

How can the overall quality of teachers and their teaching methods in Dutch secondary education improve using the Finnish secondary education model as example?

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I. Executive Summary

This research project aimed to find an answer to the central research question of “how can the overall quality of teachers and their teaching methods in Dutch secondary education improve using the Finnish secondary education model as example?”. The purpose to finding an answer to this question was for the sake of seeking overall quality improvement of secondary education in the Netherlands, as it currently faces major challenges in the form of a large teacher shortage, unprofessionalism in the classroom, and systematic flaws. On the other hand, Finland has been chosen for comparison due to its continuous success and praise in the field of education. In doing so, the goal is not to glorify nor imitate the Finnish secondary education system entirely, but rather to find inspiration from its unconventional, yet successful methods. In seeking the answer to the main research question, previous researches have been investigated, as well as existent literature regarding education in both the Netherlands and Finland. Moreover, two interviews have been conducted and two case studies have been analysed, in order to provoke further comparison.

On the basis of the findings discovered during the research, it can be concluded that the quality of teachers are indeed a large contributing factor to the success or failure of an education system. It is therefore essential that the Dutch secondary education be rid of the quantitative and qualitative shortages of teachers as effectively as possible. The research findings have shown that these issues are highly interlinked, and the most viable option to tackling both of these problems at once, is to improve the quality of teacher education. Improvement to teacher education consists of two main areas: the increasing focus of the didactic aspect of teaching for teachers in training, as this is where unprofessionalism has proven to stem from, as well as the encouragement of continuous education and training of teachers even post-graduation, although this can only be achieved by allowing more space and time for professionalisation in the average teacher’s schedule. Consequently, by improving the quality of the occupation, the teaching profession is more likely to gain a favourable image and wider appeal, which can lead to a decrease in shortage in the future. As such, the answer to the main research question based on the findings of this particular research, is that improving teacher education is the key to combatting both the quantitative and qualitative teacher shortage in the Netherlands at once. As for adjusting the education system and hierarchy itself: only after achieving improvement of teacher education, thereby increasing professionalism in secondary education, can the system itself be introduced to new education policies similar to Finland’s, such as collective autonomy, in which teachers have increased authority and decision-making power.

II. List of Abbreviations

ASCD	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
EC	European Commission
EFA	Education for All
EI	Education International
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PTR	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UN	United Nations

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IV. Introduction

“Education in the Netherlands seems to be doing quite alright on average,” comments the inspector-general of the Dutch Inspectorate of Education after presenting the annual report on the state of education, “but on the long-term, it is plain to see that we are losing our grip on education, which is very worrisome” (2018). Every year, this has more or less been the general conclusion on the state of Dutch secondary education, as the Netherlands has been running behind on international results, such as PISA, for the past 20 years (Inspectorate of Education, 2018). As a result, the country has lost sight of its previous top position, and continues to be outperformed by its peers, leaving the Dutch secondary education system in a position of mediocrity (Inspectorate of Education, 2018). One such country that tends to largely outperform others is Finland, often managing to land on top with these sorts of international assessments, despite having a rather unconventional education system. This research aims to find out what it is that sets Finland apart, how the Netherlands could possibly learn from it, and to what degree this would be realistically applicable. In doing so, this paper first explores what quality education entails to begin with, and if measuring results, such as the aforementioned PISA, is valuable for the improvement of quality. Most importantly, this research has been conducted with a heavy focus on teachers and their teaching methods, as they are often appointed as contributing factors to the balance of quality education. How they are involved in this, and how the systematic flaws directly impact their performances and thereby the overall quality of the education that they provide, will be discussed in this paper. Hence, throughout the research, the aim is to answer the following main research question, as well as related sub-questions that will aid in the search of a definitive answer:

“How can the overall quality of teachers and their teaching methods in Dutch secondary education improve using the Finnish secondary education model as example?”

1. “What is considered to be quality teaching in Dutch and Finnish secondary education respectively, and to what degree do these perspectives differ and/or overlap?”
2. “How can teacher shortages in Dutch secondary education be combatted?”
3. “To what degree does professionalism in secondary teachers, or the lack thereof, impact students’ academic success and the overall quality of secondary education?”
4. “To what extent does student assessment in secondary education reflect the quality of its teachers?”

V. Methodology

V.I. Case Motivation and Explanation

The reason for seeking out possible improvements to the Dutch secondary education system in this dissertation is to find a solution to the overarching problem of decrease in quality education that seems to be inflicting parts of Europe, and by extent the West as a whole. The Netherlands specifically was selected as main research topic, due to its prominent issues of teacher shortages and teacher unprofessionalism, which tend to stand out for an otherwise fairly well-regulated Western country. Additionally, it was chosen for the easy accessibility of sources, as there are many existing pieces of literature criticising its secondary education system. As will be showcased in the literature review, most sources seem to indicate that its current issues form the main threats to a decrease in its quality education. Correspondingly, Finland was chosen as the opposite to the Netherlands, because of its wildly different approach to secondary education, and its seemingly more successful results in comparison in sources such as ASCD, EC, OECD, and UN reports. Further details that could explain its seeming success are to be discussed in upcoming sections, including enthusiasm for the teacher profession, professionalism and a positive self-image in teachers, and the lack of standardised testing. The aim is to explore both secondary education systems, find out to what degree the two systems overlap or clash, and ultimately whether and how the Netherlands can learn from the Finnish system, in particular with regards to its teachers and teaching methods.

V.II. Comparative Analysis

This research paper will follow a comparative analysis format. This format has been selected because it is the most practical for directly comparing two countries. Each of the sub-questions will be addressed by dividing them into sections that treat both the Netherlands and Finland separately, followed by a comparison between the two, and ultimately reaching an answer to the main research question. In order to effectively analyse comparative data, it must be ensured that the information utilised has been collected through similar methods (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). Throughout the research, a combination of secondary and primary data will be used, as secondary sources will form the base of the research, whereas primary data can act as a good measure of expanding and comparing new findings to what has already been established through previous research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). In order to succeed in applying primary

data to a comparative analysis, efforts will have to be made to fully comprehend the collected information, including identifying key themes and/or patterns from the primary research with the already existing secondary data, and comparing, explaining and integrating them into the research, and lastly, making a conclusion based on these results (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009).

Before doing committing to comparative research on quality education, it must be acknowledged that Finland's education model, although generally accepted as exemplary, is far from perfect, as many Finnish sources point to Finland itself having several areas to improve on. Starting off, Finland's high performance often causes difficulties for decision-makers regarding educational improvement in the country, but problems do in fact form for Finnish teachers, especially in the areas of pedagogical leadership, personalised study plans for teachers, collaboration and networking among teachers (EC, 2017). Other research corresponds with this: there are a fair amount of teachers who feel as though they are not fully prepared to teach the contents of their subject, whereas others dread the pedagogic aspect of it (Sahlberg, 2015). Many Finnish teachers also indicate that they never receive feedback on their teaching from their principal or school leader, but only from other teachers (Sahlberg, 2015). Furthermore, the connection between the initial education that teachers undergo and the education they receive throughout the rest of their professional life, is rather weak (Sahlberg, 2015). Participation in professional development is another area on which Finland can improve; the OECD average shows that Finland is behind other countries regarding the matter (Sahlberg, 2015). Other areas of improvement include conflict resolution, collaborating with parents, and teaching children with special needs (Sahlberg, 2015).

Likewise, ex-minister of Education and Foreign Affairs of Finland, P. Stenbäck, criticises the Finnish education system for its content rather than its qualifications, by addressing that the content that students are taught nowadays is outdated (2015). He believes that there is too much of a focus put on history, rather than on 21st century issues, and a delay in the start of immersion and language programmes (2015). When it comes to the learning environment itself, he agrees with the EC's previous notion that more pedagogical efforts should be made as well, and specifically recommends that more attention be paid to disciplining students who interrupt the positive learning space for other students, as well as prioritising safety in the classroom (Stenbäck, 2015). It is often highlighted as a positive point in most assessments of the Finnish education system that local governments and politicians have had more say in curricula since the 1970s, however, Stenbäck argues that the disadvantage this brings with it, is that there is a lack of flexibility in the amount of teacher positions and general school standards (2015).

V.III. Secondary Research

As mentioned previously, secondary research will form the bulk of information sources for this research project. Given that the research focuses exclusively on the current state of education, only recent sources, i.e. sources published since 2015, will be used in order to avoid outdated information. This includes statistical information published in governmental and institutional reports, e.g. by the ASCD, EC, EFA, OECD, UN, and the Ministry of Education and Culture and Inspectorate of Education of the respective countries. To expand on this information, analytical research articles published in academic journals will be used as well, such articles from *Teaching and Teacher Education*. Primarily though, expert opinions and theories will be discussed, using books such as *Kill the Messenger: The War on Standardized Testing* by R. Phelps, *Finnish Lessons* by P. Sahlberg, *The beautiful risk of education* by G. J. J. Biesta, and *Flip the System: Changing Education from the Ground Up* by J. Evers and R. Kneyber.

V.IV Primary Research

Next to secondary research, primary research will be conducted in the form of a 40 to 45 minute qualitative interview with experts and/or practitioners in the area of Dutch secondary education, in order to incorporate relevant information into the research, and back up or refute established arguments. For this particular research, two interviewees have been chosen: one a practitioner in secondary education with over 50 years of experience as well as education author and publisher, the other a practitioner who is fairly new to the scene of teaching, with 2 years of experience. This gap in age and experience between the two is intentional, as it may lead to differing perspectives. Both will be presented with the same five base questions, some with different questions branching off of them depending on the participants' answers. The ultimate purpose of these research interviews is to seek valid and reliable data that can help answering the research question: they form a useful tool in doing qualitative research which other methods such as surveys or case studies cannot provide (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). For this particular research, a qualitative research interview, i.e. a semi-structured interview, seems to be the best fitting type of interview, because its format is formal while still allowing the interviewee freedom in their choice of words, as they are not obligated to give standardised answers like in a fully structured interview (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). This is particularly optimal when interviewing experts, because this way they are free to share their views and full range of expertise without any restriction. Furthermore, there are three key elements which make this particular research prone to utilising this method of interviewing: the nature of the research is fairly exploratory, there are several open-ended

questions to be answered within the research subject, and the time and expertise required to answer said questions is too complex and lengthy for them to fit in a standardised survey or structured interview (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). However, it must be kept in mind when conducting a qualitative research interview, that the interviewee must have enough expertise regarding the topic for their statements to form a reliable source of information (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). Moreover, the interviewer must be careful not to let their biased view influence nor lead the answers of the correspondent. Likewise, the interviewee might impose their bias onto the interviewer as well (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). Therefore, bias should be attempted to be avoided as much as possible, as it might damage the reliability and validity of the interview as a credible source (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). Lastly, it is important to not generalise the opinion of an individual into the opinion of a certain group or an entire population (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). In order to optimise the experience and outcome of the interview, preparations should be made in the form of an interview plan (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2009). Please find the full detailed interview plan for this research paper including preparations, candidates, and questions attached at the end as appendix. In the upcoming chapters, the results from these interviews will be presented, analysed and discussed.

Lastly, in addition to the interviews, two real life cases of attempts to improve and/or adjust quality in secondary education in the Netherlands have been analysed. Both are fairly recent projects. The first being an attempt to “create” more teachers, in order to combat the prevalent teacher shortage, and the second being an attempt to drastically change traditional Dutch teaching methods altogether. Using the projects’ respective websites, as well as praise and criticism presented in favour or against them, the various results and success of these programmes have been analysed and discussed. The goal of this, is that these real life experiences may be utilised as potential examples for taking any further steps towards the development education improvement.

VI. Literature Review

VI.I. Defining Quality Education

Before going into further detail about quality education, there is something to note about what education and teaching entails to begin with. Perhaps one of the most outspoken education authors regarding this topic is G. J. J. Biesta, who argues that the true meaning of “teaching” is absent in our current education system, and he questions how we could “return it” to its former state by exploring his thesis on what teaching really is, what its place is within education, and whether it “transcends” education (2015). His approach to defining education and teaching is a more philosophical, theoretical one. In his opinion, there is a distinct difference between collective learning and education, i.e. “learning from” and “being taught by”, which needs to be understood in order to analyse and criticise education (2015). “Learning from” means that students use their teacher as yet another resource, as they would a book or an internet source, in which case it is the students themselves who are essentially in control of what exactly they absorb from the information presented by their teacher (Biesta, 2015). Biesta poses that if this is all a teacher is, there is an argument to make on why we would still employ teachers, as there are plenty of stationary resources that could replace them in that case (2015). Therefore, Biesta himself subscribes to “being taught by” as the right way to approach teaching in education, rather than “learning from” (2015). “Being taught by” refers to an experience where someone introduces something new from the outside to another person, and this newly obtained knowledge makes the person in question realise and question something about themselves and their way of being, of which they were unaware beforehand (Biesta, 2015). That is why he suggests a teacher is someone who should always add something new from the outside to education, and he does not see the teacher as someone who is a fellow learner or facilitator, but rather as someone who somewhat “transcends” education (2015). However, a teacher is not necessarily someone who simply has the power to give the “gift of education” at free will; in Biesta’s opinion this is a faulty way of observing and understanding education (2015). In his view, being a teacher is not so much an occupation as it is an identity in the moment when the “gift of teaching” is received (Biesta, 2015). This analogy of viewing teaching as “giving the gift of education” is therefore in place, because it suggests giving something the other person did not previously possess (Biesta, 2015). Biesta’s distinction between “learning from” and “being taught by” is an interesting notion to make, as it may change the way we view and utilise teaching methods, should we seek improvement in the quality of education.

Continuing in the perspective of Biesta's education theory, it is then ultimately constructivism, i.e. an increasing emphasis on interactive learning for students, that he blames for a decline in quality education (2015). Constructivism argues that students have to make their own observations and conclusions through actions, and focuses more on learning than on teaching, with the teacher assuming a more supportive role towards the students, as teaching itself becomes second to the individual learning process of each student (Biesta, 2015). Biesta finds it troublesome that this school of thought has been accepted as the norm in current educational institutions, as learning environments are now built to accommodate constructivist thinking, thereby disadvantaging didactic teaching methods (2015). Consequently, students do not learn from the teachers as much as they learn from their learning environment and its associative learning facilities and services (Biesta, 2015). This then has the potential to corrupt the self-image of the teacher and how the world around them perceives them (Biesta, 2015). Biesta argues that by robbing teachers of their main task, i.e. to teach something new to students directly, and instead making them into a facilitator of learning, we essentially "give up the very idea of education" (2015, p. 46). Constructivism assumes that the process of learning is innate, which is problematic in a pedagogical point of view, because the point of education should always be to teach something new, rather than to repeat that what already exists and is already known (Biesta, 2015). Therefore, in Biesta's opinion teaching is not the act of presenting knowledge to students, but rather teaching them something that is "neither derivable from nor validated by what they already know", meaning that there needs to be trust in the authority of the one who teaches them (2015, p. 50). Constructivism is currently the *modus operandi* in the Dutch education system, which by default prioritises "learning from" methods over "being taught by" methods, as the focus is put more on the students' individual development.

The question is then: if the constructivist method is supposedly so flawed, what makes for "good" education? Regarding this, Biesta has an opinion as well. According to him, there is a distinction between quality and effectiveness or excellence in education (2015). Effective education refers to what degree education processes succeed in achieving desired results, which leads to competition consequently, whereas quality education should have students learning something because of a certain reason and with a certain goal in mind, and it should be taught to them by another person (Biesta, 2015). This is where educating distinguishes itself from "simply" learning: education is about content, goals and relations (Biesta, 2015). Answering what quality education entails can only be done while considering what the goal of education is in the first place (Biesta, 2015). In relation to that idea, the different types of education that are operative within the system cannot be observed as neutral, because how things are said and done by teachers, as well as the

content thereof, can greatly influence young minds (Biesta, 2015). The problem being that when education is being discussed, often times only the relation of the method to the result will be analysed, but the impact of the method itself remains undiscussed (Biesta, 2015).

Another problem Biesta finds within current education is that there is no real “goal”, whereas he personally would like to see multiple goals within several “domains” of education, which would greatly increase its complexity of education (2015). Through his personal analysis, Biesta finds that there are three of these domains, aka dimensions, to education (2015). The first being the dimension of qualification, in which young people are educated to meet qualifications that are expected of them in the adult world; education is about transferring content, i.e. knowledge, skill, and disposition (Biesta, 2015). In the second dimension, socialisation, education is shaped to accommodate young people to traditions (Biesta, 2015). Even when the focus is not put on tradition specifically, socialisation still takes place, because the fact that we transfer knowledge that is presumed to be the norm, is inherently a traditional practice (Biesta, 2015). The last dimension he names is “subjectification”, which is about young people becoming independent, critical, forward-thinking, and responsible individuals (2015). Biesta sees these three dimensions as goals of education, i.e. what we want to achieve in relation to these dimensions, and how we can realise those ideas (2015). Biesta believes that by dividing education into these three dimensions, we can determine what good education entails with more precision, because they overlap and synergise with each other (2015). There needs to be a balance between the three in order to achieve quality education, which can be found in the core of each teacher’s work, increasing the job’s difficulty, but also making it more more interesting and creative (Biesta, 2015). It also requires teachers to be explicitly aware of their pedagogical responsibilities (Biesta, 2015). All in all, Biesta does not view education as a tool for cultivating a young person to their full potential, but rather good education should be a worldly process in which young people develop their own person (2015).

There are, of course, many other attempts to define what makes for a quality education. Whereas Biesta’s approach is rather philosophical, a more concise attempt comes from the ASCD for instance: in its report it defines modern quality education as “a system that is designed to help students reach their full potential and enter society as fully productive citizens”, believing that focussing on literacy, numeracy and testing is outdated (2015, p. 1). The ASCD claims that there are three key pillars that contribute to forming quality in education: “ensuring access to quality teachers, providing use of quality learning tools and professional development, and the establishment of safe and supportive quality learning environments” (2015, p. 3). This is both in

correspondence and simultaneously contradictory to Biesta's view: although the ASCD does claim that the aim of education should be to have students reach their "full potential", they would also seemingly agree with Biesta's notion of "subjectification" when they note that students should have the room to develop themselves into citizens of the world. Moreover, the ASCD seems to believe that teachers are the key to quality education, which is something that Biesta subscribes to as well, as will be discussed in further detail in the upcoming section.

Similarly, another attempt to define quality education was made by the Commonwealth Education Hub, based on a discussion summary exploring quality standards in education, involving opinions of practitioners, academics and policymakers. Through its findings, the Commonwealth Education Hub claims that quality education is yet to be defined, but the organisation makes an effort to define it regardless: according to them quality education is "largely dependent on trained facilitators/teachers, a learner-centred approach, good resources and facilities, relevant curricula and material, family and community support, gender-sensitive design, and a safe and conducive learning environment" and furthermore that education itself is "a complex system, requiring a holistic education system with a national framework that clearly outlines fundamental elements of quality assurance, which is the bedrock of quality education" (2016, p. 2). This source, too, seems to point to educators playing the lead role in quality education, and more or less corresponds completely with that of the ASCD, even expanding on it in more detail. Additionally, it seems to overlap with Biesta's notion that education is and will always be complex, and is therefore in dire need of a fundamental system to accompany it, but without reducing or simplifying its complexity.

