal competence’, ‘pedagogical competence’, ‘competence in pedagogy and content’ and ‘competence



in cooperation with parents and external professionals'. At the end of their studies, pupils are expected to be competent in intercultural communication (subheaded under interpersonal competence), to be able to position themselves in the world of experience of children and to show an interest in the cultural background of children (pedagogical competence); they are expected to be able to adapt the learning material to different skill levels and take into account the cultural background of the children (content competence) and, finally, pupils are expected to be able to take into consideration different child-rearing practices and deal constructively with the cultural norms and values of the parents (competent in cooperation with parents and external professionals).

*Course descriptions:* In total, 102 course descriptions were scanned using the syntax with search terms. Tables 1–4 show the results. The rows show the course topics, while the columns show the six groups of search terms. The cells show which search terms were found in which courses.

Table 4 shows that across all study years, 43% of all courses mention at least one of the search terms in their course descriptions. In other words, in nearly half of all courses the intended curriculum deals with the topic of diversity in some way. Year 3 shows the highest percentage: in 66% of the course descriptions there is at least one reference to ethnic-cultural diversity (Table 3). In the first study year, the percentage of courses resulting in a hit is 36% (Table 1), in the second year it is 27% (Table 2) and in the fourth year it is 60% (Table 1). These results imply that the topic receives more attention in the third and fourth years than in the first and second years.

Regarding the type of course, in the first year, ethnic-cultural diversity is mainly discussed in the Active Pluriformity and Language courses, while the first year Education courses do not seem to pay attention to ethnic-cultural diversity. In the second year, the Global Citizenship course seems to pay the most attention to this topic, with three hits. In the third year a relatively large amount of attention is given to the topic in the Education courses, Innovation internship, and the Art and Design courses, as well as in specific courses such as Intercultural Education and World Orientation. Finally, in the fourth year the Art Orientation course and Age Differentiation course deal with the topic in the intended curriculum.

In terms of content, it is demonstrated that the first year pays attention to general issues concerning diversity (becoming conscious of differences) as well as pedagogy, while the second year focuses on pedagogy. The third year pays attention to general cultural differences, as well as pedagogy. Parental involvement is covered in the third as well as in the fourth year. It is remarkable that language diversity (second-language learning) results in few hits in the course descriptions and that social psychology issues involving stereotypes and identity issues are hardly mentioned either. Lastly, school and community relationships also receive very little attention in the current intended curriculum.

In summary, the vision document explicitly mentions ethnic cultural diversity and urban issues, yet does so in fairly abstract and general terms. Attention to ethnic cultural diversity seems to be less central to the documents describing the competences that student teachers are expected to acquire. Four out of seven competences mention ethnic-cultural diversity. Relating the course descriptions to the areas of expertise, it is demonstrated that in the first three years attention is paid to dealing with differences using pedagogy, while the last two years deal with the theme of parental involvement and the first and third years deal with cultural diversity in a

Table 1. Hits with the search terms A–F in the course descriptions for year 1.

Course topic	Number of courses	A: Diversity in general	B: Language diversity	C: pedagogy	D: Social interaction	E: Parents	F: Community	Number of courses with at least one hit
Geography and History	8	2		1				3
Active Pluriformity	3	2				2		3
Art and Design	2			1				1
Physical Education	2							0
Drama	4			1				1
Music	3			1				1
Science	7			3				3
World Orientation	1							0
Education	4							0
Language	4		2		1		1	3
Maths	4							0
Total number of courses in year 1	42							
Total number of hits in year 1		4	2	6	1	2	1	15 <sup>a</sup>
Percentage of hits in year 1								36%

Note: <sup>a</sup>Total of column (not of row).

Table 2. Hits with the search terms A–F in the course descriptions for year 2.

Course topic	Number of courses	A: Diversity in general	B: Language diversity	C: Pedagogy	D: Social interaction	E: Parents	F: Community	Number of courses with at least one hit
Geography and History	3				1			1
Art and Design	3			1				1
Drama	2			1				1
Music	2							0
Art Education	1			1				1
Philosophy	1							0
Speech	1			1		1		1
Science	3							0
Education	2			1				1
Writing	1							0
Language	2							0
English	1							0
Global Citizenship	1	1		1	1			1
World Orientation	1							0
Maths	2							0
Total number of courses in year 2	26							
Total number of hits in year 2		1		6				7 <sup>a</sup>
Percentage of hits in year 2								27%

Note: <sup>a</sup>Total of column (not of row).

