Teacher interpersonal competence for Dutch secondary multicultural classrooms

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Abstract

In the Netherlands, as in many European countries, classrooms display a growing cultural diversity. There is only very limited empirically supported data on the interpersonal competence teachers need in Dutch classrooms and studies from other countries cannot be generalized because of differences in the composition of the student population. This paper reports on an exploratory study in two schools on teachers' experiences in multicultural classes followed by an in-depth case study of one expert teacher. We use this study to answer the question to what degree this teacher displays interpersonal competence (teaching behaviours, knowledge and attitudes) specific for teaching in multicultural classrooms by comparing this teacher's competence with generic interpersonal teaching competence. The teacher studied seems to be aware of special needs of students from different cultures and to use this knowledge to apply specific teaching strategies and interpersonal cues to create a positive classroom atmosphere and to cater for needs of diverse students. Further, the results indicate that many elements of this teacher's interpersonal competence in teaching a multicultural class can be considered aspects of generic teaching competence. It seems that the multicultural classroom puts heavier demands on this competence than a less diverse classroom.

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" *I'm very much involved in the relationship with these students, because a conflict with one student can disturb the relationship with the whole class.*"
[…]
" *If it happens that I send someone out of the classroom, which seldom happens, then I will go to the others in the group to show that the relationship with them is still good.*"
[…]
"*It is always and constantly about the relationships.*"

1. Introduction

According to the Central Bureau for Statistics (http://www.cbs.nl), the Dutch population in 2002 mounted up to about 16 million. Of these, 3 million were either not born in the Netherlands or had parents born outside the Netherlands. About 1.6 million persons have their roots in non-western countries and live primarily in less prosperous areas of major Dutch cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. Many schools in these cities have classrooms with 50 up to 100% of students from varying non-western backgrounds. Most of these students originate from Morocco, Turkey, Surinam and the Dutch Antilles, and smaller groups from countries in Africa (e.g. Nigeria, Ethiopia), Asia (e.g. China, Afghanistan) and former Yugoslavia, often as refugees. Teachers in these schools will thus have to be prepared for teaching in multicultural classrooms.

There are only few results of Dutch research on teacher competence for multicultural classrooms in secondary education. Internationally conducted research usually focused on other student groups than those in Dutch classrooms, for example on Afro-American and Hispanic students in the United States. Most of the available Dutch research on multicultural schools is on the pre-school and elementary level, or is restricted to studies on school careers of minority students, the effects of government policy on budgets for minority students and all kind of language-related issues (e.g. Dekkers, Bosker & Driessen, 2000; Dekkers & Claassen, 2001; Karsten, Peetsma, Roeleveld & Vergeer, 2001). Because the multicultural character of the classroom provides an extra challenge for teachers' communicative skills (Ting-Toomey, 1999) we have started in 2000 studies on the specifics of interpersonal relationships in multicultural classrooms in Dutch secondary education. We thus expand our tradition of research on teacher-student interpersonal relationships in the classroom that has started halfway the 1970's (see Wubbels & Levy, 1993) and included some studies on American multicultural classrooms (e.g. den Brok, Levy, Rodriguez & Wubbels, 2002; den Brok, Levy, Wubbels & Rodriguez, 2003; Levy, den Brok, Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2003; Levy, Wubbels, Brekelmans & Morganfield, 1997).

This paper reports on an exploratory study of teachers' experiences in multicultural classes in two schools, followed by an in-depth case study of one expert teacher in a multicultural classroom. We use this case study to describe the beliefs, knowledge and attitudes of this teacher on teaching in multicultural classes and his teaching strategies and actions, and to answer the question to what degree this teacher displays interpersonal competence (teaching strategies, knowledge and attitudes) specific for teaching in multicultural classrooms. We do so by comparing this teacher's competence with generic interpersonal teaching competence. Because of the design, the results are hypotheses to be tested in subsequent research. The paper contributes to the debate in the literature about the question to what degree effective teaching in multicultural classrooms is different from a more generic approach to good teaching. Is good teaching in multicultural classrooms just good teaching or does it require specific teacher competence?

In earlier research on beginning teachers we found that good interpersonal relationships are a prerequisite for effective teaching (e.g. Wubbels, Créton & Hooymayers, 1985; cf. Veenman, 1984). The quotes at the beginning of this paper illustrate the importance the expert teacher studied in this paper attaches to his relationship with students in a multicultural classroom. In one interview he uses the word *relation* 23 times and most of the interview is directly or indirectly about his *interpersonal* relationship with the students. In the interviews in the exploratory part of the study, the general conviction of the teachers was that interpersonal relationships are a prerequisite for helping students to learn. Being this true or not, in this study we focus on the teacher-students interpersonal relationship.