Based on the literature thus far, all sources seem to point to the quality of teachers always being a contributing factor to what makes or breaks the overall quality of education; be it the most important factor, or one of many.

VI.II. Defining Quality Teaching

Having discussed interpretations of what makes for “good” education, and concluding that teachers are always a key element to this, one then wonders: if the teacher plays such a prevalent role in all of this, what is it that makes for a “good” teacher and “good” teaching methods? In this section, experts’ opinions regarding this topic will be discussed.

In their book *Flip the System: Changing Education from the Ground Up*, J. Evers and R. Kneyber explore, among other topics, what makes for a “good” teacher. While the general thought so far seems to be that teachers determine the quality of the education, it is the other way around in the view of Evers and Kneyber: the quality of the teacher is dependent on the system, support, and sense of responsibility that their professional environment offers them (2016). While the Dutch Education Council deems that the quality of teachers greatly determines the level of education as a whole, and greatly influences students’ achievements in all different sectors, Evers and Kneyber argue that all teachers will obtain experience throughout their career, but there is a certain type of teacher that “transcends” their colleagues, in who they call the “expert-teacher” (2016). Key qualities of such a teacher include the ability to offer a challenge, the ability to monitor and provide feedback, and the ability to represent, i.e. being able to analyse and learn from a certain situation in the classroom (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Knowledge on its own is therefore not a deciding factor of a good teacher; more so, didactic knowledge is required, i.e. how the teacher can apply their knowledge in an educational setting (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Students who have been taught by a so-called expert-teacher tend to achieve higher results too, as they are generally more interested and comprehensive of what has been taught to them than students of “regular” experienced teachers (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). The difference between an expert and an experienced person being the quality of the practice, aka “deliberate practice”, meaning that the expert-teacher practices their profession with a clear goal in mind, continuously receives and incorporates feedback, and checks if they were able to achieve their goal afterwards (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). It can therefore be argued, that talent or specific characteristics are not required at all, as long as the teacher practices this method (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). This idea of “teaching with a goal in mind” that expert-teachers supposedly practice, perfectly corresponds to Biesta’s previous notion that in order to achieve quality education, one must first identify a clear goal, and strive towards it.

An argument against Evers’ and Kneyber’s view forms when considering that endless practice does not necessarily lead to success, and IQ level is arguably a deciding factor in expertise regardless of how much practice one has had (2016). However, Evers and Kneyber find that argument to be

invalid, as expert-teachers have the cognitive capacity of analysing lessons in the moment they are taking place, meaning that expertise is context-sensitive; therefore, a teacher could be considered an expert at one school but not at another (2016). Evers and Kneyber find that any teacher can develop into an expert, as long as they go through three phases: the first in which they are supported externally by colleagues and supervisors, the second phase in which they transition from being counselled to self-regulation and self-monitoring, and finally the third phase in which they become independent and are able to establish their own goals, i.e. they have set high internalised standards for themselves, and make sure to achieve them accordingly (2016).

As was briefly mentioned before, Evers and Kneyber believe that understanding the goal of education is essential before we can decide what direction it should go, similar to Biesta's view (2016). In their view, teacher professionalism is important in education, but it is more than simply a collection of competences, knowledge and skills; rather, it is a continuing growing process (2016). Evers and Kneyber deem a good teacher someone who follows a routine, as it offers a platform for them to share their knowledge; however, it must be acknowledged that a teacher requires time and experience in order to formulate an effective routine, and they should be granted enough space to do so (2016). For instance, beginning teachers who do not have the security of having a permanent job, are less likely to invest in their professionalism (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). If the development of teachers' professionalism would be more valued, and more room would be offered to expand on this, Evers and Kneyber believe there would be many more expert-teachers, thereby improving the overall quality of education (2016).

Biesta would agree that teacher education is essential in developing quality in teachers, as he finds that teachers should become more highly qualified than is the current norm in the Netherlands (2015). However, that does not necessarily refer to academic qualification. In fact, he often finds that in a lot of academic institutions, there is an increased emphasis on research and publication, more so than on preparing teachers for a professional teaching environment (2015). He disagrees with this approach to teacher training, because by making research an essential focus of teacher education, teachers in training may have their vision on education influenced by the analytical and statistical aspects of doing research, which then results in a lack of understanding of the practical, didactic side of being a teacher (Biesta, 2015). In that regard, Evers, Kneyber, and Biesta all seem to agree that the lack of quality in teaching, finds its roots in flawed teacher education. Whereas Evers and Kneyber would like to see teachers become academics before they consider themselves a teacher, Biesta challenges the idea of having an academic form of teacher training altogether.

While Evers and Kneyber speak of this “expert-teacher” who continuously develops themselves professionally even after graduation, D. van der Wateren makes an interesting note regarding this as well. He, too, would like to see an increasing focus on teacher evaluations: teachers should be owners of their own quality control through intervision between colleagues, feedback sessions, continuous training, evaluation by students, cooperation instead of competition between secondary schools, and a school board specifically for teachers (2016). However, for most teachers, the current system simply does not allow them the extra time to execute other tasks beside teaching itself. If this were to become reality, a serious rescheduling of time division for teachers would have to be implemented, which is something that Evers and Kneyber are very outspoken about, as will be discussed later on in this research paper.

Similar to the aforementioned authors, L. Prick states in a 2015 interview with Kneyber that he finds that teachers are not as highly educated as they should be, and consequently do not have as much knowledge of their subject as they should have. Unlike Biesta however, Prick does not necessarily find teacher education to be at fault. In fact, he firmly believes that good teaching methods derive from the teachers’ knowledge itself, but when teachers are forced to teach by the book, is when the quality of teaching decreases (2015). Additionally, the increase in scale of education causes teachers to lose grip of their power as they are forced to abide by the school board’s decisions (Prick, 2015). He believes it decreases self-esteem in teachers when they do not have any decision-making power regarding their own work, thereby limiting their creativity and flexibility in their work (2015). Unlike the other sources thus far, this expert finds the blame to be on the lack of autonomy in modern education. This can be backed up by results provided by the ASCD, as they found that students of highly qualified, motivated, and supported teachers have proven to experience more study success and tend to continue their studies, and how successful a teacher is in transferring their knowledge to a student, is highly dependent on to what degree a teacher is allowed to participate in shaping the curriculum to fit their own level and interest, as this optimises a teacher’s motivation and participation (2015). The current “measuring culture” does not allow for this, because basing a student’s –and by extent teacher’s– skill level solely on test assessment is unethical in Prick’s opinion (2015). In his view, a good teacher should be able to determine their students’ skill level without having to test it (2015).

One large critique on the current state of education that seems to be hindering the quality control of teaching methods, is this “measuring culture” that Prick speaks of. Biesta for instance, also firmly believes that having this type of culture in learning environments is harmful to the quality of

education. Biesta claims that assessment only works if it is done in relation to the goals of quality education, but in the current system the measuring itself has become the goal instead of the method that ultimately helps achieve the goal (2015). It brings up the discussion whether we measure what we find valuable, or we have come to value that what we can measure, and Biesta argues that we should first make room to establish what is important to measure before we go ahead and assess (2015). Measuring culture can harm teaching methods, in that teachers will have to adapt their methods to a national curriculum, causing them to have to “teach to the test” and use other didactic tricks that focus more on pressuring students to achieve high results (Biesta, 2015). This process reduces the complexity of education to a linear, one-dimensional concept of learning, and restricts the teachers’ space of creating their own, collective curriculum within the general system (Biesta, 2015). Biesta does note that he does not necessarily disagree with the concept of measurement itself, as it is innate to education and a good way to make a student’s progress visible, however, using numbers and percentages is the most inaccurate representation of measuring someone’s achievements, and is furthermore pedagogically unreliable (2015). Judgement is automatically incorporated within measurement, which is another important part of education; however, most testing in secondary schools assesses the short-term effects of students’ results, while there are other aspects to good education and good teaching that can only become visible on the long-term (Biesta, 2015). Similar to Biesta, Prick does not necessarily oppose the notion that standardised testing is inherently bad either, as this type of “snapshot” testing is present in all kinds of fields, and therefore secondary education is not solely to blame for it (2015). What he does disagree with, is how much the chance of successfully passing a multiple choice final exam is up to luck: in his personal testing he found that a small percentage of students were able to pass the exam simply by having guessed the answers that they did not know correctly (2015).

Van der Wateren strongly agrees with the idea that standardised testing harms the freedom of the teacher, and the overall quality of teaching methods, although he is more strongly against it than the previously mentioned authors. According to him, a large fault in this system is that students have the potential to receive incorrect study advice, which may in turn be stressful on the teacher: a student who scores lower on an important standardised test than they usually would, may receive binding recommendation based on the results that does not necessarily fit their current skill level, leaving the final decision of the binding recommendation up to the teacher, which is an especially stressful choice to make when pressured by the students’ parents or guardians (van der Wateren, 2015). Additionally, he states that schools often use the argument that measuring results adds to transparency, which satisfies the parents or guardians, however he believes this is a mere excuse

that makes it easier to potentially blame teachers for undesirable results (2015). On the other side of the spectrum, exams can also suffer from inflation of test scores, i.e. students score higher than their actual level, due to teaching to the test and test training (van der Wateren, 2016). Overall, van der Wateren would agree with Biesta's notion that we must first understand what is worth being measured, before we go ahead and measure it; he does not see a problem in *how* testing takes place, but rather he finds the better question to be *what* is being tested (2016). He questions what exactly is being measured, because whether high average grades equal high quality of education is debatable (2016). After all, exam scores only indicate what the student is already capable or incapable of, but not the reason why (van der Wateren, 2016). He finds that the answer should be sought after independently from the test score, but this type of evaluation lacks in the current education system (2016). However, regardless of what form it takes, testing is an irreplaceable part of education, in his view (van der Wateren, 2016).

Despite the general negativity aimed towards standardised testing, there are also authors who would plead in favour of the Western standardised system. For instance, one research finds that if done correctly, it can be argued that standardised testing is even beneficial, as it can act as a diagnostic improvement tool (Sahlberg, Hasak, & Rodriguez, 2017). One author that is particularly outspoken about the topic, R. Phelps, discusses arguments against standardised testing and attempts to refute them in his book *Kill the Messenger: The War on Standardized Testing*. He acknowledges standardised testing to undeniably form the most reliable tool for accountability in Western education, for better or for worse (2017). In reaction to the general opinion that standardised tests are unnatural and unfair, because they would supposedly distort teacher instruction to the point where they have to adopt the "teaching to the test" approach that Biesta, Evers, and Kneyber name, he argues that standardised tests measure attained knowledge and skills, but not how this is obtained, and therefore teaching methods do not have to be adjusted at all (2017). In defence of the standardised testing system, he brings up the question whether there are any better alternatives to it that would directly solve all the beforementioned imperfections, and argues that no such thing exists in current times (2017).

Overall, it seems that teacher education, teacher evaluation, and teacher autonomy are three key elements which experts would argue are important in deciding what makes for a qualified teacher.

VI.III. The State of Quality in Dutch Secondary Education

Now that the concepts of quality education and quality teaching have been explored, the upcoming section will review how the Dutch secondary education system has been holding up in relation.

A 2015 Global Monitoring policy paper by EFA shows that teacher shortages are one of the main concerns to quality in secondary education worldwide, as they result in a higher global PTR, meaning that worldwide, classrooms are growing, often leading to less individual contact between teachers and students. According to the 2017 report by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, which reviews the state of Dutch education on annual basis, it appears that the Netherlands, too, has been experiencing this problem on a grand scale, as the shortage of teachers in the Netherlands has been the largest problem to affect Dutch secondary education in recent years. Aside from the shortages, the Netherlands is highly inconsistent in its general methods and quality of teaching as well, to the extent where it is the number one country in differing performances per school, whereas Finland is second-last as of 2017 (Inspectorate of Education). The overall shortage of qualified teachers plays an important factor as to what has led to this result, as some schools choose to employ unauthorised education, decreasing the overall quality of lessons (Inspectorate of Education, 2017). The EC shows similar results in its 2017 Education and Training Monitor, reporting that Dutch secondary education is indeed largely affected by the shortage of teachers, specifically in the subjects of mathematics, sciences, and foreign languages. In addition, the profile of the average teacher applicant lacks diversity: most are female and have a Western background (EC, 2017). Their results, too, show that freedom in secondary schools leads to a high variability in quality education and different levels of professionalism in teachers (EC, 2017). For instance, in 2015, five percent of all classes in Dutch secondary education were given by staff with no professional teaching background (EC, 2017). The view of Evers and Kneyber corresponds to these statistics, as they would argue that the Dutch Education Council is trying too hard to combat the quantitative shortage of teachers, but not the qualitative shortage of teachers, leading to unprofessionalism in classrooms (2016). An interesting note to make about these results, is that in the previous section, many authors seemed to be in favour of more autonomy for teachers and school boards, instead of the authorities. However, the results presented by the Inspectorate and EC contradict this notion: too much autonomy in Dutch secondary education has proven to lead to variable levels of quality in its education, which then leads to potential unprofessionalism in educators, possibly risking the academic success of students, because the level of professionalism of teachers strongly influences students' success.

As a direct result of teacher shortages, another issue surface: the image of the teaching profession. A 2015 Teaching and Learning International Survey conducted by EFA, shows that only a third of participating secondary teachers believed their profession was valuable to society. Additionally, in comparison to other countries, teachers in the Netherlands generally seem to especially experience difficulties in intellectually challenging their students, and easily risk becoming overworked in the dynamic learning environments they operate in (Inspectorate of Education, 2017). Perhaps this is also result of the increasing PTR, as mentioned in the previous EFA report. As a result of this stigma of teacher being a stressful occupation, teacher as a career choice seems to become increasingly unappealing, as the amount of students deciding to pursue a career in secondary education continues to plummet, and as such, it is estimated that the teacher shortage will continue to increase in the upcoming years. (Inspectorate of Education, 2017). As a result, the current system generates a vicious circle, in which teacher shortages exist because the profession is unappealing, and because it remains unappealing, the shortage will only keep increasing.

While too much autonomy has been proven to cause a decrease in quality, Prick argues that a certain increase in autonomy for teachers could fix the current stigma around the profession; therefore, there may also be positive effects to it. Admittedly, the issue of unqualified teaching is difficult to combat, as it usually takes place in lower levels of secondary education, and it is only in the higher levels in which the students' parents or guardians are usually higher educated and with that, more eager to intervene in their child's education (Prick, 2015). Therefore, Prick finds that teachers should be given more authority in the Netherlands, only if they are well educated (2015). Prick finds the problem to be that the school board itself is often afraid to give them this freedom, in the fear of losing their power within the organisation, which is why they prefer the current method, thereby forcing teachers to use corresponding methods (Prick, 2015).

While on the topic of teaching methods and the assessment thereof, the Netherlands is a perfect example of a country that applies the Western standardised system. Standardised testing is almost singlehandedly organised by Cito, which for the most part develops central exams, regular exams, orientation programmes, additional training, and advice for secondary education (2017). Additionally, it instructs teachers accordingly, in order for their methods to fit the standardised tests (2017). In a system like this, the students' performance is generally expected to reflect the quality of their teacher (Bastos, 2017). Whether this type of system is benifical or disadvantageous at the end of the day, can be argued for or against, as was presented in the previous section.

VI.IV. The State of Quality in Finnish Secondary Education

In complete contrast to the Netherlands, teacher is one of the most appealing career choices for young Finns, and due to its extensive selection process, Finland seems to experience more of a teacher “surplus”, rather than a shortage. A 2017 report by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture claims that teacher is revered as an esteemed profession: all teachers are respected knowledge workers and expected to hold at least a bachelor and master’s degree in whatever field they specialise in. P. Sahlberg expands on the seeming success of the Finnish education system in his book series *Finnish Lessons*. He explains that the reason why all secondary teachers must possess a research-based master’s degree, is because research-based teacher education in Finland includes scientific educational knowledge, didactics, and integrated practice, in order to train teachers in their pedagogical thinking, evidence-based decision-making, and engagement in the professional community (2015). By setting such high standards for teachers, only the most motivated and educated of participants are likely to be hired, leaving any occasions where an underqualified person ends up in the classroom extremely rare. Sahlberg finds that in order to maintain this level of quality, teacher education should be more standardised, i.e. setting high standards for teacher preparation programmes in universities, whereas the process of teaching and learning itself should be less standardised (2015). Interestingly, while previously stated that Biesta finds that focusing too much on the research aspect of being a teacher has the potential to cloud the importance of the didactic competences of a teacher, Finnish teacher education seems to have no problem incorporating both into one programme.

Beside teacher being a popular profession to pursue as a career for students in Finland, as evidenced by its overwhelming surplus of candidates, people who have been employed in Finnish education for a longer period of time tend to have a better self-image about their profession as well. Most sources seem to point at the teacher’s self-efficacy and high level of autonomy leading to the overarching success of the Finnish comprehensive education system. For instance, the EC report on Finland’s state of education, states that Finland has the highest level of autonomy in schools of all European countries, because the lack of common framework generally allows them more freedom in their way of operating, as well as a larger role to play in decision-making within the school board (2017). It deems Finland’s teacher development programme successful thus far, as it has been able to maintain quality quite consistently, with its teaching hours being evenly distributed without negatively affecting student performances (EC, 2017). Another source points out that for the most part teachers are free to apply their own methods, and students assume a higher degree of personal responsibility within the classroom (Ministry of Education and Culture,

2017). Moreover, Finnish secondary schools have high flexibility because of a modular curriculum structure, allowing for teaching schedules to be reorganised when needed (Sahlberg, 2015). As such, secondary teachers in Finland teach around 590 to 670 hours per year, whereas in the Netherlands the average is around 800 hours (Sahlberg, 2015). Sahlberg argues that teachers should be trusted to have this freedom in order to execute those teaching methods that they know would lead to the best results, in order for their profession to remain attractive to them (2015). However, one thing to keep in mind is that the reason why Dutch teachers tend to make more hours is likely due to the beforementioned teacher shortage in combination with the high PTR ratio. The Netherlands' population is around triple that of Finland's; it is then only logical that this leaves many more students per teacher on average in the Netherlands, adding to the overall workload and potentially stress-level of the Dutch teacher as opposed to their Finnish counterpart.

Another study shows that despite the general overwhelmingly positive results regarding the job satisfaction of teachers in Finland, there are in fact negative effects tied to teaching in the Finnish comprehensive education system as well. O. Malinen and H. Savolainen's research, conducted through data collection from 642 secondary schools in Finland, led to mixed results that potentially contradict previous findings. The two scholars found that a pleasurable job experience indeed stems from positive work conditions, including autonomy, self-efficacy, and positive student-teacher relationships; but what poses the largest threat to quality performance in teachers is generally a negative school climate and negative student behaviour (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Malinen and Savolainen found that the disciplinary Finnish school environment is more likely to generate stressful experiences, which in turn has the potential to lead to burnouts in teachers (2016). This proves to be true, because the study shows that Finnish teachers experience the highest amount of work-related stress when compared to other occupations in the country (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Finnish teachers may indicate to be generally satisfied with their profession, however the learning environment itself seems to greatly impact their satisfaction and potentially their performance. Seeing as the increasing autonomy of teachers has led to both positive and negative results in the Netherlands and Finland, whether autonomy in education is an asset in every education system is debatable. It can be argued that it is due to trust being a key factor to the functioning of the Finnish school culture, that freedom in teacher leadership seems to prove so successful (Bastos, 2017). Great value is seen in the improvement to the overall performance of the school through self-evaluation, such as teacher assessment without needing inspection, and perhaps this is an area where Dutch secondary schools are simply lacking still.