Table 3. Hits with the search terms A–F in the course descriptions for year 3.

Course topic	Number of courses	A: Diversity in general	B: Language diversity	C: Pedagogy	D: Social interaction	E: Parents	F: Community	Number of courses with at least one hit
Art and Design	10	5		8		1		9
Music for Young Children	1							0
Physical Education	2							0
Age Differentiation	2					2		2
Global Week	1	1						1
Intercultural Education	1	1			1	1		1
Education	2	2			1	2	1	2
Internship Orientation	1							0
Internship Innovation	1	1		1		1		1
Language	2	1				1		1
English	1							0
World Orientation	3	1		2		1		2
Maths and Care	2							0
Total number of courses in year 3	29							
Total number of hits in year 3		12		11	2	9	1	19 <sup>a</sup>
Percentage of hits in year 3								66%

Note: <sup>a</sup>Total of column (not of row).

Table 4. Hits with the search terms A–F in the course descriptions for year 4 and total number across all years.

Course topic	Number of courses	A: Diversity in general	B: Language diversity	C: Pedagogy	D: Social interaction	E: Parents	F: Community	Number of courses with at least one hit
Physical Education	1							0
English	1							0
Art Orientation	1			1		1		1
Age Differentiation	2					2	1	2
Total number of courses in year 4	5							
Total number of hits in study year 4								3 <sup>a</sup>
Percentage of total year 4								60%
Total number all study years	102	17	2	24	5	15	3	44
Percentages of total all study years								43%

Note: <sup>a</sup>Total of column (not of row).

more general way. The themes of language development in diverse classes, social interaction and identity receive relatively little attention in the curriculum.

### *Results of the analysis of the implemented curriculum*

To validate the results of the curriculum analysis on paper and to find out whether the hits emerge in the implemented curriculum, a focus group session was held with the curriculum committee.

An analysis of the notes confirms that cultural diversity receives relatively little attention until the third year. According to the teacher trainers in the curriculum committee, the pupils learn about ethnic cultural diversity in a general sense in the first year, in which they are expected to become conscious of differences, but it is not until the third year that pupils really learn about issues related to dealing with ethnic cultural differences. Secondly, the teacher trainers confirm that the general topic of education opportunities and inequality receives the most attention. Thirdly, the low number of hits regarding language development is confirmed and explained by the fact that the Dutch as a Second Language course was dropped from the curriculum a few years ago. The topics from this former course were supposed to be dealt with in the general language courses; however, the teacher trainers suspect that this does not really happen, and certainly not in a structural way.

Aside from these confirmations of the results of the intended curriculum analysis, the teacher trainers tell us that while some courses do not mention the topic on paper, they do pay attention to it in practice. The teacher trainers give examples of various learning activities related to diversity and urban issues, for example in the language courses, the education courses and the internships. For example, pupils are obliged to do an internship in an 'education-opportunity school' (i.e. a school in an underprivileged neighbourhood) where they are confronted with diverse classes. The teacher trainers also inform us that, aside from the courses analysed, pupils may choose a minor that deals with urban issues. In summary, it can be asserted that the implemented curriculum probably pays more attention to ethnic cultural diversity than is suggested by the analysis of the intended curriculum.

### ***Part 3. Recommendations for a curriculum reform***

Starting from the overview of the areas of expertise and the curriculum analysis, we recommend that subcompetences be developed in the areas of ethnic-cultural diversity and urban issues and that these be added to the existing teacher competences. In addition, more explicit attention needs to be paid to language, social psychological processes and school-community relationships.

We recommend that attention be paid to the areas of expertise in each study phase and in each of the Language, Education and World Orientation core courses. We expect the impact on the quality of teaching to be higher when the areas of expertise are integrated in core courses instead of being added as separate courses. This could be achieved by implementing a development line in the sense that the first study phase focuses on a basis of knowledge and skills with an emphasis on memorising and understanding. In the second study phase this can be broadened to application and analysing, and in the final phase pupils should be able to evaluate (real or described) situations, as well as adapt or develop them. In this way, ethnic-

cultural diversity and urban issues would have a structural role in the curriculum, allowing pupils to develop in a gradual but structural way (Anderson et al. 2001).