This paper starts with an overview of studies in the Netherlands that have focused on interpersonal teacher competence in multicultural classrooms. The results of this review are used to construct a framework that is then used to report on the exploratory study conducted at two multicultural schools, aimed at extracting knowledge, attitudes and strategies with respect to interpersonal teacher competence. Subsequently, a more in-depth study is reported that has been conducted with one experienced teacher. monitor

2. Earlier studies about interpersonal competence for the multicultural classroom

In this section we present an inventory of elements of interpersonal competence in Dutch multicultural classrooms mentioned in earlier Dutch studies. We ordered these elements in categories derived from the international literature on generic interpersonal teaching competence. We distinguish three categories including teacher behaviour and teaching strategies and one about underlying knowledge and attitudes: instruct

- *monitoring and managing student behaviour:* this includes formulating and implementing rules and procedures for (resolving inappropriate or disrupting) student behaviour, and assessing student behaviour and making students accountable (Cummings, 2000; Evertson & Harris, 1999; Gilberts & Lignugaris-Kraft, 1997; Jones, 1996);
- *creating positive teacher-student (and peer) relationships:* This includes for example showing personal interest in students (Cummings, 2000; Jones, 1996);
- *teaching for student attention and engagement*: this includes e.g. clear and well paced instruction (Evertson & Harris, 1999; Jones, 1996); and,
- *attitudes and knowledge* teachers need to posses.

Because interpersonal competence in multicultural classes may depend on class composition we mainly review studies conducted in the Netherlands. We, however, do not neglect the international literature because two of the Dutch studies included a review of studies in other countries and transferred these international results to the Dutch situation (Hajer 2002; Derriks, Ledoux, Overmaat & van Eck, 2002). In the Netherlands, only few studies have been undertaken to investigate (among others) interpersonal competence of teachers to effectively communicate with students from different backgrounds and support their learning. Table 1 summarises the results of our review.

Hajer (2002) reviewed international studies about teacher competence for multicultural and multilingual classrooms. She concluded that the literature is indecisive about the question if teaching in these classes requires specific competence or rather applying generic competence. Studies that focus on the specifics of multilingual and multicultural classrooms (e.g. Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2000; Phuntsog, 2001; le Roux, 2001; Scarcella, 1990; Zeichner, 1996) yield all kind of knowledge that might be important for teachers in these classrooms, however, the usefulness of this knowledge for teaching is at least unclear and this focus even may lead to stereotyping of students from non-western backgrounds. Another approach starting from more generic competence (such as effectiveness research, e.g. Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Van der Werf & Weide, 1991) leads to descriptions that do not show specifics for multicultural classrooms (van der Geugten, 2000). Trying to bridge these two approaches Hajer (2002) analysed videotapes of mathematics lessons on multicultural schools and suggested a number of relevant elements of interpersonal competence for teachers, that we have summarized in Table 1.

After a review of the international literature, Derriks and her colleagues (Derriks et al. 2002) found similar elements of competence to be of importance. Their literature review was conducted as part of a larger study for the Dutch Ministry of Education to yield a list of required elements of competence for teachers and school leaders in multicultural schools. While their study investigated teacher strategies and attitudes with respect to all kinds of differences (such as intelligence, gender and socio-economic background), a major part focused on cultural and ethnic differences. Their study used both quantitative and qualitative data sources (e.g. interviews).

Van der Werf and Weide (1991) in a large scale correlational study investigated teacher competence in relation to multicultural students' learning outcomes. Apart from observation, literature review and questionnaire research, researchers have also interviewed teachers to elicit relevant experiences and strategies (Renkema, Olde Monnikhof, Bakker & Dekkers, 2000).

From Table 1 we can conclude that the limited amount of research on interpersonal competence for the multicultural classroom shows overlap and no contradiction in the results about the required knowledge and attitudes, and about the kind of teaching activities and strategies that teachers should have at their disposal for teaching in multicultural classrooms. However, several aspects are only mentioned in one study. Aspects of competence that are found frequently are:

- having high expectations of students, being interested in students perceptions and being aware of own cognitions, and behaviour,
- creating and maintaining a positive relationship and a safe environment through rewards, compliments, showing respect and confidence, and empathy and providing some freedom and responsibility for students,
- promoting on-task behaviour and creating and maintaining a productive, engaging learning environment through clear structuring, strong leadership, setting, communicating and enforcing rules, and probing for student problems and understanding.

Table 1
Results of earlier Dutch studies on interpersonal competence in multicultural classrooms.