When it comes to teaching methods and assessment, the Finnish education system tends to stand out to all of its international peers, as Finland does not operate the standardised testing system. In fact, most Finnish teachers are sceptical of standardised testing, and value qualitative measuring over quantitative methods, as it is believed that quality is defined by mutual interaction between schools and students in the Finnish system (Bastos, 2017). Therefore, student assessment takes place through diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment done by teachers at the end of every period, as well as comprehensive evaluation of students' progress after each semester using report cards, and national assessments (Sahlberg, 2015). Notable is that Finnish students generally experience less anxiety than their peers from other countries because of this; usually, more focus is put on preparing students to confidently make decisions about their further academic and professional careers, as there is a lot of counselling and guidance available in most Finnish schools, which all students are entitled to for two hours a week during lower-secondary school (Sahlberg, 2015). These reforms over the years have added to the organisation of teaching and learning within schools, usually resulting in flexible, open, and interactive learning environments (Sahlberg, 2015).

Despite a supposed level of freedom within the Finnish system, it must be clarified that secondary students in Finland do take a single standardised test in their academic career in the form of the National Matriculation Examination, after having completed all of their compulsory courses (Sahlberg, 2015). This examination receives a lot of criticism from both teachers and students alike, as it requires teachers to deviate from their usual teaching methods in order to teach students solely that what will be tested on the exam (Sahlberg, 2015). The criticism is expected, because this type of assessment generally goes against the fundamentals of what the Finnish education usually stands for, usually leading to frustration in both students and teachers alike (Sahlberg, 2015). Despite this, transitioning from lower-secondary to upper-secondary education is significantly more comfortable for Finnish students than for their peers from most other countries, because at that point in their academic career, they have no experience with standardised testing yet, making the stakes seem high, which in turn pressures the students to succeed, as failure can lead to dramatic consequences, such as avoidance of risk taking, boredom, and fear (Sahlberg, 2015).

In regards to what exactly it is that makes the Finnish education system so successful in comparison to its international peers, there have been conducted many researches. Most of the time, the answer seems to point in the same general direction: according to the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, teachers are recognised as the key to quality education, and are therefore required to be continuously trained in order to maintain their professionalism (2017). Another 2017

research by R. M. B. Bastos investigates the success of the Finnish education system as well. His research, too, concludes that of all contributing factors to the success of the Finnish education system, the quality of teachers indeed outweighs all other factors (Bastos, 2017). According to his results, teachers having a say in the decision-making process and directly participating in school planning and curriculum development plays a large part in this (Bastos, 2017).

Interestingly, despite the general opinion of teachers being the key to a quality education, there are also experts who would partially disagree with this notion. For instance, Malinen and Savolainen found in their studies that it is not the individual teachers, but rather the school climate as a whole that adds to quality education, as a positive learning environment leads to academic achievement, motivated students, and lower suspension rates (2016). Sahlberg, would disagree more strongly; he states that although crucial, teachers are not in fact the most important factor to quality education, as he found that up to two-thirds of a student's success is influenced by external factors, such as their parents' academic and professional record, peer influence, and the individual student's characteristics (2015). According to him, judging teachers solely based on their students' achievements is unfair, because these external factors have been proven to have more impact on academic results than the quality of teaching (2015). Therefore, a teacher's performance does not directly impact that of their student, and the quality of a teacher's skills cannot and should not be measured solely based on their students' standardised test results accordingly (Sahlberg, 2015). In addition, he notes that in such a system, if all "weaker performing" teachers were to be fired and only "greatly performing" were to be hired, the system would collapse, as it usually takes up to five to ten years of continuous systematic practice for a teacher to be measured effectively and accurately in the first place (2015). This would also make it impossible for teachers who just started out to find a job where they are allowed to make mistakes and develop professionally through practice (Sahlberg, 2015). Furthermore, he believes school leadership is just as important as teacher leadership, i.e. creating a positive learning environment, involving parents or guardians, setting high expectations, and developing staff skills are as important to forming a quality education (2015). He also argues that the notion that "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers" is false, because according to him, this statement assumes that teachers work separately and do not affect one another, while in this day and age most teachers are likely to work cooperatively and influence each other (2015). A point of critique one could present against this argument, is that whether Sahlberg's view is realistic and would function in education systems other than Finland's is up for debate, as it must be kept in mind that all these regulations have been tailored to specifically fit Finland's comprehensive school system since the 1900s.

VII. Results

VII.I. Quality Education and Quality Teaching

In the literature review, most of the sources seemed to point to teachers forming the base of quality in education. Before answering any of the more in-depth questions, in order to establish their stance regarding this topic, the interviewees were first requested to present their personal view on what quality education entails and the role of teachers therein, as well as what they personally find to be challenges to the current system.

The first interviewee, van der Wateren, claims that he subscribes to Biesta's school of thought, i.e. the three dimensions of education: qualification, socialisation, and subjectification (2018). Likewise, van der Wateren believes that the most important task of education is first and foremost to raise young people into becoming adults and cosmopolitan citizens, i.e. independent, autonomous individuals (2018). Qualification is therefore the key element in his view, and to him that refers to the skills and knowledge one must obtain in order to play a functioning role in the adult world (2018). Socialisation to him is everything what young people need in order to become a functioning member of society, i.e. a professional society, a democratic society, and all kinds of organisations (van der Wateren, 2018). It is more about traditions, habits, norms and values that are important to society and specific groups (van der Wateren, 2018). "Subjectification" to him means personal development, which is about a young person becoming a subject who is actively making decisions and managing responsibilities independently, rather than an object that mindlessly absorbs knowledge (van der Wateren, 2018).

The second interviewee, practitioner M. Stadhouders, states that she finds personal attention to be the key element to quality education (2018). She believes in the "CAR-model" that was taught to her during her study programme: competence, autonomy, and relationship; those are the three needs of a student (2018). Competence meaning that the student feels like they are capable of succeeding, autonomy meaning that students are given enough room to grow independently, and relationship meaning the students' feeling of belonging to the group, and the teacher's responsibility to ensure all this (Stadhouders, 2018). Stadhouders finds that in that regard, the students should be the main focus in quality education, and not necessarily the teacher (2018). Another thing she finds essential is structure, meaning that the teacher is able to organise their

lessons without being interrupted by the students (2018). That being said, she clarifies that she would much prefer having her own structure over having to follow the structure provided to her by the school, i.e. a study guide that states everything that the students will be tested on, and to which she has to adapt her lesson plans (2018). She would prefer more autonomy in this, and ultimately be able to teach what she personally finds most important about her subject to her students, rather than teaching to the standardised tests (2018).

Although he is in favour of a type of education that focuses on the students, van der Wateren does believe that students should not be the ones to direct education, but rather, he prefers students to contribute their opinions, while it should be the teachers who make the final decisions ultimately, because it cannot be expected of secondary school students to make such decisions at their age (2018). Regarding the general opinion that that teachers are the one true key element to quality education, van der Wateren somewhat agrees, but with a slight restriction: he clarifies by explaining that as of recent, there has been a certain movement going on within secondary education that primarily focuses on the student, whereby the teacher acts more as a “coach” of sorts, who helps them from the sidelines when necessary, but who is not “the sage on the stage” (2018). He states that he dislikes this idea of the teacher being more of a coach, preferring the idea of the teacher being the lead instead, as the teacher has the full responsibility at the end of the day (2018). He does agree with the statement in the sense that teachers play a crucial role, and the quality of their skills makes or breaks education (2018). The idea of the teacher being a coach and nothing more he finds dangerous however, because it reduces the role of teacher to someone who only observes the situation, but barely interacts (2018).

According to van der Wateren, there are too many organisations that offer courses that “mass produce” teachers nowadays, causing the teachers who graduate from said programmes to become more of a robot transferring information by teaching “scripted lessons”, which then negatively impacts the students (2018). That is why ultimately, he does agree that a good teacher is truly irreplaceable (2018). In his eyes, a good teacher is a pedagogue first and foremost, and a professional second (2018). He adds that it is of utmost importance to know one’s craft, to stand above it even, in order to transfer it to the students correctly (2018). Although he mentioned before that highly educated teachers are a necessity, he also states that their education does not necessarily determine the skills of the teacher, but rather he views it more as a starting point of sorts (2018). He expects a good teacher to continue educating and training themselves even after graduation, as he finds teaching to be a profession in which one is continuously learning (2018). In

the end, he finds both academic and practical experience to be important, however depending on the course of study, one might be more prevalent than the other (2018).

Stadhouders states that at the end of the day, a good teacher is someone who has the best interest of their students at heart, and aims to educate them to the best of their abilities (2018). A good student-teacher relationship she deems therefore essential, as well as structure, and knowledge and control over one's subject (2018). She agrees with the opinion that the didactic competences of a teacher should be prioritised over their professional capabilities, although she also believes that their professional skills can add to the quality of the education they provide (2018). In her vision, a teacher who has more experience is not necessarily more qualified than someone who recently graduated; rather, what is most important in her eyes is that a teacher continuously evaluates themselves, i.e. how one's actions affect their personal development, as well as that of their colleagues and students (2018). She often perceives that more experienced teachers tend to stop self-reflecting once they have reached a point where they are comfortable enough with their own teaching methods, thereby risking that they become grounded in their own traditions (2018).

Van der Wateren finds that there are definitely multiple challenges to the system, but he finds the system itself to be the most problematic one (2018). As he mentioned previously, he finds that teachers should be the main decision-makers when it comes to choices that have a heavy impact on education (2018). As such, he strongly believes in Evers' and Kneyber's "flip the system" model: the idea of flipping the current hierarchy completely upside down, i.e. the teachers and students would be on top of the chain, whereas the school board and authorities would play a less important, more supportive role in the decision-making procedure (2018). As of now, the bottom of the pyramid has little to no influence in decisions that can potentially greatly impact their working environment, and van der Wateren would prefer to see a radical reverse in this system (2018). This idea will be explained and explored in further detail later on in this chapter. Other than that, van der Wateren would also like schools to question, criticise and evaluate their own systems and actively seek improvement in the quality of the education they provide (2018). Another point he finds extremely urgent is the qualification of teachers: in his opinion the bar must be placed much higher for the qualification of teachers, otherwise their inexperience will cause their students to become poorly educated, non-critical citizens (2018).

Stadhouders finds the multicultural society in the Netherlands to be the greatest challenge to its quality education, as a lot of autochthonous teachers and students tend to have trouble managing the difficulties that come along with it, in her experience (2018). Secondly, the integration of technology into education is also troublesome to her at times, as the concept of IT education is more ambitious than its actual execution is able to realise, and therefore it does not work entirely as desired quite yet (2018). She finds that technology in education needs a lot more work before complete digitalisation can be implemented indefinitely, and teachers who would come to utilise it would need to be properly educated before doing so (2018). On the other hand, another issue she experiences is dated teaching methods: a lot of the material she has to work with originates in the previous century, and she would prefer that teaching materials be accommodated to current times in order to appeal to both teachers and students alike, thereby potentially increasing their concentration and motivation levels (2018). Ultimately, she would like to see a balance between the technological methods of modern education and the dated methods of traditional education (2018). Stadhouders finds that the quality of teaching does generally have the potential to impact the students' score, but there is a certain line to cross where one ceases to be a teacher and enters the territory of the orthopedagogue and the students' parents or guardians (2018). She claims that she has always been taught that when students score between a six and seven out of ten, the teacher is doing a great job in aiming for the desired level in difficulty of the material, whereas if the average score is above or below that, the difficulty spike is too easy or too hard respectively (2018). She likes to refer to this model in her own evaluation, because she believes it can help in finding a balance in difficulty levels and getting a general idea of what the students are already capable of, and how she, as a teacher, can help them elevate to the next level (2018).

VII.II. Combatting Quantative and Qualitative Teacher Shortages

As became evident in the literature review, the largest cause of decrease in quality education in the Netherlands is the overall teacher shortage, and the results thereof, i.e. unprofessionalism in the classroom. In order to address this elephant in the room, this section will explore different theories and methods on how to combat this, as well as the interviewees' opinion thereof.

In regards to combatting the qualitative shortage of teachers, many experts seem to be in favour of improving teacher education in order to combat unprofessionalism. Even though the topic of quality in teachers has been getting more attention in the Netherlands, there has yet to be a coherent policy that aids in creating more expert-teachers (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Therefore, Evers and Kneyber find that developing teacher education should be a larger focus, and study programmes for teachers should have a coherent curriculum, with clear goals and values (2016). Secondly, when work shadowing, teachers in training should exclusively do so with expert-teachers (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Moreover, universities that provide study programmes for teachers should only employ staff that excel at teaching themselves, in order to give a good example (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). There is an ongoing discussion in the Netherlands about whether teachers should be exclusively academically educated, i.e. possess a master's degree, similar to the Finnish teachers. Whether this is utile is debatable according to Evers and Kneyber, because if said academically levelled study programmes do not provide the abovementioned points, it will not have much effect on the quality of the teacher (2016). Teacher education is of essential importance, and if we truly value quality, teacher education should not be allowed to be simplified or sped up (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Similarly, Biesta believes that purely academic teacher training clouds what is most essential for teachers in training to learn: from a perspective on how to be a professional as a teacher, instead of a heavy focus on sheer academic knowledge (2015). Although in his opinion, both knowledge and skill do matter in education, Biesta believes that education should always be about content, i.e. that what has to be taught and why (2015).

Van der Wateren is another supporter of an increased focus on teacher education, and especially the continuous focus thereof later on in the teacher's career, in order to provide quality teaching. However, in order to truly achieve this, van der Wateren believes that school days should be shorter, as teachers should be granted more time to develop themselves professionally, as well as more time for lesson preparation and the development of teaching materials (2016). On the other hand, Stadhouders finds that forcing Dutch teachers to obtain higher education before allowing them to teach is undesirable (2018). Even if someone is highly educated in the field, that does not

make them a teacher necessarily: there are certain aspects to teaching that can only be learned through practice, such as maintaining a health student-teacher relationship, or how to properly transfer information to students (Stadhouders, 2018).

In order to combat teacher shortages and the overall negative reputation the profession seems to carry with it, EFA advises governments to attract teachers from different types of backgrounds, employ teachers only where they are most needed, and improve teachers' education before and during their careers (2015). In its 2016 review of the Dutch education system, the OECD agrees with this notion and recommends that teacher professionalism in the Netherlands specifically should be strengthened and sustained. They find career structure for Dutch teachers to be lacking, as it requires more development, including greater salary, career diversity and differentiating teaching skills (OECD, 2016). In recruitment, higher levels of expertise should be required, rather than relying on cognitive skills exclusively, as too many classes in secondary education are being taught by unqualified educators as is (OECD, 2016). Furthermore, the relationship between teacher training institutions and schools has to be improved, and more collaborative efforts need to be made in order to create a better learning environment, such as self-evaluation rather than inspection, as this allows for more transparency and authority for teachers (OECD, 2016). As of recent, efforts have been made in an attempt to combat teacher shortages in the Netherlands: a Teacher's Agenda programme is preparing to be launched in order to improve quality teaching and make teacher as a profession more appealing to the public (EC, 2017). The programme will allow teachers to continue their studies during their career and possibly obtain additional masters or bachelors in education next to their previous degrees, and ultimately be able to obtain higher salaries (EC, 2017). As of current date, concrete results of the successfulness of this project are not yet available, as it has only been implemented since August 2018 (EC, 2017).

Another possible solution to combatting the quantitative and qualitative shortage at the same time, is an increasing focus on lateral-entry teachers, i.e. professionals who become teachers later on in their career, practicing a subject in their specific field of specialisation. Van der Wateren brings this point up, because personally, he finds this to be an excellent development, as long as these new teachers properly educate themselves on the pedagogical aspect of teaching (2018). In the Netherlands, this has been a fairly popular solution in combatting teacher shortages in recent years, as there have been several projects dedicated to this movement. To what degree such a programme is successful will be expanded on later on in this chapter, as the most recent project that trains professionals into teachers, "Trainees in onderwijs", will be analysed as a case study.

Given the extreme enthusiasm that is expressed towards the profession in Finland and the sheer amount of people willing to work in education, Sahlberg brings up the following point in his book series: if one country has a teacher shortage and the other has a teacher surplus, why not import teachers there where needed (2015)? He explores the idea by listing experiences he has had with Finnish teachers working in the United States, and concludes that most teachers had to adapt to the American school system, meaning that they were limited in practicing their knowledge and personalised method like they would have in Finland, and like their American peers, most had changed careers by their fifth year, whereas in Finland teachers usually remain employed in the field education until retirement (Sahlberg, 2015). Regarding this concept of importing teachers without necessarily renewing the system, van der Wateren argues this would only work if these imported teachers were to be placed in secondary schools that already have a more progressive system to begin with, otherwise the teachers would not be able to operate as they are used to and would eventually burn out, which is not beneficial for any of the parties involved (2018). However, for secondary schools that already fit within this concept, and that experience difficulties finding teachers of their desired qualifications, importing teachers from abroad might just be the solution (van der Wateren, 2018). On the other hand, Stadhouders both agrees and disagrees with the idea of importing teachers: while she likes the idea of having highly educated teachers in Dutch classrooms, the language barrier would cause a problem, because English would have to be the main spoken and written language, which she personally does not approve of, as secondary school students are still in the process of developing their native language at that point (2018).

VII.III. Adjusting and Reorganising the Education System

Based on the findings of the literature review, it seems as though the standardised testing system that is operational in Western secondary education, including that of the Netherlands, is a type of student assessment system that has the potential to reduce quality in teaching methods and the overall quality of education by extent. As an alternative to simply adjusting, some would argue that a more radical approach is necessary: in their opinion, a complete reorganisation of the current educational system would be more advantageous at this point. In this section, various alternatives on how to change and potentially improve the current system will be explored, as well as the realism thereof and the interviewees' views on the topic.

Van der Wateren argues that rather than determining what students and teachers are capable of based on test results, standardised tests should instead form a moment of feedback for both parties, in which can be examined at what level the student is and whether the teacher's methods were effective, and determine from there on what should be improved on in the future (2015). Much like Biesta's view, he finds that we must first question what the goal of education is, before we can determine what should be tested (van der Wateren, 2016). Likewise, grading teachers based on their students' performances is equally unfair, because determining a teacher's "added value" based on their students' grades is objectively unjust, in his opinion (van der Wateren, 2016). He bases this thought on his previous research, in which he found that there is in fact no statistical connection between annual performances of teachers by any means (van der Wateren, 2016). Education should not be a competition for neither students nor teachers; as it is now, the system is based on distrust (van der Wateren, 2016). In the personal interview with van der Wateren, he elaborates on his previously stated opinions on how he thinks the current education system could be improved: he claims that first and foremost, a good teacher is not necessarily someone who is able to have students score an above average grade, and therefore, exam results should not fathom a good teacher much, as exams do not contribute much to the overall quality of education (2018). Consequently, he dreads that participation in exam preparation is mandatory for teachers in most secondary schools very early on (2018). If the quality of the exams themselves were any better he would not have any objections to it, but his colleagues and he himself find it problematic that exam preparation creates a situation where they have to teach the students only that which will be expected of them on the exam, but no less or more (2018). There are also secondary schools where exam preparation only happens in the last year or last few months, which is a method he would much prefer in comparison (2018). Ultimately, he finds that exam results do not mirror what a school has to offer altogether, which is one of his main research subjects in finding better ways to

offer quality education (2018). Additionally, he mentions that in recent years, there have actually been cases of experimentation with such unconventional teaching methods in secondary schools in the Netherlands (2018). One such school is the “Niekée” in Roermond, which uses the “Agora” method. This case will be further analysed as a case study later on in this chapter.