From a more general educational point of view, we recommend closely monitoring the alignment between the vision document, the revised competences and the courses (see Nijveld 2007 for a model that supports this alignment in practice). School effectiveness research shows that it is important to align course programmes in this way in order to encourage pupil achievement (e.g. Fullan 2001). The analysed documents show little alignment, which implies that the courses are not necessarily a reflection of the vision document and competences. In addition, the course objectives should describe the required competences (i.e. the behaviour, knowledge and attitudes) in enough detail for the design of the courses in practice. Finally, monitoring the alignment includes the learning activities and assessment practices. The revision of the competences will take effect only in the case that the course objectives, learning activities and assessment change accordingly.

### **Summary and conclusions**

This article starts with an overview of five relevant areas of expertise needed by teachers who are to teach classes of pupils from diverse backgrounds. Teacher training colleges committed to educating teachers for urban schools should support their student teachers in acquiring these areas of expertise to sufficient levels. Urban teachers should first of all know about language development in classes of pupils whose first language is not the language of instruction. Secondly, these teachers should be competent in using pedagogical resources that support the learning of all their pupils. Diverse classes need different pedagogical resources and different types of instruction from homogeneous classrooms. If schools and teachers are committed to encouraging the talents of all their pupils they should have knowledge of the use of teaching materials, methods and types of instruction designed for diverse classes. In addition, urban teachers should know about social psychology issues such as stereotyping, teacher expectations and ethnic-identity issues. And finally, urban teachers who succeed in engaging the parents of their diverse pupils as well as cooperating with community organisations on a basis of equality will further support school achievement in their urban schools.

The second part of the article presents the findings of an analysis of the intended and implemented curriculum of a teacher training college in one of the major cities in the Netherlands. The intended curriculum, the vision document and four out of seven competences explicitly mention ethnic cultural diversity and urban issues. An analysis of the course descriptions showed that the first and third years include courses that deal with cultural diversity in a general way. The theme of pedagogy is dealt with in the first three years and the theme of parental involvement is dealt with in the final two years. The areas of language and social interaction and identity receive relatively little attention in the curriculum. Finally, we conclude on the basis of the focus-group session with teacher trainers that the implemented curriculum seems to pay more attention to ethnic-cultural diversity than suggested by the intended curriculum. One of our recommendations is to integrate the areas of expertise more structurally in the curriculum, which implies the inclusion of additional subcompetences that reflect all areas of expertise, and attention for the topic in each study phase and in each core course. We also recommend closely monitoring the

alignment of the vision, the revised competences, the courses and assessment practices.

Recently, the management decided to follow up on the recommendations by setting up a working group with the assignment to revise the competences in close cooperation with the researchers. In a number of sessions, this working group developed a revised and more detailed set of competences. The knowledge component as described was revised and combined with the skills and attitude component. The revised competences will serve as a basis for the curriculum reform that was intended by the management of the teacher training college. Once the revised competences have been converted into new course objectives, learning activities and assessment practices, this particular college can be expected to succeed in educating excellent teachers for diversity to higher levels.

We would like to end this article with some reflections on this project from a European perspective. The method employed to conduct the analysis of the curriculum has proven to be effective given the goal of the present study. According to the curriculum committee, the analysis resulted in a valid overview that showed the extent to which the areas of expertise are covered in the curriculum. The overview turned out to be a useful basis for designing the curriculum reform in a cooperation between the management, teacher trainers and the researchers. Therefore, the method, being straightforward and easy to apply, may be useful in a variety of comparable curriculum reform projects.

It is important, however, to consider the fact that member states have different perceptions of the role of education in a multicultural society (EU 2007). Teaching for diversity in countries where the school is considered to be an instrument to promote integration of migrants into the dominant society is a different matter compared to teaching for diversity when schools are considered to be a reflection of the multicultural society and where all cultures are valued equally. Furthermore, it is important to consider the fact that culturally diverse settings vary according to the specific migration histories of the migrant population in the member states, according to the percentages of migrants in classrooms and according to differences between migrant groups (e.g., in terms of religion). In sum, these issues should be considered before embarking on a comparable curriculum reform.

We would like to emphasise the recommendation made in the EU (2010) project regarding the advancement of discussion on teachers' skills and key competences. The EU project notes that some skills and competences that have become more important during recent years, such as teaching heterogeneous classes, deserve more consideration when developing teacher education. We hope that the current article and its literature overview will play a role in this area. Therefore, we recommend maintaining and further developing European networks. An example of such a policy network is the newly EU-funded Sirius network, which focuses on the education of migrant children. One of the key issues in the Sirius network concerns the professional capacity of school staff. These networks can support the quality improvement in teacher education in Europe with the focus on preparing teachers for diversity. Ultimately, this could improve the educational position of children from diverse backgrounds.



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