Classroom management competence element	Strategies (study between brackets)
Monitoring and managing student behaviour	Being in a dominant position without eliciting aggression (Hajer, 2002). Showing awareness of student competition and conflicts between students (Hajer, 2002). Dealing with emotional student reactions with no fear (Derriks, et al., 2002). Providing explicit information regarding rules and take more time in explaining when rules are broken (Renkema, et al., 2000). Dealing with macho behaviour by providing clear and explicit rules, allow no discussion regarding rule breaking and downplay materialistic behaviour (Renkema, et al., 2000). Checking for and requiring cooperation and participation (Hajer, 2002). Giving feedback frequently (Van der Werf & Weide, 1991).
Creating positive teacher-student (and peer) relationships	Probing for student individual problems (Hajer, 2002). Showing respect for and interest in students and their background (Derriks, et al., 2002). Suggesting that nothing is abnormal (Derriks, et al., 2002). Giving confidence to students (Derriks, et al., 2002). Making students feel safe and accepted (Derriks, et al., 2002). Giving student freedom and responsibility (Derriks, et al., 2002). Listening to students (without taking as submissive role) in negotiation processes (Derriks, et al., 2002).
Teaching for student attention and engagement	Allowing students to make mistakes and contribute in imperfect wording (Hajer, 2002). Testing frequently (Van der Werf & Weide, 1991). Stimulating all students to participate and contribute (Hajer, 2002). Showing awareness of students following and understanding (Hajer, 2002) . Rewarding, accepting, paraphrasing, repeating and asking other students' attention for contributions of students (Hajer, 2002). Structuring content and group processes (Derriks, et al., 2002). Display enthousiasm (Derriks, et al., 2002). Questioning (Derriks, et al., 2002; Renkema et al., 2000). Clear and direct instruction (Van der Werf & Weide, 1991).
Required teacher attitudes and knowledge	Maintaining high expectations (Hajer, 2002; Derriks, et al., 2002; Van der Werf & Weide, 1991). Being mindful of own perception of students and of (unjustified) reinforcement of these perceptions (Hajer, 2002). Readiness to explore own prejudices about student (behaviour) (Hajer, 2002). Being mindful of normative behaviour (Derriks, et al., 2002). Being sensitive to within-group status differences (Derriks, et al., 2002).

3. The exploratory group study

In the first phase of the present study we have conducted *focus groups* (see e.g. Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2000; Greenbaum, 1998; Krueger, 2000) in two schools twice with groups of four experienced and beginning teachers. Teachers were selected because they were particularly interested in the topic of teaching in multicultural classes. The teachers taught in urban schools one with about 75 and the other about 90% students from ethnic minorities. The focus groups aimed to elicit all teachers' experiences in multicultural classrooms from which potential important elements of competence could be derived. Also the teachers were invited to mention not only interpersonal, but *all* necessary aspects of competence. The focus groups were videotaped and transcribed. The transcriptions were analysed inductively by two researchers independently from an interpersonal perspective. Statements about competence were classified in themes that seemed to be recurrent and emerged from the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss, 1987). Afterwards, the two researchers discussed differences and came to agreement about the classifications of statements. The results on interpersonal competence are summarized in Table 2 in the same categories as used in Table 1.

Table 2
Teaching strategies, and required knowledge and attitude for multicultural classrooms mentioned by teachers in focus groups.

Classroom management competence element	Strategies
Monitoring and managing student behaviour	1. Focusing on cooperation of leader of the peer group 2. Coping with relatively intensely student emotional responses 3. Negotiating without giving in and at the same time honouring student perspectives and needs 4. Providing and strictly enforcing clear procedures and sound rules 5. Preventing escalating conflicts 6. Showing to be in control 7. Using small rather than intense corrections (eyes, gestures instead of words) 8. Making no mistakes in content or procedures 9. Helping students to focus on rational arguments instead of power arguments 10. Putting limits to students
Creating positive teacher-student and (peer) relationships	11. Showing humour 12. Correcting students needs to be followed by making rapport 13. Giving feedback without causing humiliation, or loss of face 14. Building trustful relationships e.g. through physical contact 15. Showing respect and providing frequent compliments and rewards
Teaching for student attention and engagement	16. Frequent and varied testing 17. Actively engage in probing for individual student's interests, beliefs and background
Required teacher attitudes and knowledge	18. Being aware of student diversity in and between "homogenous" ethnic groups 19. Being aware of school culture, norms and rules 20. Being aware of huge language difficulties 21. Being interested in students' backgrounds 22. Being knowledgeable about students in their specific personal situation (school, home, ethnics, neighbourhood) 23. Being aware of authority problems of male students with female teachers 24. Being aware of the multiple factors that are important for life and problems in multicultural classrooms

The results in the last row of Table 2 can be considered as the general *attitudes and knowledge* needed for teachers that have to become visible in the *actions and strategies* mentioned in the first three rows. Although the teachers in our study tried to describe competence as if it was specific for teaching in multicultural classrooms, we observe that the activities and strategies mentioned were worded in rather generic terms. These can easily be interpreted alternatively as descriptions of interpersonal aspects of generic good teaching and this observation also holds for the results of the earlier Dutch studies.