Throughout the research paper so far, the term “flip the system” has been named by several authors. This term originates from Evers’ and Kneyber’s school of thought: their desire to discard the measuring culture in education has led to this idea. In this view, Evers and Kneyber assume Biesta’s view on what “good education” entails, i.e. finding a balance between the three dimensions of qualification, socialisation, and subjectification (2016). That is not to say that they deem Biesta’s definition of good education as the definitive answer; rather it forms a starting point and a possibility and what good education could be (2016). Evers and Kneyber find the current education system to be flawed, as it is primarily ruled by regulations, protocols and grades, which tend to replace the knowledge, wisdom, and the intuition of the teacher (2016). Therefore, Evers and Kneyber find it logical that in an alternative system, teachers would have the ability to have more input in their own work field (2016). On the one hand, decision-makers in the the field of Dutch education seem to support the idea of more autonomy for teachers, however, in reality they are still hesitant about implementing such an idea and tend to stick to traditional methods (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). As a result, teachers still execute that what is asked of them by their higher-ups, and since they are the ones practicing these methods, they are more likely to receive the blame for the failure of the education system as a whole by the general public, rather than the actual decision-makers (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Hence, Evers and Kneyber present a radical reverse as alternative; a “renaissance” of the system, in which the decision-making roles are flipped around.

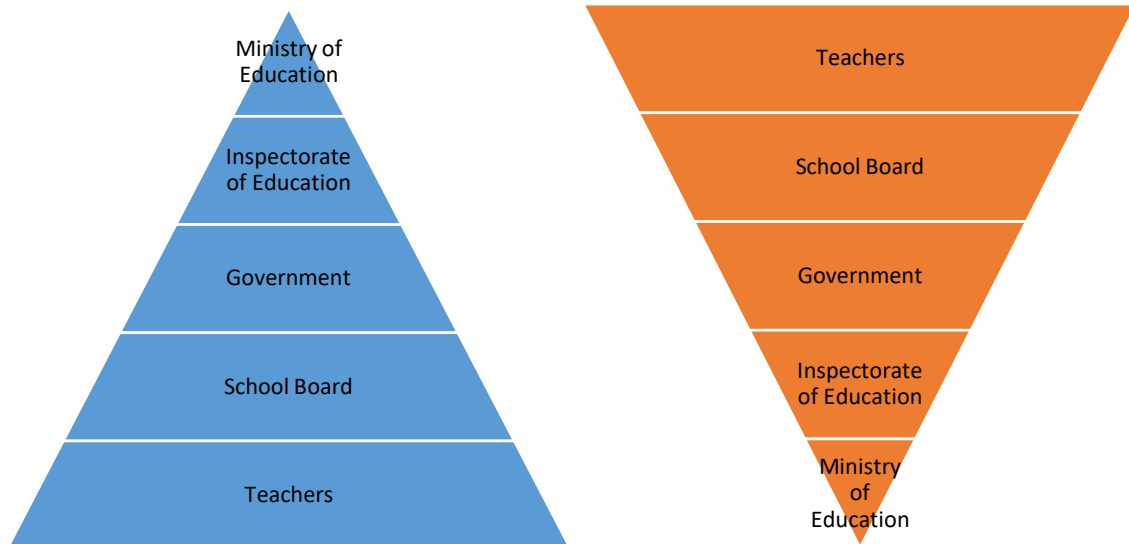


Figure 1: Presented on the left are the different layers of management in the current education system in the Netherlands. Presented on the right is what it would look like in Evers' and Kneyber's "flip the system" model, i.e. a complete reverse.

In the alternative that Evers and Kneyber present, they see two grand advantages: the first being that their model would allow for the depoliticisation of education, giving teachers more professional autonomy and trust, which they require in order to provide quality education (2016). The second being that this increase in overall quality will raise the bar in all sorts of fields that affect education and all of its stakeholders (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). In the current system, each layer gives account to the layer above them, and the means of measurement for this is determined by the upper layer as well (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Evers and Kneyber believe that in order to give teachers the appropriate professional responsibility and room that they need, this entire process should be reversed, meaning that the branch of teacher as a whole would determine how the quality of education will be measured, while leaders and governments would support them in this (2016). The authors name this process "collective autonomy" for teachers (2016). They believe that flipping the system can only be successful if collective autonomy is incorporated, as teachers should have a say in the majority of decisions made (2016). Whether collective autonomy is a realistic goal, Evers and Kneyber would argue in favour, but admit that it cannot be guaranteed to succeed, since almost no improvement strategy can be without failures (2016). Moreover, it depends on the teachers and the school to what degree the new model is applicable (Evers & Kneyber, 2016).

One critique regarding collective autonomy is that teachers are not adequately educated to make important decisions, but Evers and Kneyber would claim that this is because in their current position, they are not asked to use their true expertise: in reality it should open the opportunity for

highly educated teachers to put their full competences to use (2016). Collective autonomy also has the potential to at least fundamentally change the system of every layer, meaning that they would become more intermingled instead of purely hierarchical (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Simply waiting for the Ministry of Education to change the current flaws in its education system by itself is not realistic for teachers if they truly want to see change; instead, teachers themselves will have to take the first step in resisting the measuring culture and making collective autonomy a reasonable alternative (Evers & Kneyber, 2016).

In addition to having teachers strive for a more favourable professional environment, Evers and Kneyber also argue that the system for decision-makers should be reorganised as well, in order to better support education (2016). As mentioned before, Evers and Kneyber admit that there is always a certain risk to achieving quality education, and according to them, the issue is that decision-makers are not willing to take these risks (2016). It is understandable that they are hesitant in taking large risks and cannot afford to blindly trust an entire group of people to take decisions without knowing their capability thereof; therefore, if teachers were to become decision-makers, it should be done righteously (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). However, Evers and Kneyber find that the branch of teacher could be given as much responsibility as possible in making decisions regarding their own work (2016). If this is too unrealistic, Evers and Kneyber find that at the very least, teachers' schedules should be organised differently (2016). In order to improve quality in education, there is need for more time dedicated to aspects other than teaching itself, such as self reflection, discussions, curriculum-building, and preparing lessons (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Time division for teachers proves to be a fundamental problem that hinders all of these processes, and teachers cannot be expected to achieve all this when the majority of their schedule is occupied by teaching only (Evers & Kneyber, 2016).

Moreover, the measurement of quality and development in education should also be transferred to the branch of teachers, because often times schools and teachers do not identify with systematic measurements (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). An alternative could be to create expert-groups consisting of teachers from different schools who teach the same subject, and have them give each other feedback (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Additionally, every teacher should be a member of the national register of teachers before they are allowed to teach, and the criteria and conditions for entrance should also be determined by the teacher faculty itself (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). In the interview with Stadhouders, she notes that she is a supporter of this initiative, as she finds the lack of unqualified teachers to be more urgent than the lack of teachers in general (2018). A lot of teachers

are not tested on whether they are qualified to begin with these days, and that is why she is a supporter of having a national registration, in order to control and maintain the competence of teachers, similar to the one for medical doctors (2018). In this scenario which assumes collective autonomy, the layer of Inspectorate of Education could then be erased, because the measurement of quality would be transferred to the teachers and schools themselves (Evers & Kneyber, 2016).

In order to improve the quality of teachers themselves, Evers and Kneyber would like to see a renewed career path system for teachers to be offered as well, consisting of different routes that a teacher can take (2016). Every recently graduated teacher should not have a workload too heavy and time-intensive; instead, they should still spend a lot of time evaluating and educating themselves, and preferably be supervised by more experienced teachers (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). After this phase, teachers should specialise by obtaining a master's degree in their field of interest (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). This opportunity to develop oneself further after having graduated will then add to the improved image of teacher as a profession as well, potentially attracting more highly capable professionals to the occupation (Evers & Kneyber, 2016).

As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, van der Wateren is a supporter of Evers' and Kneyber's model. When asked about the realism of the implementation and the potential benefits of such a model, he elaborates by stating that in a scenario where a "flip the system" idea would be executed, he thinks that first and foremost, teachers would have to be ready to handle the responsibility to make good decisions for themselves; therefore, highly educated teachers are, again, of utmost importance to him (2018). The positive effect of a "flip the system" model on teachers would mean an improvement of their self-image, more autonomy and security, and more support from authorities (van der Wateren, 2018). It is a form of professionalisation in his eyes, in which teachers transform from executors to independent professionals (2018). He believes that flipping the system would solve all of the current issues of the Dutch secondary education model at once (2018). He does note that naturally, a lot of work would have to be done in order for it to work, starting with better education for the teachers themselves (2018).

On the other hand, van der Wateren believes that despite being in favour of the aforementioned "flip the system" idea — which inherently has several aspects in common with the Finnish education model, such as collective autonomy — simply importing Finnish policies without any adjustments is unrealistic (2018). Moreover, he reckons that Finland itself has run into problems with its system: its smaller population and lack of immigration causes a singular monoculture to reign supreme over

others, whereas the Netherlands has a much more multicultural society (2018). Whereas the Dutch education system originates from a heavily compartmentalised society, with schools having been segregated in the past by sorting them into specific groups, such as by religion, Finland is missing that historical part to its education model, allowing for a more free-form type of education that is less bound to tradition (van der Wateren, 2018). That said, he is personally in favour of the Finnish model, but were it to be implemented in the Netherlands, he deems it necessary to keep in mind the historical set-up of the Dutch education system, and think about what ways these foreign policies could fit into Dutch society (2018). The most important aspect in his opinion, again, is to have highly educated and carefully selected teachers working within that model, and preferably to have a renewed study programme for teachers and educators that ties into said new model (2018).

Stadhouders thinks there is a certain demand for different education policies in the Netherlands, since a lot of people seem to be having problems with the current state of the Dutch education system (2018). The current model operates a very traditional, systematic approach, in which the contents of each academic year are planned out from the start, and she would much prefer giving students the possibility to pursue their own interests within the curriculum (2018). She thinks this is a realistic option that should at least be considered, because in a way it fits in with the aforementioned “CAR-model”: giving students just enough autonomy to explore and develop their talents will make them feel more competent, and additionally they will more likely be surrounded by students with the same interests, which in turn allows for social development amongst students and teachers, bringing in the relationship part of the model (2018).

VII.IV. Case Study I: Trainees in onderwijs

In regards to the main research question, as well as the overall urgent question on how to combat teacher shortages in the Netherlands, the case of the “Trainees in onderwijs” (translation: “trainees in education”) project will be analysed. The Trainees in onderwijs project is an undertaking in which academics get the chance to teach a subject that relates to their sector, in order to relieve some of the pressure on the education sector regarding its shortage in qualified employees. The project is an independent initiative launched in 2018, building on previous similar projects “Eerst de Klas” (translation: “the classroom first”) and “Onderwijstraineeship” (translation: education traineeship), which ran from 2009 to 2018 (Trainees in onderwijs, 2018). The organisation was created as an independent, joined initiative by secondary schools, academic institutions, businesses, and societal organisations and is non-profit; it utilises the budget provided for lateral-entry teachers by government subsidies (Trainees in onderwijs, 2018). The goal of the programme is to enrich education by attracting a new target group to secondary education: ambitious academics who did not choose to pursue education initially, but who realised after having finished their academic study programme and having worked in the business world, that they want to make a switch to the education sector (Trainees in onderwijs, 2018). In order to facilitate this, the programme aims to strengthen connections between schools, study programmes, the public sector, and the private sector by intensive cooperation (Trainees in onderwijs, 2018). By doing this, Trainees in onderwijs hopes to achieve their vision of improving the overall quality and diversity of education in the Netherlands, as they believe it is in dire need of critical, creative and self-aware teachers who think about what should be valued in education and how to best prepare the next generation for the future (2018). The programme recognises the shortage of highly qualified teachers as a problem, as well as the general unappealing image that the teaching profession has in current times, and hopes that by enriching education with this new focus group of young professionals, this can improve (Trainees in onderwijs, 2018). In doing so, Trainees in onderwijs has three core values:

1. Transparency: Trainees in onderwijs values integrity and clear communication;
2. Ambition: Trainees in onderwijs executes absolute commitment to its partners and the cause and expects the same of participants;
3. Networking: Trainees in onderwijs employs a diverse team that works towards a joined goal, therefore the sharing of knowledge, experience and insights is essential. (Trainees in onderwijs, 2018)

The organisation provides participants with a two-year study programme of inspiring and interdisciplinary traineeship, during which driven and curious professionals will be developed into full-fledged teachers who actively leave a positive impact on Dutch education (Trainees in onderwijs, 2018). During the two years, trainees will acquire valuable experience in the classroom, as well as participate in projects in regards to leadership, entrepreneurship, research, and personal development (Trainees in onderwijs, 2018). After the two years, trainees finish their teacher training and obtain their upper secondary teaching qualification (Trainees in onderwijs, 2018). This way, Trainees in onderwijs stimulates the development of talents and offers a broad orientation on a function with societal relevance, based on the thought that good teaching equals good leadership, and vice versa (2018).

Although the programme itself is too recent to have bore any fruits yet, challenges to the programme can be identified when researching the flaws of the previous programmes on which it is based, i.e. Eerste de Klas and Onderwijstraineeship. In the case of the former for instance, most teachers that participated in Eerste de Klas would have left the education sector within five years after graduating, making it unlikely that they will have sharpened their teaching skills enough to provide quality education within this short time period, should they ever decide to return (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). It is therefore debatable whether the programme will be genuinely effective, or whether it is yet another makeshift solution for the teacher shortage issue.

VII.V. Case Study II: Agora Roermond

In relation to the main research question and the last interview question, i.e. how realistic the implementation of new methods and policies in Dutch secondary education is, a relevant case will be analysed as to “test” the effectiveness of a real life example. The case concerns a fairly recent attempt to change traditional teaching methods in the form of the “Agora school”, which is hosted in secondary school “Niekée” in Roermond. The term “Agora” refers to an unconventional method of teaching, which seeks to specifically tailor the education experience to each individual student, and has more in common with enquiry-based education than traditional secondary education (Niekée Roermond, 2018). Although there have been plans to launch the programme at other locations, Niekée Roermond was the first establishment in which this programme was launched in August 2014 with 34 students throughout all different levels of secondary education the school has to offer, i.e. lower vocational education (vmbo), higher general secondary education (havo), and pre-university education (vwo) (Niekée Roermond, 2018). The aim of the Agora method is to execute its eight fundamental ideas:

1. To encourage freedom in education, i.e. not restricting where education takes place to just the school building itself;
2. To encourage the curiosity and the natural urge to learn that children have;
3. To inspire students is more important than to offer them knowledge;
4. To have teachers counsel students by teaching them skills that will be necessary and useful for their entire learning life;
5. To have parents play an essential role in the development of their children, including within education;
6. To deem it necessary to hire partners of society as experts in education;
7. To approach students with multilingualism in a communicative manner;
8. To have the ultimate goal be that students can embrace the insecurities of the future without any recklessness or fear. (Niekée Roermond, 2018)

In order to achieve all this, a student’s study programme is based on their individual characteristics, skills, motivation, and personal situation (Agora Roermond, 2016). Rather than teachers, students at Agora each have a personal “coach” who are pedagogical experts and teachers that supervise the students and aid them along the way (Agora Roermond, 2016). The main change from a traditional secondary school is that there are no classes taught or exams conducted within the

programme; instead, students work on “challenges”, which are personal projects they prepare and execute based on their own interests (Agora Roermond, 2016). After finishing a challenge, students will have to self-reflect on what they have learned and how they have developed (Agora Roermond, 2016). The coaches are also responsible for introducing the students to a wide spectrum of studies, upon which student may base their challenges, i.e. the spiritual dimension, the social-ethical dimension, the scientific dimension, the artistic dimension, and the societal dimension (Agora Roermond, 2016). Beside challenges, there also discussion panels hosted within the programme, as well as workshops and presentations (Agora Roermond, 2016).

In its four years of existence, a few challenges have been identified as a result to Agora’s unconventional teaching model, as it does not seem to fit in with the traditional Dutch secondary education system quite yet. Although Agora’s way of approaching education is in tune with the Dutch law, it is difficult for the Dutch Inspectorate of Education to measure how well the school is actually doing, since it does not work with a grading system of any sort, and therefore an alternative has to be sought for the school to prove its responsibility and capability. School leader J. Fassen deems that the main issue for Agora, is that its teaching methods do not comply with the final central exam, which is a mandatory written exam that all secondary students must pass in order to graduate (2018). As a result of not being used to standardised testing, the students of Agora do not know how to study to a test and tend to score failing grades, and consequently, the school board has to hire teachers and experts who are used to lecturing according to the final exam at the last minute (Fassen, 2018). The process disturbs Agora’s regular schedule, as it has to be crammed into the third of fourth academic year, making it difficult for students to get accustomed to, as it deviates wildly from the type of teaching they are taught in previous years, and is generally demotivating for them (Fassen, 2018).

VIII. Discussion

VIII.I. Determining Quality in Education

When comparing the interviewees' stances regarding what quality education and quality teaching entails to previously presented literature, it becomes apparent that van der Wateren, like many other experts, tends to agree with Biesta's initial definition of what makes for good education: he believes that teachers should play a leading role in education, and not the students per se (2018). Unlike the data presented in reports such as the ASCD's and the EC's however, van der Wateren does not believe that teachers are the one key to quality education in the current system, because as it is now, too many teachers are unqualified and are forced by the system to assume a supportive role instead of a leading role (2018). Interestingly, unlike all other sources presented thus far, Stadhouders is the first to state that she prefers a student-centric approach over a teacher-centric approach (2018). Perhaps this is due to her entering the field of education more recently than the more experienced teachers, as she also mentions that she teaches based on the CAR-model that was taught to her during her training, which is a model that inherently focuses on the needs of the students (2018). That being said, she also notes that she would like more autonomy in her work, as well (2018). This makes for an interesting discussion topic, because it raises the question whether current teacher education in the Netherlands trains teachers to focus on students' needs, rather than on developing their own qualities. If this is indeed the case, it would make sense that teachers are not used to having a lot of autonomy, and why experts as well as practitioners generally seem to like the idea of having more freedom in their teaching methods. As autonomy seems to be one of the succeeding factors of Finland's education system as presented by Sahlberg in the literature review, perhaps increasing teacher autonomy is a viable option for the Dutch secondary education system as well. The one important criteria for implementing this is that first, teachers should be more highly educated, because statistics presented by the EC (2017) and EFA (2015) have shown that autonomy in unprofessional settings can and will lead to unqualified education, which in turn decreases the overall quality of the education provided.

