

## Preface

Although my first language is Dutch this thesis is written in English in order to make reaching a potentially larger audience possible. I am aware of the fact that the resulting ‘broken English’ of this thesis can at times be painful for native English speakers and completely incomprehensible for all nationalities. Misunderstandings because of language difficulties will occur, but my estimate is that these occurrences will be infrequent and certainly less than when people with other nationalities would attempt to read this thesis in Dutch.

Whenever I write about a teacher or student in a general sense I will use the personal pronoun ‘she’ instead of ‘he’ or ‘he/she’. This is my modest way of making up for centuries of patriarchy. When the context makes it clear that the particular person to whom I refer is male I will of course use the accompanying pronoun.

Throughout this thesis I will speak about ‘teaching/learning activities’ and ‘the teaching/learning process’, instead of for instance ‘teaching activities’ or ‘learning process’. The reason for this is that the interest of this research, as in most didactical research, lies in the interrelation of teaching (as descriptive of what a teacher does) and learning (as descriptive of what students do). The ‘grain size’ of the description of what goes on in the classroom I chose to be large enough so that it would include both teaching and learning. It is to emphasise this interrelation of teaching and learning that I will use the somewhat cumbersome terms ‘teaching/learning activities’ and ‘the teaching/learning process’.

Another term I will frequently use is ‘didactics’ with which I mean the content-specific interrelation of teaching and learning activities and processes. This usage of the term didactics is quite common in many continental European languages, but differs from the British or North-American usage of the term, which for some seem to carry negative connotations.

In this research I have benefited from the advice of mainly two people: Piet Lijnse and Kees Klaassen. I found it stimulating and humbling to work with these really smart individuals. Educating people is stretching people. However, nobody likes being stretched. I found being stretched by these two gentlemen in the process of educating me unpleasant and I resisted as much as I could. If there has been any increase in my qualities it is therefore completely due to their unrelenting efforts.

Discussions of this research with colleagues were sometimes useful. In this respect I like to offer thanks to Roald Verhoeff and Hanna Westbroek. Without the kind contribution of two teachers the educational design described in this thesis could not have been tested and developed. Warm thanks are therefore due to Felix Metselaar and Michiel Boonzajer.

Since for obvious reasons I could not implement all suggestions for improvement, any mistakes in this thesis are completely my own.

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