On the topic of what makes for a qualified teacher, van der Wateren again tends to agree with authors such as Evers and Kneyber, in that a teacher should be highly educated. However, he sees it more as a starting point for teachers, rather than a requirement (2018). Ideally, in order to truly ensure quality, it should be only natural that a good teacher continues to train themselves even

after graduation, and throughout their entire career (van der Wateren, 2018). On the other hand, remarkable is that Stadhouders, again, focuses on the student rather than the teacher in this scenario, claiming that a good teacher should prioritise the relationship with their students above all (2018). This is likely another influence of her training, which tends to favour the student-centric approach. She does agree with van der Wateren and the aforementioned experts in the sense that she finds that more experience does not equal quality; what is important is that teachers continue to develop themselves. However, despite the disagreements about whether the teacher, the student, or both should be the focus in education between authors and interviewees, the common thread is that all of them seem to be in favour of an increased quality in teacher education, including post-graduation. This corresponds well to the previous point, in that autonomy and high qualification standards go hand in hand in Finland. Thus, perhaps this is another aspect of the Finnish system that the Netherlands can incorporate.

When it comes to challenges to the current Dutch education system, van der Wateren names the entire current system as the main flaw, much like Evers and Kneyber (2018). Therefore, he is in favour of their “flip the system” model (van der Wateren, 2018). He also notes that schools should evaluate themselves, which corresponds to their idea of erasing the Inspectorate layer (2018). As he is in agreement with Biesta, Evers and Kneyber, he is more innately opposed to the measuring culture than Stadhouders, who despite being in favour of more autonomy, does believe in the measuring system, as it helps her determine her own current level and the students’ (2018). Interesting to note is that despite the controversies around it, all beforementioned experts do admit that one way or another, measuring is a necessary element to education, and standardised testing will therefore likely always be around. Although Bastos’ (2017) and Sahlberg’s (2015) results have shown that the Finnish are generally largely opposed to standardised testing, perhaps this is one element of the Finnish system that simply cannot be implemented, as measuring through grades is too ingrained within the Western culture, meaning not only inside of education, but in all other fields around it, as well (Biesta, 2015). Regarding these systematic challenges, Stadhouders’ view again diverts from the experts’, as she mentions much different challenges. Instead of naming flaws in the system or the quality of teachers, she personally sees the context in which education takes places to be challenging: the multicultural society in the Netherlands, the implementation of technology, and dated teaching methods seem to be the main threats in her view (2018). All of these three are placed in the context of often more experienced teachers having difficulty understanding and implementing them (2018). It is likely that this is another effect of her entering the field fairly recently, and observing things that more experienced teachers have troubles with,

or traditions that she believes to be outdated or too modern (2018). Overall, almost all of the main challenges that are named by authors and interviewees alike, e.g. teacher shortages, lack of autonomy, lack of qualification, multiculturalism, are specific to the Netherlands and do not apply to Finland.

Important to note is that although it is true that the results show that Stadhouders' opinion generally seems to differ from the more experienced teachers and experts, which is likely due to her entering the field of education more recently and using more student-centric methods according to her training, naturally her opinion does not reflect that of all young, more inexperienced teachers. That being said, it is interesting to observe to what degree the norms and values taught by a teacher's training programme influences the way the teacher thinks and operates, and whether a teacher holds on to those values later on in their career, or instead discards them once they are comfortable and confident enough in their own abilities. Analysing the effects of teacher education, as well as comparing current teacher education to teacher education from previous decades is therefore likely another interesting field of study that could aid further in seeking the answer to the improvement of quality education, and more specifically, teacher education.

VIII.II. Possible Solutions to Current Challenges

Before proposing possible solutions to the challenges that the Dutch secondary education system currently faces, it is important to note once more that directly importing policies from another country such as Finland to the Netherlands is highly unrealistic, given the different social, political, historic, and religious backgrounds of the countries that have influenced their respective education systems over time (van der Wateren, 2018). Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the goal of this research should sooner be to encourage the implementation of policies inspired by, but not entirely taken from the Finnish system directly. Moreover, it must be emphasised that, as was argued by Sahlberg and Stenbäck earlier on in the research, just because Finland's education system is successful on surface level, it, too, has its own issues to work through and no system is inherently "perfect" (2015).

As evident from the literature review, the largest current issue to face education in the Netherlands, is its teacher shortage. From the three or so methods to combatting teacher shortages discussed by authors and interviewees, improving teacher education seems to be the most popular and reliable choice for strengthening the appeal of the teaching profession. Biesta (2015), Evers, Kneyber (2016), and van der Wateren (2018) all mention that the current teacher education in the Netherlands tends to focus too much on the academic side of teaching, rather than the didactic. Although Stadhouders agrees that didactics should become an increasing focus in teacher training, she remarks that raising the academic bar for teachers might not necessarily improve the quality of the education they provide (2018). They all would like to see a renewal in teacher education; as mentioned in the previous section, strengthening teacher education has the potential to improve quality, thereby creating the possibility to combat both qualitative and quantitative shortages. The aforementioned experts also continuously point out that they would like to see a scenario in which teachers continue to develop themselves professionally even after graduating. Despite not having produced any results yet due to its recent implementation, the Teacher's Agenda programme seems to be a viable solution in that case; at least in theory. If following the logic of van der Wateren (2018), and by extent Biesta (2015), Evers and Kneyber (2016), continuous teacher training is a huge factor to what makes for a qualified teacher, and since the programme aims to stimulate teachers in the continuation of their studies even after graduation, it has the potential to help realise this goal.

A similar alternative to post-graduation training that van der Wateren is greatly in favour of, is the stimulation of leading people who are already professionals into the field of education, in the form of lateral-entry teachers (2018). The Trainees in onderwijs programme aims to achieve exactly this. Another aspect of Trainees in onderwijs that would likely please many experts, is that it strengthens the link between teacher education and secondary schools is, as the weak link between the two was an often mentioned point of criticism for current teacher education, as Stadhouders for instance mentioned that there is hardly any effort put in aiding teachers in training to find a fitting internship (2018). What is useful about this programme is that it tackles both the quantitative and the qualitative shortage at the same time, in that it creates new teachers who are already professionals by default, similar to the requirement that Finnish teachers would need. However, whether they can compare to the didactic competences of the average Finnish teacher is another point of discussion. Namely, the teachers being professionals before they are pedagogues can form a problem if following Biesta's (2015) school of thought: according to him, teacher education should have an increasing focus on the didactic side of the profession, but whether it is realistically achievable for teachers to obtain the required didactic experience that so many experts speak of in a two year programme, is questionable, because certainly, they do obtain practical experience right away, but whether this is enough time to truly develop themselves into pedagogues is unlikely (Evers & Kneyber, 2016). Moreover, the statistic that Evers and Kneyber provide regarding previous similar attempts at this type of programme, i.e. that most teachers graduating from such programmes will have left the education sector within five years or so, is perhaps proof that these newly created teachers were not up for the challenge (2016). If the span of the programme could extend with a few years, similar to the duration of obtaining a master's degree for instance, perhaps there would be more time to properly educate the trainees didactically. Granted, this requires more time and money to invest into the programme, but perhaps it can lead to the end result being more successful, i.e. teachers being more confident in their skills and reputation of their profession, thereby being more likely to stick around in the education sector.

Another possible solution to teacher shortages that was explored, was a bit more foreign and conceptual: the idea of importing teachers from the Finnish teacher "surplus" to the Netherlands, as discussed by Sahlberg (2015). Regarding this topic, opinions seem to be evenly divided. Whereas van der Wateren believes it is doable only if the schools in which the teachers are placed are already fairly similar to the Finnish model, Stadhouders finds it an unlikely option for secondary education altogether, and finds it to be more fitting for higher education, as the language barrier forms a too large of an issue (2018). Although an interesting concept, perhaps it is yet too vague and impractical

to carry out in practice, and should at least be further developed into some sort of programme that accustoms foreign teachers to the difference in education systems and the language barrier, before attempting to execute it.

Of all the possible solutions discussed, perhaps the most radical and ambitious one is the concept to reorganise the education system entirely, which is an idea originally proposed by Evers and Kneyber, and is often praised by other experts, including Biesta, Prick, and van der Wateren. From the results gathered, the desire to flip the system often seems to stem from a distaste for the measuring culture that exists within education. Evers and Kneyber vouch for collective autonomy, but while authorities generally tend to be in favour of granting teachers more autonomy, they are hesitant to definitively implement any sort of policy that allows for more autonomy among teachers (2016). Van der Wateren believes that teachers have to prove to be capable of having the responsibility before this can be implemented, which is why he deems it necessary to have highly educated teachers first and foremost, before attempting any major changes to the system (2018). However, if successful he believes that it would greatly improve the self-image, autonomy level, and professionalism of teachers (2018). Evers' and Kneyber's notion that at least teachers should be granted more time to spend on other aspects of their profession outside of teaching is something that corresponds with van der Wateren's view (2016). Yet again, all sources seem to point out that everything starts with teacher education, before anything else should be attempted at. At the same time, Evers and Kneyber admit that their system cannot be guaranteed to succeed even then, and its success would likely vary per school and per teacher (2016). Interestingly, another opinion that overlaps is Evers and Kneyber's desire to have a national registration for teachers, which Stadhouders also mentions she approves of (2018). Perhaps this idea is a more realistic and fitting concept at current time, because it controls the quality of teachers without having to reorganise the system, and should therefore be less expensive and time-intensive to implement as a policy.

Interestingly, from all the critique discussed around the current standardised testing system throughout the research, van der Wateren seems to be the most outspoken on this particular subject, because in his view, it can directly affect the quality of teaching (2018). He is the only expert to point out that he finds the exams themselves to be flawed (2018). Therefore, he mentions that he is greatly in favour of the Agora method (2018). Remarkable about the Agora method is that it deviates from traditional secondary education without violating any Dutch education policies, proving that a change of the system is in fact realistic, at least legally. Interesting is that this method

also corresponds with Biesta's definition of quality education to a certain degree: it more or less remove the concept of "learning" altogether, instead aiming to inspire students to be educated by their surroundings, by each other, and by themselves (Agora Roermond, 2016). On the other hand, it also supports the idea of teachers becoming more of a counsellor to their students, rather than a leader, which contradicts Biesta's and van der Wateren's view that teachers should take the lead in a good education setting (2016). However, the advantage to this is that all teachers are guaranteed to be didactic experts. The one challenge the Agora method faces, is that it does not fit in very well with the standardised system, which is a part of traditional education that it cannot avoid (2016). As such, either Agora would have to adapt to the standardised system by introducing graded tests into their method, or for the Agora method to realise its full potential, the system would have to be reorganised, and only then it can work in harmony with Agora. All literature so far points to the fact that whether we like it or not, measuring will always be part of education to a certain degree, because we have to determine at one point how much someone has developed and where they can improve, and furthermore, it is simply too ingrained into different fields of Western culture to completely obsolete it at this point. In the case of Agora, it is more difficult to measure students' progress, since they do not work with grades. Therefore, since it is not very likely that the standardised system will leave anytime soon, it would be more realistic for Agora to introduce some sort of grading system in order to properly prepare the students for the central exams. Agora's method seems to be a beginning phase of something that might have a lot of potential, but as it is now, it is still a bit unaccustomed. It also differs from the Finnish method still, because in Finland teachers tend play a more important role within education, i.e. they have more autonomy and authority than in Agora. As teachers do seem to play an important factor in quality education according to the research thus far, perhaps Agora is too abstract a concept to fit within this definition of quality education.

All in all, it seems that based on the results, there are in fact several solutions to improving the quality of education in the Dutch secondary education system, that are similar to methods employed in the Finnish model, and could be realistically applied in the Netherlands as well. Which ones are most likely and realistic to persist, will be concluded in the next chapter.

IX. Conclusion and Recommendations

Throughout this research, existent literature regarding quality education has been intensively reviewed and discussed, including expert opinions and theories, as well as statistics provided by organisations specialised in education. Furthermore, personal interviews have been conducted allowing for further comparison of opinions. Case studies have been included as well, in order to provide real life examples of hypothetical concepts.

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that overall, there is potential to improve the quality of secondary teachers and their teaching methods in the Netherlands, using the Finnish secondary education system as an example. To all the named challenges that the Dutch system faces, i.e. teacher shortages, teacher unprofessionalism and systematic flaws, teacher education seems to stand at the core of it. First of all, it must be emphasised that teacher education is of utmost importance in upping the quality of the education teachers provide. Therefore, a reform, or at the very least an adjustment, in teaching programmes is highly advised. A main point of discussion in this research was whether this means that all teachers should be highly educated on an academic level, such as the Finnish teachers, who are required to possess a master's degree in teaching itself, as well as in their specific field of teaching. While this would be ideal, in order to take the first step to change, it is likely wiser to focus first on improving the didactic aspect of teaching within teacher education, as this is currently a weak spot of Dutch secondary education that has proven to lead to unprofessionalism and unauthorised teaching in schools. This is where programmes such as Trainees in onderwijs can be very helpful, as they can turn people that already have the academic expertise, into pedagogical experts as well. Another important point to note about teacher education, is that it should not stop after graduation. This is both an individual and a collective task: a teacher should continue to train themselves, and there should be a support group consisting of teachers and possibly other staff members within the school's organisation, that act as quality control of sorts, by providing intensive feedback on a teacher's methods. The Teacher's Agenda initiative has the potential to aid in post-graduation education for teachers, and it will be interesting to analyse its results for future education research projects. As for a support group consisting of teachers, this is something that can be directly lent from the Finnish system, as it has been proven to elevate teacher performances. That being said, in order to implement such an idea, enough time and space must be granted in the Dutch curriculum, in order to allow teachers to further develop themselves professionally, as currently the average workload of a secondary

teacher is too heavy to properly do so. In increasing the quality of the profession, it is then the goal to be rid of its surrounding stigma, and ultimately to regain its former status of a well-rewarded and respected occupation, which in turn motivates those who practice it, as well as those who are aspiring to fulfil the teaching profession in the future. By improving the appeal of the occupation, it can then aid in combatting the teacher shortage, thereby relieving the current work-loaded schedules of Dutch secondary teachers, and allowing more room for professional development. The teacher shortage and the issue of unprofessionalism are greatly interlinked, and improving teacher education seems to be the most viable option in order to combat both the quantitative and qualitative shortage at once.

A more drastic, yet considerable option is the idea of collective autonomy. In Finland, autonomy in teachers is one of the key elements to their comprehensive learning system. Before attempting to adjust the education system in the Netherlands however, it is crucial for teacher education to be improved on first and foremost, because teachers need to be both willing and prepared to take on responsibilities of increased authority, in a scenario where the hierarchy in education is completely flipped. Were secondary teachers to be more confident in their skills and their image, collective autonomy is more likely to succeed. In the meanwhile, it is interesting to experiment with unconventional teaching methods such as the Agora method, but before such a system can work more flawlessly, either it needs to adapt itself to the education system, or the education system needs to adapt itself to reimagined teaching methods, because the current clash in value of measurement does not allow the two to comply. All in all, improving teacher education should be focused on first; potentially adjusting or reorganising the system itself comes second.

In order to further develop this research and make more definitive, and possibly more realistic conclusions, further research is recommended. Naturally, one field of study that is interesting to further conduct research on in this particular case, is teacher education, as the results from this research have shown that this is perhaps the core to the flaws of the current education system. This could include an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of current Dutch teacher education, as well as measuring what the different values of academic capabilities and didactic capabilities are to improving quality education. When it comes to changing the education system itself, it is perhaps useful to conduct more studies on education policies: as of now there is a distinct lack of a policy that controls quality education in the Netherlands. Taking steps to developing such a policy, perhaps as initiative by the Inspectorate of Education or the Ministry of Education, could aid in combatting unprofessionalism in secondary teachers.

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XI. Appendices

XI.I. Appendix: Student Ethics Form

Student Ethics Form

European Studies Student Ethics Form

Your name: Anne van Doorn

Supervisor: A. Funk

Instructions/checklist

Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>). If you are planning research with human subjects you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.

- a. ☐ Read section 3 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
- b. ☐ Complete sections 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
- c. ☐ Ask your project supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and sign the form.
- d. ☐ Append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation.

Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)

- (i) **Title of Project:** How can the overall quality of teachers and their teaching methods in Dutch secondary education improve using the Finnish secondary education model as example?
- (ii) **Aims of project:** To find where Dutch secondary education currently lacks, and how it can potentially combat the identified issues by using the Finnish secondary education model as example.
- (iii) **Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your supervisor, you should answer 'NO' to this question.)**

YES

If yes: you should complete the rest of this form.

Section 2 Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.

(i) What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure):

Two participants have partaken in a $\pm$ 40 minute qualitative research interview, in which they answered about seven questions (including branching questions depending on their answers) regarding the topic of quality education and their personal opinion and experiences thereof.

(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited?

The first interviewee is an education expert and experienced practitioner, whereas the second interviewee is a practitioner who has entered the field more recently. They have been recruited by invitation via email.

(iii) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to, tick the appropriate boxes and then state what they are in the space below?

Questionnaires[]; Pictures[]; Sounds []; Words[x]; Other[].

Appropriate interview questions.

(iv) Consent: Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. Either verbally or by means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. A standard informed consent form is available in the Dissertation Manual.

(vi) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data? Personal data (name, addresses etc.) should not be stored in such a way that they can be associated with the participant's data.

Before the start and recording of the interviews, interviewees were explained the purpose of the research and the purpose of obtaining primary data through interview. Then, they were proposed to remain anonymous if preferred, and were asked to fill out the consent form.

Student's signature:  date: 6/12/18

Supervisor's signature (if satisfied with the proposed procedures):  date: 6/12/2010

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

- 1) Research Project Title: *How can the overall quality of teachers and their teaching methods in Dutch secondary education improve?*
- 2) Project Description (1 paragraph)

In this project I aim to find where Dutch secondary education lacks, and ultimately how it can improve on its teachers and teaching methods using the Finnish secondary education model as example.

If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.

I am 16 years of age or older.

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

[Signature] *9-7-18*

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

- 1) Research Project Title: *How can the overall quality of teachers and their teaching methods in Dutch secondary education improve?*
- 2) Project Description (1 paragraph):
In this project I aim to find where Dutch secondary education lacks, and ultimately how it can improve on its teachers and teaching methods using the Finnish secondary education model as example.

If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.

I am 16 years of age or older.

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

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Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

9/7/18

Qualitative Research Interview Plan	
Preparation	- Establish credibility: show interviewee interviewer is knowledgeable enough to discuss the relevant topics, be able to apply sources used in the literature review - Provide relevant information: before interview, introduce interviewee to the topic and make sure they know what themes will be discussed - Appropriate location: interviewee's preferred location, electronic interview if necessary - Appropriate behaviour interviewer: neutral, unbiased, attentive listening, summarising - Opening comments before interview: explain purpose of research, explain purpose of obtaining primary data, propose anonymity if preferred, consent sheet, information sheet - Questions: phrased clearly, short, open, (why, what, how) unbiased, avoid jargon, probing - Recording data: audio-recording, notes, contextual data (location of interview, data and time, setting of interview, background information participant, interviewer's impression) Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhills, A. (2009). <i>Research Methods for Business Students</i>. Pearson. Retrieved from https://eclass.teicrete.gr/modules/document/file.php/DLH105/Research%20Methods%20for%20Business%20Students%2C%205th%20Edition.pdf
Candidates	1. D. van der Wateren: secondary teacher, education author 2. M. Stadhouders: secondary teacher
Interview questions	1. Can you tell something about your role within secondary education in the Netherlands? 2. What do you consider to be key elements of a quality education? 3. What do you consider to be challenges for the current Dutch secondary education system? ➔ What challenges affects teachers and their teaching methods, and in what ways? ➔ In what area(s) is there room for improvement in your opinion?

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. What qualifies a “good” secondary teacher in your opinion?
➔ To what degree does a teacher’s academic/professional background add/subtract to their practical skills and teaching methods?5. To what degree should students’ achievements directly reflect the quality of their teacher?6. Question may require further explanation regarding Finland’s model in particular depending on the interviewee’s range of expertise. Explain:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dutch teacher shortage vs Finnish “teacher surplus”2. Dutch teacher professionalism and self-image vs Finnish3. Dutch teaching methods and standardised testing vs FinnishWhy is implementing methods used by other countries’ education models a good/bad idea for the Dutch secondary education system?
➔ Is it realistic? Would teachers benefit from this?7. Do you have any other comments/remarks? |
|--|--|

XI.IV. Appendix: Interview Transcripts

Interview I

Date: 09/07/2018

Location: Amsterdam

Interviewer: R. A. J. van Doorn

Interviewee: D. van der Wateren

A: De eerste vraag is: kunt u in het kort iets vertellen over uw rol in het voortgezet onderwijs?

D: Nou, ik ben tot vandaag leraar natuurkunde en NLT.

A: Tot vandaag?

D: Ja, ik ga straks naar school en dan hebben we een afscheidsfeestje.

A: Oh, echt waar? Wat toevallig.

D: Ja, en ik heb vroeger aardijkskundse gegeven. Ik geef tegenwoordig natuurkunde en NLT, maar daarnaast ben ik nogal actief in kringen van onderwijsvernieuwing, dus ik zit in allerlei netwerken. Ik publiceer veel.

A: Ja, ik zag ook dat u een educatie schrijver was, inderdaad. Zo heb ik u ook gevonden, door uw blog. Wat zijn in uw mening hoofdelementen van kwaliteitsonderwijs? Mag er één of meerderen zijn.

D: Nou, ik weet niet of jij iets gelezen hebt van Gert Biesta?

A: Gert Biesta?

D: Ja, Gert Biesta is een onderwijspedagoog, filosoof, die heel veel heeft gepubliceerd over precies die vraag: “wat is goed onderwijs?”. En eigenlijk verwoordde hij op een goede manier wat ik al heel lang geleden dacht en vond: dat de belangrijkste taak van onderwijs is jonge mensen opvoeden tot volwassen burger, wereldburgers.

A: Dus het gaat echt om opvoeding van de studenten? Dus de studenten staan centraal in het onderwijs vindt u?

D: Ja, kinderen, leerlingen, studenten... Nou, ze staan niet zo zeer centraal in die zin en er zijn verschillende opvattingen over: je hebt leeringgericht onderwijs, student centraal onderwijs, en het leraar-docent centraal onderwijs. Dat zijn zo een paar manieren om naar onderwijs te kijken. Als je zegt “de leerling centraal”, dan moet je daar wel bij zeggen wat je daar precies mee bedoelt. Kijk, voor mij betekent “de leerling centraal” niet zo zeer dat de leerling de regie heeft over het onderwijs, wat niet betekent dat de leerling niet zou kunnen meedenken –en graag ook zelfs– maar

uiteindelijk zijn het volwassenen die de richting moeten aangeven. Je kan niet van kinderen verwachten, zelfs niet van jongvolwassen studenten, dat ze een overzicht hebben over alles wat er te koop is. Dus daarom denk ik dat als je zegt “leerling centraal”, als je daarmee bedoelt dat het gaat dat het kind en de jongeren, of jongvolwassenen, geholpen wordt om een zelfstandig, autonoom, volwassen individu te worden. En Gert Biesta z’n antwoord op de vraag “wat is goed onderwijs?”, is dat onderwijs bestaat uit drie elementen, of we noemen het tegenwoordig dimensies. Het ene is kwalificatie, dat is wat eigenlijk in het algemeen wordt gezien als de kern van het onderwijs, maar dat is dus zijn opvattingen en mijn opvatting dus ook. Kwalificatie, dat gaat dus over de dingen, de vaardigheden, de kennis die je moet hebben om in de volwassen wereld een rol te gaan spelen. Het tweede element, of de tweede dimensie, noemt hij socialisatie. Socialisatie, dat is alles wat er nodig is om jonge mensen te helpen om lid te worden van een gemeenschap, dat kan zijn een beroepsgemeenschap, dat kan zijn een democratische samenleving, dat kan zijn allerlei organisaties, dus dan gaat het meer om tradities en gewoonten en normen en waarden die in de maatschappij en bepaalde groepen belangrijk geworden vonden. En het laatste is wat hij dan met een beetje een raar woord “subjectificatie” noemt.

A: Subjectificatie?

D: Subjectificatie ja, dat is een woord –ik weet niet of hij dat heeft uitgevonden– hij noemt het soms ook wel eens “subjectifiering”. Een enkele keer wordt het ook wel eens “persoonsvorming” genoemd, maar dat is een beetje een ongelukkig woord. Subjectificatie drukt het wel goed uit, want het gaat erom dat een jong mens in staat wordt gebracht om een subject te worden, dus niet een object van waar kennis in gepompt wordt, maar een subject dat zelf actief bezig is keuzes te maken, verantwoordelijkheid te nemen, en dat soort dingen meer.

A: Het is interessant dat u het gelijk over leerlingen had, want uit mijn onderzoek komt heel vaak naar boven dat heel veel experts vinden dat de leraar juist het meest belangrijke element is van onderwijs. De leraar is de sleutel zeg maar, dat zeggen er heel veel. Bent u het daar mee eens?

D: Ja, nou ja... Ook weer met een restrictie. Kijk, Biesta keert zich inderdaad tegen dat leerlinggerichte. Kijk, er is een stroming die heeft het over leerlinggericht onderwijs en daar wordt de leraar eigenlijk veranderd in een coach, die aan de zeikant staat en leerlingen helpt de weg te vinden ofzo en die ze alleen maar bijspringt als het nodig is, maar die niet, ja, ze zeggen dan niet “the sage on the stage” is. En dat is een idee waar ik me niet in kan vinden. Soms ben je coach als leraar, soms ben je inderdaad iemand die meer weet en die kennis overbrengt. Dus ik denk dat ik meer in de hoek zit van de leraar die heeft de hoofdrol, die heeft de verantwoordelijkheid. Je kan natuurlijk niet van kinderen verwachten, zeker niet van minderjarigen– kijk, jongvolwassenen mensen van jouw leeftijd, kun je natuurlijk veel meer verantwoordelijkheid geven.

A: Ja, hbo enzo is een ander verhaal.

D: Ja. Nou ja, goed. Ja, ik ben in het principe mee— volwassen, bijna volwassen, ja, hoe je het bekijkt. Maar, dus, een leraar heeft inderdaad een cruciale rol en de kwaliteit van leraren, ja, dat maakt of breekt het onderwijs. Ik bedoel, je kan met de meeste beroerde hulpmiddelen kan een goede leraar kinderen echt tot hele grote hoogten brengen.

A: Ja, daar zouden heel veel experts dan met u eens zijn. Eens even kijken hoor.

D: Nou, ik wil nog wel even iets erover zeggen, want het is inderdaad een soort mode in sommige kringen om de leraar te reduceren tot een soort coach of iemand die gewoon alleen maar zorgt dat het een beetje loopt. Dat is een heel gevaarlijke gedachte namelijk en daar zal je Jelmer, als je die spreekt, ook zeker over horen. Er zijn grote internationale ondernemingen die wereldwijd onderwijs leveren —tenminste, wat zij dan onderwijs noemen— en die stomen leraren in zes weken klaar voor de klas. Daar heb je misschien wel over gehoord?

A: Ja, leraaronderwijs is ook een heel groot topic.

D: Ja, en dat zijn dan lessen die zijn van A tot Z gescript. Zo'n leraar —nou ja, je mag het die naam eigenlijk niet geven— die staat voor de klas en die moet gewoon dan van minuut tot minuut de script volgen die ergens in Texas ofzo bedacht is. En nou ja, dat is een hele gevaarlijke ontwikkeling ook, omdat dat ook, ja, jongen mensen klaarstoomt tot gehoorzame burgers, weet je. Het is vaak in niet erg democratische landen.

A: Ja, dan krijg je een beetje het robot argument, zeg maar.

D: Ja, voor mij is een leraar echt onvervangbaar.

A: Oké, mijn volgende vraag is: wat vind u de grootste uitdagingen of uitdaging voor het voortgezet onderwijs in Nederland?

D: Nou, dat zijn er nog wel wat. Nou kijk, om te beginnen —en dat is ook waar Jelmer en René *Het Alternatief* voor hebben opgezet— *Het Alternatief* —en daar wordt het begrip “flip the system” gebruikt, en dat is ook de internationale serie— *Het Alternatief* gaat uit van het principe dat de leraar in het onderwijs centraal gesteld moet worden als het gaat om beslissingen over dingen die echt vergaande gevolgen hebben voor het onderwijs. En dus, het “flip the system” is een model waarbij eigenlijk de piramide die we nu hebben op z'n kop wordt gezet, met bovenaan de minister, daaronder het ministerie en de Onderwijsinspectie, en daaronder de schoolbesturen, daaronder weer de schoolleiding, en dan komen de leraren, en met een beetje goede wil, zitten helemaal onderaan de leerlingen. En de onderkant van die grote piramide heeft helemaal niets in de melk te brokkelen als het gaat over belangrijke veranderingen in het onderwijs. Nou, dat willen we met *Het Alternatief* radicaal omdraaien. Dus wat nu aan de top zit, dat zijn eigenlijk functies die zouden

ondersteunend moeten zijn. Die zouden eigenlijk op allerlei manieren het werk van leraren en leerlingen mogelijk moeten maken. En nou, dat is denk ik de meest urgente verandering.

A: Ja, dus het hele systeem in het algemeen is de grootste uitdaging.

D: Ja, en daar komt dan, ja, dan komen— kijk als je dat doet, dan moet je vervolgens die vraag stellen die Biesta stelt: “wat is goed onderwijs?”

A: Ja, dat is de hoofdvraag uiteindelijk.

D: Ja, en dat is een vraag die vreemdgenoeg zelden wordt gesteld. Je zal heel weinig scholen tegenkomen waar er op die manier over wordt nagedacht, “wat is nu eigenlijk goed onderwijs?”. We gaan er vanuit dat we dat wel weten.

A: Ja, maar ja, het is een open begrip zeg maar. Er zijn zo veel verschillende meningen over. Moeilijk te definiëren.

D: Ja, maar meningen zijn op zichzelf niet zo vreselijk interressant— het gaat erom dat je goed nadenkt en daarbij ook goede argumenten gebruikt. En argumenten zijn op zichzelf niet zomaar meningen, die kun je baseren op logisch redeneren, of op feiten— er zijn genoeg feiten te delen over de kwaliteit van onderwijs. Maar ja, goed en als je dan nog een aantal dingen wil weten: ik ben zelf bezig met een project dat ik onder andere ook met een aantal onderwijsinspecteurs doe, in dat we vinden dat op scholen eigen onderwijs moet evalueren, dat er een systeem moet komen waarbij scholen zelf hun eigen evaluaties doen, waarbij de Onderwijsinspectie wat meer op een afstand wordt gezet. En een ander project is een nieuwe opzet voor de eindexamens, schoolexamens en de centrale examens, nog een actueel onderwerp.

A: Ja, een van mijn volgende vragen gaat ook over examens in het algemeen.

D: Oh, mooi. Ja goed, en wat verder... Ja, wat natuurlijk écht hyper, hyper urgent is, is gewoon zorgen voor meer hoog gekwalificeerde leraren. Dat wordt echt een énorm probleem. En het gevaar is heel groot dat men dat probleem gaat oplossen op een manier zoals die commerciële onderwijsbedrijven doen: dus gewoon laagopgeleide, goedkope, zogenaamde leerkrachten en heel veel robotleraren, enzovoorts. En nou ja, dat vind ik écht daarom ook een heel belangrijk probleem, omdat het gewoon een directe bedreiging van de democratie is. Je krijgt dan gewoon slecht opgeleide mensen die alleen maar gewoon braaf doen wat hun gezegd wordt en verder niet kritisch zijn ten opzichte van degen die bovengesteld zijn.

A: Oké, en stel dat we een soort van “flip the system” zouden doen, wat voor effect zou dat op leraren hebben— wat voor direct effect denkt u?

D: Ja, ik denk dat is een tweeledig iets. De ene kant is— een voorwaarde voor “flip the system” is dat je leraren hebt die in staat zijn om die verantwoordelijkheid aan te kunnen, dus dat betekent toch in eerste instantie goed opgeleide leraren.

A: Ja, dan kom je weer terug bij hoog gekwalificeerde leraren.

D: Ja, daar valt alles bij. En het effect natuurlijk— kijk, er zijn wel scholen waar dat in zekere mate behoorlijk is doorgevoerd, ja, dat soort ideeën. Op allerlei plekken wordt daarmee geëxperimenteerd. Het gevolg voor leraren is natuurlijk dat ze, ja, trots zijn op hun vak, dat ze autonoom zijn, dat ze zich sterk voelen, gesteund voelen door de leiding, dat soort dingen. En dat dat allerlei positieve effecten heeft op de werksfeer en ik denk dat de werkdruk daardoor ook een stuk minder kan worden. Maar uiteindelijk bepaal je dan zelf je werk, dat is natuurlijk een hele andere manier. Dus het is een vorm van professionalisering, waarbij mensen dus in plaats van uitvoerders veranderen in zelfstandige professionals die met elkaar samen werken.

A: In Finland is dat zo'n beetje het geval, vandaar dat ik daar onderzoek naar doe, dus het is grappig dat u dat allemaal woord voor woord zo opnoemt. Ik kom daar later wel even op terug. Van al deze uitdagingen, welke denkt u dat het reëel is om nu aan te pakken?

D: Ik denk niet dat je dat los van elkaar kan zien.

A: Het moet allemaal in één keer?

D: Allemaal in één keer, nou ja, je moet werken aan een soort geïntegreerde oplossing. Dus ja, het is niet een kwestie van één van die dingetjes doen en daarna die andere dingetjes. Ik denk dat als je niet een soort van integrale aanpak hebt, dan gaat het helemaal niet gebeuren, denk ik. Dan wordt het een soort van pleistertjes plakken, hier en daar. Dus ik denk dat het een kwestie is ook van hard werken en heel veel geduld hebben en met heel veel mensen over deze dingen praten.

A: Dus, als je een “flip the system” zou doen, dan zou dat moeten betekenen dat langzamerhand al die andere uitdagingen verholpen worden, zeg maar.

D: Ja, eigenlijk pak je die allemaal tegelijkertijd aan. Als je “flip the system” wil, dan moet je zorgen voor goede docenten— dat betekent dat je leraaropleidingen moet opzetten die van voldoende hoog niveau zijn. En je ziet die dingen ook nu gebeuren: er zijn besturen die ook deze ideeën aanhangen, die zelf in samenwerking met andere besturen eigen opleidingen gaan opzetten. Dus bijvoorbeeld Agora in Roermond —ik weet niet of je er wel eens van gehoord hebt— dat is ook zeker een school die ik in de gaten zou houden. Dat is een school waarbij kinderen echt in grote mate vrijheid hebben zelf te bepalen wat ze willen leren en wat ze willen doen op school. En waarbij de leraar wel degelijk ook een belangrijke rol speelt en Agora is nu begonnen in Roermond, maar er komen nu op vijf of zes of andere scholen in al die andere plaatsen— Rotterdam wil volgend jaar gaan starten met het Agora en tegelijkertijd willen de mensen die Agora ooit begonnen hebben een leraaropleiding opzetten. Dus ja, het zijn dingen die gewoon toch een beetje synchroon plaatsvinden. Het is ook echt een fundamentele omwentel van het denken over onderwijs. Het is geen lapwerk, het heeft geen zin.

A: Dit hebben we al eigenlijk een soort van behandeld: wat maakt een goede leraar in het voortgezet onderwijs? U had het al een beetje over begeleiding en een coach.

D: Nou, ik wil daar nog wel iets meer over zeggen. Kijk, een goede leraar is natuurlijk in eerste plaats een pedagoog. Dat is toch de kern van wat je aan het doen bent. En dat is iets wat ik al –nou, ik ben in 1977 begonnen als leraar, ik heb dat zeven jaar gedaan en daarna heb ik twintig jaar onderzoek gedaan en daarna ben ik weer voor de klas gekomen– maar eigenlijk al vanaf het allereerste begin dat ik les ging geven kwam bij mij de overtuiging dat het vak wat ik gaf, nou ja, best interessant is, ook leuk om te geven enzovoorts, maar het is voor mij toch vooral een aanleiding om kinderen op te voeden. Dus het pedagogische dat vond ik ook zeker zo interessant. Dus je bent in eerste plaats pedagoog en in de tweede plaats moet je een goede vakvrouw of vakman zijn. Je moet je vak echt zéér goed beheersen. Je moet een heel breed overzicht hebben van wat het vak inhoudt. Je moet ook in staat zijn over de grenzen van je vak te kijken. Eigenlijk, je moet ver boven de stof staan, wil je dat aan je leerlingen goed overbrengen.

A: Duidelijk. En u vindt dat een leraar altijd hoogopgeleid moet zijn?

D: Nou, ik ken ook wel minder hoogopgeleide leraren die uitstekend zijn en ik ken ook heel wat hoogopgeleide leraren die beroerd zijn. Dat zegt op zichzelf niet zo ontzettend veel, maar door de bank genomen denk ik dat het verstandig is om mensen gewoon– ook als je bijvoorbeeld een hbo lerarenopleiding hebt gedaan, dat is prima, maar voor mij is dat toch het begin. Ik zou een tweedegraads leraar echt, als ik schoolleider was zou ik zeggen, “nou, fijn dat je bij ons komt werken en ga vooral ervaring opdoen voor de klas, maar ik verwacht van je dat je jezelf verder bijschoolt” en een eerstegraads haalt. En het betekent trouwens ook niet dat –stel dat je klaar bent met je eerstegraads– dat je dan uitgestudeerd bent. Dat vind ik ook zo’n treurig misverstand dat ik ook wel eens bij jongere docenten zie, die dan zeggen van “nou, hier heb je een interessant artikel, dat is echt iets voor jou,” dat ze dan zeggen “ja, nee, dat ga ik niet lezen hoor, want ik heb in mijn studie al genoeg artikelen gelezen en ik ben klaar”. Nou ja, zo iemand hoort eigenlijk niet voor de klas, vind ik. Het is echt ontzettend belangrijk dat je gewoon door blijft leren. Dat lesgeven, dat is echt een vak, daar ben je nooit op uitgeleerd.

A: Vindt u het eigenlijk dat academische ervaring of professionele ervaring –dus echt in de klas– belangrijker is?

D: Ik denk allebei is prima. Kijk, het hangt een beetje er vanaf wat voor vak je geeft. Kijk, als je klassieke talen geeft, is het denk ik handig om flinke academische ervaring te hebben in teksten en bronnen onderzoeken enzovoorts. Als je een meer praktisch vak ofzo geeft, ja, een technisch vak, dan is het slimmer om professionele ervaring te hebben. Ja, of allebei ofzo.

A: Dus het hangt een beetje van het vak af.

D: Ik vind zijstromers in het onderwijs een uitstekende ontwikkeling.

A: Hoezo? Kunt u dat uitleggen?

D: Mits die zich goed gaat bijscholen, met name op het pedagogische gebied.

A: Oké, de volgende vraag gaat meer over standaardtesten. Ik had een artikel van uw blog gelezen van geloof ik vorig jaar, dat er heel diep op in ging, dus ik weet ongeveer uw standpunt daarover, maar in hoeverre vindt u dat de resultaten van een student direct de leraar kunnen reflecteren? Of mag je dat überhaupt aannemen?

D: Nou, met heel veel slagen om de arm.

A: Met heel veel slagen om de arm?

D: Ja, nou ja, kijk, ik zal niet beweren dat als de examcijfers van mijn leerlingen bekend zijn en die zijn aardig of zelfs ook boven het landelijk gemiddelde, dan ben ik wel tevreden ja, dat zal ik niet ontkennen. Maakt me dat tot een goede leraar als de cijfers van mijn leerlingen boven het landelijk gemiddelde zijn? Muah, volgend jaar kunnen ze wel weer onder het landelijk gemiddelde zijn, dat hebben we ook wel meegemaakt.

A: Dus resultaten zeggen niet zoveel over de leraar per sé?

D: Nee, kijk, ik vind het examen is zo'n klein deeltje eigenlijk van wat voor mij het onderwijs inhoudt. Ja, kijk, één van de kwadere kanten van die centrale examens is dat heel veel scholen, waaronder mijn school, ook eigenlijk al een paar jaar voor het examen begint met examentraining. En dat je eigenlijk niet toekomt aan de leuke dingen van het vak.

A: Dus dan is het eigenlijk dat de lesmethode aangepast wordt aan het examen?

D: Ja.

A: En dat vindt u een probleem?

D: Ja, dat vind ik een heel groot probleem omdat het, ja, als de kwaliteit van die examens nou verschrikkelijk goed zou zijn, dan zou ik zeggen: dat is geen enkel probleem, maar het is, nou ja, alle mensen die ik spreek –en ik spreek nu echt al honderden mensen die graag willen dat het anders gaat met het examen– en iedereen roept hetzelfde: het is gewoon “teaching to the test” enzo, het zijn kunstjes– je moet leerlingen leren door een hoepel te springen. En je ziet het nu ook aan Agora in Roermond, je hebt de eerste lichting van het vmbo en havo ook, die heeft nu examen gedaan. Die hebben drie jaar lang hebben ze –het vmbo dan– echt alles kunnen doen wat ze zelf wilden– als ze muziek willen maken prima, als ze iets anders willen doen... En ze kregen wel wiskunde en Nederlands en Engels enzo, maar het is er grotendeels zelf projectjes bedenken en die uitvoeren en steun van docenten. En het laatste jaar was dan examentraining. Nou, alle leerlingen zijn daar geslaagd, het zijn er niet zoveel, het zijn er 17 ofzo of 20. Maar goed, dus het kan ook op die manier. En ik weet van het vierde gymnasium in Amsterdam, die doen ook vijf jaar lang – zelfs vijf en een

half jaar lang— van alles en nog wat, gewoon wat de school en de docenten zelf belangrijk vinden en dan de laatste paar maanden is dan pure examentraining: gewoon flauwekul vragen, gewoon leren en vooral niet te moeilijk denken.

A: Ja, ik heb het zelf ook meegemaakt, dat het inderdaad de laatste paar maanden— je krijgt dan zo'n wit-blauw boekje en je merkt ook gewoon dat de leraren er niks aan vinden, maar ja.

D: En daarvoor hadden jullie wel wat meer mogelijkheden om andere dingen te doen?

A: Ja, daarvoor had je wel eens projectjes of interactieve dingen, maar die examenperiode is inderdaad echt alleen maar dezelfde stof opnieuw, opnieuw, opnieuw repeteren. En dan voor bepaalde vakken waar je misschien wat minder goed in bent, had je nog extra lessen dat je dan nog over ging doen, zeg maar. Ja, stampen inderdaad.

D: Ja, zo kan het ook. Ja goed, dat is een manier om het probleem van het eindexamen te omzeilen en nou ja, dus dat is heel goed mogelijk. Nee, ik vind dus, examens zijn bepaald geen goede afspiegeling van wat een school te bieden heeft en dat is ook de reden waarom onder andere in dat project wat ik wat met Inspectie doe, mogelijkheden ga onderzoeken om de kwaliteit van je onderwijs op andere manieren te bepalen, dus kijken naar juist die hoek van vakkundige aspecten enzo, dat doe je op burgerschap en dat soort zaken.

A: Juist. We zijn al wel bij de laatste vraag, die is ietsje langer. Ik had verteld dat ik Nederland met Finland vergelijk. Ik geef even wat achtergrondinformatie daarover, want wat uit mijn literatuuronderzoek vooral naar boven kwam, is dat er zijn in het algemeen drie grote verschillen tussen Nederland en Finland, want een groot probleem bij ons is natuurlijk lerarentekort. Wat opmerkelijk is dus in Finland, waar leraren heel hoog opgeleid worden, is er juist een overschot, omdat ze zo veel kandidaten krijgen op scholen dat ze gewoon 90 procent afwijzen. En dan een tweede ding was dat, omdat ze zo hoogopgeleid zijn hebben heel veel leraren daar een beter zelf-imago en ook een beetje een publiek imago, van “deze persoon is een hoogopgeleide”. Terwijl in Nederland, een leraar is een leraar. Het is niet vaak een beroep waar mensen echt naar streven.

D: Nee, eigenlijk meer een sukkel.

A: Zo kun je het verwoorden. Maar het imago. En dan het laatste, inderdaad wat we al besproken hadden, autonomie, zeg maar. Daar zijn ze veel vrijer in leermethodes en ze hebben ook maar één standaardtest tussen voortgezet en hoger onderwijs in. Terwijl wij hebben ze meerdere keer per jaar. Dus dat zijn drie grote verschillen, maar zo'n “flip the system” idee zou dan eigenlijk best wel veel weghebben van Finland. Denkt u dat dat realistisch is, als we van een ander land ineens beleiden qua onderwijs zouden implementeren?

D: Ja, nee, kijk, je kan natuurlijk de Finse situatie niet zonder meer importeren in Nederland. Het is overigens als ik het goed begrijp –maar ik volg het niet zo heel erg– zijn ze in Finland nu ook wel in de problemen aan het komen.

A: Ja, nee, het is uiteraard niet allemaal perfect.

D: Nee, maar het heeft er mee te maken dat, kijk, Finland is een land met heel weinig immigranten en dat verandert nu wel en dat levert toch al wel hier en daar wat problemen op. Kijk, Finland is een veel kleiner land, tenminste niet qua oppervlakte, maar qua inwoners. Dus het is wel heel erg een soort monocultuur, terwijl wij natuurlijk toch een hele pluriforme samenleving zijn met ook, ja, weet je, ons onderwijs is natuurlijk gekomen uit de verzuilde samenleving. Vroeger had je –dat heb jij misschien niet meer meegemaakt– maar vroeger had je katholieke, protestantse –die heb je nog steeds wel– maar dat speelde eigenlijk geen rol meer, maar vroeger was het echt héél streng gescheiden en die zuilen, dus de katholieke kerk en de protestantse kerk en de socialistische beweging, die hadden énorm veel invloed op de inhoud en manier waarop het onderwijs gegeven werd. En dat zijn allemaal dingen die je in Finland– die historie heb je helemaal niet in Finland. En Finse kinderen gaan ook veel later naar school.

A: Klopt, ja. Ook meer vrije tijd enzo.

D: Ja. Nee, er zijn een hele boel dingen die mij enorm bevallen in Finland. En als je daar van gecharmeerd bent, dan is dat prima, maar dan moet je gaan nadenken over op welke manier je zoiets in Nederland zou kunnen doen. Ik ben zelf heel gecharmeerd ook van een school als High Tech High in San Diego, waar ik vorig jaar op bezoek was. Dat is vanaf de kleuterklas tot aan de twaalfde klas, is dat voornamelijk projectonderwijs, op projecten gebaseerd onderwijs. En nou ja, ik heb daar met open ogen staan te kijken, dat is echt voor mij ideaal onderwijs. En waarbij de leerlingen dus ook heel veel autonomie hebben, maar waarbij de leraren ook een belangrijke rol spelen en dat is weer een iets andere vorm van onderwijs dan in Finland, maar je zou heel goed een model kunnen bedenken waarbij de voordelen van allebei de systemen met elkaar gecombineerd worden. Maar kijk, voor allebei de systemen –in San Diego ook– dat waren stuk voor stuk hoogopgeleide mensen. Precies hetzelfde wat je noemde in Finland heb je daar ook. Van de tien kandidaten die daar solliciteerde, worden er negen afgewezen. En verder hebben ze hun eigen opleiding enzo, nou ja, goed. Dus ja, dat is toch wel een dingetje: je moet echt zorgen dat je gewoon een pool hebt van goed opgeleide docenten waar je uit kan kiezen.

A: Juist. Er zijn een aantal auteurs die praten over het concept van leraren importeren. Aangezien wij een tekort hebben, zeggen sommige mensen: “waarom importeren we geen leraren uit andere landen?” Vindt u dat een goed of een slecht idee?

D: Goh, heb ik nog nooit over nagedacht.

A: Het is een aardig nieuw concept. Ik weet niet of het ook echt al is uitgevoerd. Ik geloof wel— ik las over Finland en Amerika, dat ze Finse leraren in Amerika hadden geplaatst en die moesten ontzettend wennen aan dat systeem daar, dat is natuurlijk twee andere werelden. U hebt er nog nooit echt over nagedacht; wat is uw eerste indruk? Zou dat lukken denkt u? Zouden ze hier zich thuisvoelen of zouden ze heel erg moeten wennen?

D: Nou, dat hangt er vanaf welke school. Ik zou wel een paar scholen weten die wel een paar Finse leraren zouden kunnen gebruiken, ja. Maar dat zijn dan scholen die eigenlijk al in dit concept passen, ja. En dan komt zo iemand tot min of meer een gespreid bedje. En die komt dan in een situatie waar die zich meteen thuis kan voelen. Maar als je die op een of andere Luzac ofzo gaat zetten, een of andere drillschool waar het alleen maar gaat om de hoge examencijfers, ja, ik denk niet dat zo iemand daar gelukkig wordt.

A: Nee, dus eigenlijk zou het alleen een goed idee zijn als de systemen al beetje vergelijkbaar zijn.

D: Ja. Ja, ik denk dat het voor de progressieve scholen, die een andere cours willen varen, die moeite hebben om docenten te krijgen van een voldoende niveau. Ik denk dat daar een uitkomst voor is, ja. Zou wel eens kunnen. Ik zou het eens vragen...

A: Ja, dat was een beetje mijn meest open, creatieve vraag, zeg maar, omdat het zo'n onbesproken onderwerp is.

D: Ja, ik zie straks een hele boel mensen, ook een paar bestuurders.

A: Ja, misschien een discussie onderwerp. Nou, dat waren in ieder geval mijn vragen. Heeft u zelf nog op— of aanmerkingen?

D: Nee, zo op het eerste gezicht niet.

A: Oké, nou, dan dank ik u voor uw deelname in mijn onderzoek.

D: Nou, heel graag gedaan. Laat het nog eens horen.

Interview II

Date: 09/07/2018

Location: Zuidland

Interviewer: R. A. J. van Doorn

Interviewee: M. Stadhouders

A: Kun je iets vertellen in het kort over jouw rol in het voortgezet onderwijs?

M: Nou, ik heb nu twee jaar les gegeven al. Eerste jaar was wel mbo, dus niet voortgezet onderwijs. Tweede jaar was wel in het voortgezet onderwijs, op het Jacob van Liesveldt in Hellevoetsluis. En daarbij was ik docent Nederlands voor die kinderen. Dus dat is mijn rol.

A: Juist. En wat zijn in jouw mening hoofdelementen van kwaliteitsonderwijs? Mag er ook één zijn.

M: Persoonlijke aandacht.

A: Persoonlijke aandacht. Kun je dat uitleggen?

M: Ja, voor mij is de relatie zeg maar met leerlingen een van de belangrijkste dingen. Als je geen relatie hebt met je leerlingen, dan gaat het lesgeven naar mijn idee ook niet. Dat is wel een goede— je hebt zeg maar het “CAR-model” en dat staat voor competentie, autonomie en relatie. En dat zijn de drie behoeftes van leerlingen. En competentie is dat de leerling het gevoel heeft dat hij het aankan. En autonomie is, ja, de leerlingen zitten in de puberteit weet je, ze willen ook hun eigen gang gaan, dus dat je ze de ruimte geeft om te groeien eigenlijk. En relatie is van “ik hoor erbij”. En dat is voor de leerlingen natuurlijk best wel belangrijk, dat ze het gevoel hebben dat ze onderdeel zijn van een groep en dus ook de docent als lid van die groep, maar wel een bijzonder soort lid natuurlijk, omdat je er wel iets boven staat. Dus op die manier dat je altijd wel al je leerlingen betrokken houdt bij de groep, bij de les en dat dat goed is voor het onderwijs dat ze krijgen.

A: Dus je vindt dat de leerling centraal moet staan?

M: Ja. Ook wel structuur, dat vind ik ook heel belangrijk.

A: Structuur ook?

M: Ja. De leerlingen zijn zelf behoorlijk chaotisch, maar goed dat is natuurlijk niet zo gek want ze hebben heel veel verschillende soorten vakken, er gebeurt van alles in hun hoofd, in hun lichaam— ze moeten met zoveel dingen rekening houden dat ik denk van ja, het is als docent een kleine moeite om structuur aan te brengen in je lessen en dat zorgt ook gewoon voor rust in hun hoofd.

A: Oké, duidelijk. En wat vind jij op dit moment de grootste uitdagingen voor het huidige voortgezet onderwijs in Nederland? Of eentje, hoeft niet meerdere te zijn.

M: Eén ding is denk ik toch wel —even kijken hoe noem je dat— multiculturele samenleving.

A: Mixen zeg maar?

M: Ja, daar kan nog niet elke docent mee overweg. En ook het integreren van technologie in het onderwijs. Die twee punten, denk ik. Bovendien is het hele onderwijs een zootje natuurlijk, dat kan gewoon veel beter, maar kort samengevat die twee, denk ik.

A: Dat vind jij de twee hoofduitdagingen?

M: Ja.

A: Dus technologie is een uitdaging hoe? Is het moeilijk om je daar aan aan te passen zeg maar?

M: Nou het idee is fantastisch –ICT in het onderwijs– omdat je kan veel processen veel efficiënter maken door ICT in het onderwijs toe te passen. Bovendien is het ook wel leuker voor die kinderen, alleen het werkt nog niet, dus dat is een heel groot minpunt. Dus daar moet nog hard aan gewerkt worden.

A: En voor multiculturele samenleving– zijn dat vooral docenten die daar moeite mee hebben, of de leerlingen ook, in jouw ervaring?

M: Leerlingen ook. Heel erg, ja. En ik denk dat dat zeg maar niet alleen zo zeer gericht is naar hoe het is voor leerlingen met een andere afkomst, maar ook met Nederlandse afkomst, omdat je bijvoorbeeld ziet– ik heb bijvoorbeeld een klas en er zit een Turkse jongen in. Nou, die doet het super op school, weet je, er is niks op aan te merken, die praat gewoon accentloos eigenlijk ook. Maar, vriendjes om hem heen, die nemen zo’n stoer, straat-achtig Turks accent aan, weet je, dat ik denk van, dat is niet de manier hoe je daar mee om gaat, weet je. Maar dat is stoerdoenerij, waarvan ik denk, dat is niet nodig, weet je. Dus dat is ook een dingetje zeg maar voor kinderen met een Nederlandse achtergrond, die moeten dat ook gewoon als normaal zien, weet je. Je hoeft je niet zo te gedragen omdat hij een andere achtergrond heeft, weet je wel.

A: Dus het is eigenlijk ook een beetje het “middelbare school cultuurtje” in het algemeen, dat een beetje er in meespeelt.

M: Ja. En ook, ik weet niet of je wel eens methodes hebt bekeken; die stammen uit 1908 en dat– afbeeldingen en namen, dat is nog steeds zo’n Klaas en Piet terwijl je ondertussen ook een Fakim en weet ik veel wat in je klas hebt, weet je, maar dat is toch, weet je, dat is niet bekend voor leerlingen. Alleen maar dat soort namen, dat zijn niet meer namen van nu. Dus ik denk dat als je iets in de methodes zet wat aanspreekt is voor die leerlingen, wat herkenbaar is, dat dat toch ook misschien beter werkt voor hun concentratie en motivatie.

A: Oké, dus jij hebt het liefst eigenlijk een soort van balans tussen– het is nu een beetje het één en het uiterste van technologie is weer een beetje te gemoderniseerd, maar oude methodes zijn weer een beetje te gedateerd, dus eigenlijk moet er een soort van balans komen misschien?

M: Ja.

A: Oké, dat is ook wel een interessante opmerking. Hebben leerlingen zelf ook moeite met technologie in jouw omgeving? Merk je dat?

M: Ja, absoluut. Weet je, “Kahoot” –ik weet niet of je dat kent– dat vinden leraren fantastisch, maar ze weten niet eens hoe ze daar mee overweg moeten, dus dat, weet je, dat is een website alleen al. Ze snappen niet het verschil bijvoorbeeld tussen een browser en een website, weet je.

A: Dus misschien voordat dat echt geïmplementeerd wordt, moeten leraren zelf ook een beetje meer daarover worden geïnformeerd?

M: Dat ze cursussen ofzo krijgen? Ja, maar weet je, bijvoorbeeld oudere docenten, die zien het ook alleen maar als een last voor het onderwijs. En ik ook nog, omdat het nog niet functioneel is. Maar het kán zo handig zijn als het werkt en als alle docenten weten er mee om te gaan en –wat ik zeg– als het werkt, dan zou het echt wel een uitkomst bieden voor heel veel dingen, zodat er weer aandacht aan andere zaken kan worden besteed, maar dat is nog niet het geval.

A: En oude methodes– hebben leraren door ook last van denk, als iets gedateerd is? De leerlingen zullen misschien denken van, “oh, nou ja, dat boeit me niet zoveel”, maar heb jij als docent dat ook?

M: Ja, nou ja, ik heb toevallig laatst heb ik daar met een docent het over gehad, want ik had een bijeenkomst over chromebooks voor volgend jaar –ik dacht eerst oh mijn god, dan moet ik dadelijk allemaal ICT meuk gaan doen, dat zie ik helemaal niet zitten– maar we gaan met een methode werken dat heet “PLOT26” en dat is compleet digitaal. En die kinderen die moeten ook aan de slag met chromebooks, dus ze hebben geen boek meer. Dus dat wordt voor mij nogal een uitdaging, maar het leuke is dat PLOT26 is een heel moderne methode en die focussen zich op lezen, schrijven, spreken en fictie, maar grammatica onderwijs komt bijna niet aan bod. Terwijl –als je misschien zelf nog wel kent– van Nieuw Nederlands, nou, dat is echt, dat zijn twee flinke hoofdstukken grammatica. Maar wat is het nou: sinds de jaren ’70 is gewoon al wetenschappelijk bewezen dat grammatica onderwijs niets helpt in goed kunnen lezen of schrijven. Maar waarom wordt er dan nog steeds opdoorgehamerd? Het naamwoordelijk gezegde is dus al gewoon bewezen, daar kan een kind niet beter van schrijven. Dus dat is heel– maar dat is gewoon uit traditie dat het nog gedaan wordt, terwijl het eigenlijk helemaal niet meer werkt en binnen PLOT26 besteden ze daar ook gewoon geen aandacht meer aan, of heel weinig in ieder geval.

A: Oké, volgende vraag. We gaan de focus een beetje meer gooien op leraren zelf. Wat maakt een leraar in het voortgezet onderwijs?

M: In eerste instantie, je moet van kinderen houden, want dat zie je ook gewoon nog best wel vaak, dat dat niet het geval is. Wat maakt een goede leraar... Toch ook wel alsnog weer goede relatie met de leerlingen. Kennis van het vak. En dat is denk ik best wel een puntje nu ook in het onderwijs,

omdat niet alle leraren zijn bevoegd en dat willen ze gaan veranderen met die nationale registratie, dat –net als wat artsen hebben– dat je je nu als docent ook moet gaan registreren, zodat de overheid kan bijhouden of jij je bevoegdheid hebt gehaald, ja of nee. Daar ben ik wel een voorstander van.

A: Ik kom later nog terug op dat kennis van het vak, voornamelijk een beetje hoe professioneel leraren zijn tegenwoordig. Daar komen we later ook nog even op terug. Maar jij noemt vooral dingen –moet van kinderen houden, goede relatie met leerlingen, kennis van het vak–

M: En structuur, structuur.

A: Structuur ook weer?

M: Ja, structuur is belangrijk.

A: Zou je dan zeggen dat het pedagogische gedeelte van leraar zijn belangrijker is dan het academische?

M: Ja.

A: Ja, eigenlijk om een beetje daar op door te gaan: denk je dat de academische achtergrond van een leraar of de professionele ervaring belangrijker is? Is de ene dan de belangrijker dan de ander, of alletwee even belangrijk, denk je?

M: Nou, ik zou niet meteen zeggen dat een docent die langer in het onderwijs zit beter is dan een docent die net van de opleiding afkomt, absoluut niet.

A: Oké, hoezo niet?

M: Ik denk, het allerbelangrijkste is –en dat leer je op de opleiding heel erg goed en het is belangrijk dat je het blijft doen– reflecteren op jezelf. Hoe je het doet als leraar en wat voor effect het heeft op de leerlingen en leraren. Wat je vaak ziet bij docenten die al jaren in het vak zitten, die houden op het gegeven moment op met reflecteren en die hebben van die vastgeroeste gewoontes die beter zouden kunnen. Maar ja, aan de andere kant, een leraar die veel ervaring heeft, die kan uit ervaring bepaalde keuzes maken die betere zijn, bijvoorbeeld omtrend het orde houden ofzo.

A: Juist, dus misschien verschillende elementen van leraar zijn– misschien heb je voor het één meer aan de academische achtergrond, voor het andere meer aan je professionele ervaring.

M: Ja, ik denk voor de kwaliteit van het lesgeven dat het academische meer belangrijk is, maar voor het handige de ervaring. Dat is makkelijk voor je als docent.

A: Oké, dus er is wel een soort van balans.

M: Ja.

A: In hoeverre reflecteren de resultaten van een student de kwaliteit van een leraar in jouw mening?

M: Een leraar heeft wel in zekere mate invloed in het leren van de leerling en dat heeft deels te maken met kwaliteit van het lesgeven en zowel de motivatie. Maar het geldt niet voor elke leerling en dat is echt super jammer, maar dat is nou eenmaal zo. Sommige leerlingen zijn gewoon niet te motiveren, of sommige leerlingen hebben gewoon écht heel veel moeite met iets. En je bent als docent maar een docent en niet een orthopedagoog of een vader of moeder, weet je wel. Het docent zijn houdt wel ergens op.

A: Juist. Een veelvoorkomend probleem in Nederland tegenwoordig, is dat als een kind bijvoorbeeld een keer ondergemiddeld scoort, dat dan heel vaak de ouders of beschermers naar de leraar toegaan en de leraar een beetje gaan uithoren. Terwijl als ze bovengemiddeld scoren, krijgt Timmy de prijs zeg maar, vandaar die vraag. Is dit ethisch zeg maar; mag je de leraar tot zo ver, zeg maar, uithoren, van: zit jij hier achter? Dus ja, er zijn heel veel verschillende meningen over deze, om heel eerlijk te zijn. Sommige mensen vinden het echt niet kunnen. Sommige mensen vinden dat het apart moet staan, dat er ook andere invloeden zijn. Het leven thuis van een leerling kan ook invloed hebben over hoe zijn cijferlijst er uiteindelijk uit ziet, het is niet alleen de leraar. Terwijl anderen zeggen, je kan in het algemeen de leraar ervoor beschuldigen— nou ja, het is niet altijd “beschuldigen”. Ja, sommige leraren zeggen ook: als ik een hoge cijferlijst krijgt zeg maar, dan zeg ik niet van mezelf per se dat ik een goede leraar ben. Het volgende jaar kan het weer iets minder zijn, of iets hoger.

M: Nou ja, ze zeggen dat als je leerlingen tussen de zes en de zeven scoren, dat het dan een goed niveau was. Halen de leerlingen alleen maar achten en negens en tienen dan is het te makkelijk. Maar halen ze alleen maar onvoldoendes, dan is het te moeilijk. Maar als ze tussen de zes en de zeven, dan zit het op een goed niveau. Natuurlijk heb je binnen de klas altijd verschillende niveaus, verschillende motivaties van leerlingen, maar als je zeg maar het algemeen plaatje kijkt en de cijfers vallen daartussen kan je zeggen dat je het goed gedaan hebt.

A: Oké, dus het is meer een beetje een soort van balans idee?

M: Ja. Het moet niet te makkelijk zijn. Als je leerlingen alleen maar achten en negens halen, dan heb je ze het niet te makkelijk gemaakt?

A: Ja, dat was dus een beetje de vraag.

M: Ja, weet je, het is wel de bedoeling dat je je leerlingen naar een hoger niveau tilt en ze niet geeft wat ze al kunnen. Je zit op school om te leren, niet om te laten zien wat je allemaal kan.

A: Oké, dit is eigenlijk al mijn laatste vraag, maar hij is best wel groot, dus het zijn een soort van sub-vragen die je er tussendoor krijgt, ja?

M: Oké.

A: Ik ga je nu even inlichten over hoe Finland in elkaar steekt: er zijn in het algemeen –tenminste, uit mijn literatuuronderzoek– iets van drie verschillen tussen Nederland en Finland in het onderwijs– tenminste, dingen die er echt uitspringen. Wat wij vooral heel erg hebben is natuurlijk een lerarentekort, dat merk je overal. Als je naar Finland kijkt, ze hebben daar een overschot aan leraren, omdat er zo veel mensen applicatie doen om leraar te worden op universiteiten, maar ook voortgezet onderwijs, dat ze gewoon negen van de tien moeten afwijzen, omdat het zo’n ontzettend populair beroep is. Je moet geloof ik een master in pedagogie hebben en eentje in het vak waarin je specialiseert voordat jij jezelf een leraar mag noemen in Finland en daardoor hebben mensen daar ook een soort van heel hoog imago voor leraar, weet je wel: “wow, leraar”, terwijl hier staat het een beetje van “oh, ben je leraar geworden... oké”.

M: Klinkt als een droom.

A: Ja, het zal vast ook wel nadelen hebben; ik wil niet klinken alsof ik Finland vereert ofzo. Het derde punt is: ze zijn heel erg autonoom in Finland. Ze zijn extreem autonoom, tot het punt waar– er zijn bijna geen standaardtesten meer. In Nederland heb je nog wel eens dat leraren zich moeten houden aan het boekje, zodat alles wat op het examen behandeld wordt, behandeld wordt in de les, terwijl in Finland: de leraar bepaalt het allemaal zelf. Ja, het is een beetje het één en het uiterste, weet je wel. Het is eigenlijk best wel extreem. Nou ja, ik heb hier een aantal vragen over. Denk je dat het realistisch is als we een land als Finland –of welk land dan ook– als wij een beleid van een ander land zouden proberen te implementeren in Nederland, in het onderwijs. Zou dat lukken denk je, of zou het falen?

M: Met VVD aan de macht niet, maar... Nou ja, weet je, in Nederland heb je een –hoe heet dat– een meritocratie ofzo iets?

A: Een meritocratie. Ja, ik heb het wel eens gehoord, inderdaad. Ik weet alleen niet meer wat het inhoudt.

M: Dat het een samenleving is waarin, zeg maar, vaardigheden heel hoog in het vaandel staan. Als je werkt voor wat je verdient, zeg maar. Als je wat wil bereiken, moet je er hard voor werken, zeg maar. En dat zorgt deels voor veel stress bij leerlingen en bij studenten, dus dat is niet zo heel best. Nou, of het mogelijk is, weet je...

A: Ja, het is een moeilijke hoor. Het is ook een beetje een open vraag. Het is meer: denk je dat het realistisch is; zou zoiets überhaupt werken als we ineens zoiets zouden proberen te implementeren.

M: Ik denk wel dat er vraag naar is in Nederland, omdat het onderwijs nu niet functioneel is, niet werkt. Je hebt nu –hoe heet het ook alweer– een leerjaar stofsysteem of leerstof jaarsysteem ofzo iets en dat is dus, wat je eigenlijk zei, heel vastgeroest: in jaar één leren leerlingen dit, in jaar

twee dat en als je het in jaar één al niet voor elkaar hebt gekregen als leerling, dan is jaar twee ook al zinloos voor je, eigenlijk. En ik zou wat dat betreft daar wel graag verandering in willen zien, dat leerlingen gewoon hun eigen lijn kunnen volgen. Dat een leerling zeg maar dát kan volgen waar hij of zij behoefte aan heeft en niet dat het moet want zo is het ingesteld, zeg maar.

A: Dat klinkt een beetje –zoals je het beschrijft– een beetje meer als het Noord-Amerikanse systeem, waarbij je zelf vakken mag kiezen per semester, van: dit semester wil ik biologie, scheikunde en een taal, ofzo.

M: Ja.

A: Zou je denken, misschien, dat dat hier ook zou kunnen?

M: Ja. Ja, zou ik wel leuk vinden. Ja, maar weet je, dan heb je toch ook dat de leerlingen veel meer gemotiveerd zijn, lijkt me, als ze precies– dat is dat stukje autonomie weer, van dat CAR-model, dat zouden ze fantastisch vinden en dat ze iets kunnen kiezen waar ze goed in zijn. Dus dat is weer die competentie en dat je dan in de klas zit met leerlingen die willen, dus dat is weer een relatie, dus wat dat betreft zou ik het wel ideaal vinden. Maar er moet wel iets veranderen in het onderwijs, dus ik vind wel dat het geprobeerd zou moeten worden, dus ja.

A: Ja, we kunnen het proberen. Oké, wat betreft een lerarentekort –dat is echt het hoofdprobleem bij ons op het moment, tenminste als ik mijn literatuuronderzoek mag geloven– wat vind je van het idee –het is nog niet vaak echt uitgevoerd– maar het concept van leraren importeren, dus bijvoorbeeld een leraar uit Finland die niet is aangekomen in Finland, omdat er te veel leraren in Finland zijn, of tenminste, te veel kandidaten. Stel, die krijgt een baan aangeboden in Nederland, waar we tekort hebben en helemaal tekort aan hoogopgeleide leraren. Zou dat een goed idee zijn, denk je? Denk er even over na.

M: Ja en nee.

A: Ja en nee. Hoezo ja?

M: Als iemand anders het beter kan: waarom niet? Dus ja, als je het in Nederland niet hebt, natuurlijk, ga ergens anders zoeken. Kijk, als diegene gewoon goed geschoold is en het aankan en weet ik veel wat: joh, lekker doen, zou ik zeggen. En nee, ze spreken de Nederlandse taal niet. En dat betekent dat er Engels wordt gesproken en dat is echt heel erg halfbakken, dus dan krijg je kinderen die én niet goed Nederlands spreken én halfbakken Engels.

A: Ja, dus misschien dat bewaren voor hogerberoepsonderwijs, waar meer opleidingen in het Engels worden aangeboden, of ook dat niet?

M: Voor de opleiding European Studies is het handig, daar ben ik wel voorstander van. Maar je hebt bijvoorbeeld ook management of business, weet ik veel, opleidingen, dat ik denk van, ja... Weet je,

dat ik denk van, je kan het beter gewoon in het Nederlands doen, want het heeft weinig toegevoegde waarden om het in het Engels te doen.

A: Ja, maar ja, dat is weer een heel ander onderwerp. Het importeren –nou ja het is een beetje een vaag concept– het is één keer uitgevoerd met Finland, maar toen in Amerika en ze konden niet wennen, want het systeem was veel te verschillend in Amerika. Zij zijn autonomie gewend en toen moesten ze ineens naar het boekje, zeg maar, hun lesmethodes aanpassen en ze konden niet wennen, dus ja, nou ja, wij zijn anders dan Amerika, dus of het hier zou werken is weer een vraag op zich, maar vandaar.

M: Aan de andere kant denk ik: ja, Nederland is een land dat altijd –ze zeggen van niet– maar eigenlijk past Nederland wel altijd best goed aan aan een hoop dingen.

A: Oké. Een ander punt: wat zou je er van vinden als leraren gedwongen werden om hogeropgeleid te zijn voordat ze de klas in mogen, dus bijvoorbeeld, zoals in Finland: master degree in pedagogie en dan het vak wat je gaat geven. Zou dat leraren verbeteren, denk je?

M: Nee.

A: Nee? Hoezo niet?

M: Omdat je misschien nog zo goed kan leren maar dat maakt je nog geen leraar. En dat is dus weer relatie met de leerlingen, dat leer je niet. Natuurlijk heb je trucjes en dingetjes, maar leerlingen zien daar doorheen– kijk, tuurlijk, je kan super veel kennis van je vak hebben en precies weten hoe ze leren en weet ik hoe dat allemaal in die hersenen eraan toe gaat, maar als jij het niet weet over te brengen op een enthousiaste manier, op een manier die de leerlingen boeit, dan heb je niks aan een diploma.

A: Dus uiteindelijk vindt je ervaring wél belangrijker dan een academische achtergrond? Want eerst zei je dat er een soort van balans is, of dat dat van het vak afhangt.

M: Nee hoor, je hoeft er geen ervaring voor te hebben. Ik denk dat het een soort van in je zit ofzo, dat het bepaalde eigenschappen zijn die je moet hebben om een goede leraar te zijn.

A: Het is meer de focus op pedagogie, want je noemt elke keer meer pedagogische elementen, van: relatie met kinderen, relatie met...

M: Ja. Want ik zie bijvoorbeeld bij iemand die ik ken: ze gaat nu naar het tweede jaar van de lerarenopleiding Engels, het is de bedoeling dat je in het eerste jaar al stage loopt, maar ze hadden geen plekken voor de docenten Engels. Dus, toen deed ze een of andere opdracht in plaats van de stage, dus ze heeft nog helemaal geen les gegeven en kan echt heel goed Engels maar ze weet nog helemaal niet of ze lesgeven leuk vindt. Weet je, je hebt docenten die raken helemaal in de stress, nou: leerlingen, alles bijhouden... Terwijl, ik krijg er bijvoorbeeld super veel energie van juist. Ik

word er blij van, maar als je er niet blij van wordt, of als je er gestresst door raakt, of je vind die leerlingen irritant, of weet ik veel wat— het moet wel in je zitten, denk ik.

A: Vast wel dat je eigenschappen moet hebben die er bij passen. Oké, dan de allerlaatste: ja, ik had het even over standaardtesten eerder, dat we in Nederland heel veel dat leraren zich vaak een beetje aan het examen moeten aanpassen en dan daarop gebaseerd hun ding doen. Heb je hier zelf ervaring mee? Dat je je methodes aan moest passen, van: oh dit komt in het examen, dit ga ik uitleggen, dat je daar echt op bent gefocust?

M: Ja. Ja, het is zeg maar dat het PTA —ik weet niet of je dat kent— dat is zeg maar de studiewijzer als je moet zien wat leerlingen aan het eind van het jaar kunnen, wat wordt er van ze gevraagd, wat wordt er van ze getoetst en daar pas je inderdaad wel je lessen op aan. Dan kan je zeg maar zien van: oké, dit is de methode waarmee we werken, we weten wat ze aan het einde van die vier, vijf of zes jaar moeten weten en bepalen dat we in jaar twee gaan we aan de slag met deze en deze onderwerpen, dus dat wordt getoetst ook en daar krijgen ze les in, dus veel vrijheid is er niet in.

A: Vindt je dat fijn of niet, dat je er geen vrijheid in hebt, of vindt je het juist fijn dat het gestructureerd is?

M: Ik houd van structuur, maar ik houd vooral van mijn eigen structuur, dus ik ben het er niet helemaal mee eens. De methode bijvoorbeeld, Nieuw Nederlands, dat is zeg maar hoofdstuk één tot en met hoofdstuk zes en dan heb je in hoofdstuk één paragraaf lezen, paragraaf woordenschat, paragraaf grammatica, enzovoort enzovoort. En dat ik denk, als je bijvoorbeeld stipt die methode volgt, dat is zo niet handig en dat ik denk, wat ze op het Jacob (van Liesveldt) al deden was: oké, een paragraafje lezen, dat slaat weer op het paragraafje woordenschat uit een ander hoofdstuk enzo, weet je, die deden dat altijd heel erg koppelen aan elkaar, zodat het toch een betekenisvoller iets werd. Dus daar hielden ze wel rekening mee. Maar ja, ik zou het wel even anders doen.

A: Ja? Zou je liever net zoals de Finse leraren, dat je echt zelf je eigen ding opstelt, van: dit vind ik belangrijk dat mensen weten over mijn vak, dit zou getoetst moeten worden?

M: Ja.

A: Als je de optie had, zou je dat liever doen dan standaardtesten?

M: Ja. Ja, want in de tweede klas moesten we het hebben over de bijvoegelijke bepalingen en de ondergeschikte bijwoordelijke bepalingen, dat ik zelf ook had van: oh, wat is het ook alweer? Dat ik denk van: als ik al moet nadenken van “wat is het ook alweer”, dan weet je toch dat je er helemaal niets aan hebt? Dus wat ik denk, is dat het belangrijkste is dat de leerlingen goed leren lezen, goed leren schrijven, dat ze durven te presenteren, weet je wel, dat ze goed kunnen spreken, goed leren luisteren— dat is veel belangrijker dan grammatica onderwijs.

A: Oké, ik geloof dat ik alles zo’n beetje heb. Heb je verder nog op- of aanmerkingen?