We can compare the opinions on interpersonal teaching competence for multicultural classrooms expressed by the teachers in our focus groups with the results of the earlier Dutch studies. Such a comparison reveals overlap and no contradiction. However several additional aspects are mentioned in our study, such as a focus on leaders in peer groups in order to manage student behavior, the attention for personal knowledge about students, the multiple factors involved in problems and situations of minority students, and being aware of gender issues and of school culture and norms. Other results from our focus groups probably can be regarded as specifications of more general aspects mentioned in earlier research. The earlier result in the category creating positive teacher-student relationships about "rewards, compliments, showing respect and confidence, and empathy", for example, can be specified in the need to re-establishing rapport after a correction of student behaviour.

Additionally, we can compare the results with suggestions for interpersonal competence to be found in the extensive literature on *intercultural communication* and *intercultural conflict management*. Ting-Toomey (1999) for example, mentions as strategies:
- empathy and patience: speak slowly and in relatively simple sentences, allow for comprehension pauses, restate in different words, use probing questions to check if messages have been understood, paraphrase, use visual restatements;
- mindful listening to others;
- mindful reframing (translate messages of others to their cultural context);
- adequate face-management (prevent humiliation or loss of face);
- trust-building;
- adaptive communication: practicing patience, using vocal cues that signal listening attentiveness, being open to stories, proverbs, metaphors, analogies or understatements, encouraging, addressing conflicts to the whole group/class, accepting longer turn-taking or pauses, using head nods that indicate affirmation and listening to relational meaning of messages;
- use of collaborative dialogue strategies: stimulating verbal assertiveness, using verbal and direct responses, articulating reasons behind responses or statements, using direct and specific questions, targeting questions to specific individuals, engaging in overlap talks and fast turn-taking, using verbal paraphrasing, using perception check questions and listening well to content;
- check understanding of words, sentences and concepts that are particular difficult for second language users and use teaching strategies for improving understanding of these if necessary.

Such a comparison again shows a lot of overlap for the creation of positive relationships, and for knowledge and attitude, but the monitoring and management of student behaviour, and teaching for student attention and engagement seem to be rather specific for the teaching situation.

In sum our exploratory work leads to the conclusion that there seems to be some consensus about interpersonal teaching competence needed for multicultural classrooms. The available evidence, however, left the dilemma of generic versus specific competence unsolved. It seems possible to interpret nearly all elements of competence mentioned as special manifestations of generic interpersonal teaching competence. Re-establishing rapport with a punished student, for example, is important for a good teacher-student relationship and for a feeling of safety of every student. Teachers in every classroom should be aware of and be able to do this. Language problems may occur in every classroom, et cetera. This conclusion was a first reason for us to embark on a more in-depth study of the teaching of one expert teacher. A second reason for this was our dissatisfaction with the level of specificity that competence was described on. Our review of earlier studies and our own exploratory work from an interpersonal perspective suggested for example the importance of warm and supportive teacher-student relations. From our own studies on interpersonal teacher behaviour we know that warm and supportive teacher student relations contribute substantially to high student cognitive and affective outcomes (Brekelmans, Wubbels & den Brok, 2002). This importance has been mentioned before in studies on multicultural classrooms from the perspective of educational effectiveness (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Van der Werf & Weide, 1991), and prevention of student dropout (Aviles, Guerrero, Howarth & Thomas, 1999; Davalos, Chavez & Guardiola, 1999; Dekkers, et al., 2001; 2000; Jordan, Lara, & McPartland, 1996; Moore, 1994; Zea, Reisen, Beil & Caplan, 1997). The studies are, however,

rather vague on how to achieve such warm and supportive relationships in multicultural classes. We need more specific detailed descriptions of what teachers actually do to achieve such relationships and we think that an in-depth case study approach is a suitable method to collect such descriptions.

4. Design of the case study

4.1 Data and procedures

In this phase of our study data have been collected on one experienced, male History teacher in secondary education in one of his classes. This teacher was considered by the school principal and a teacher supervisor as an expert in teaching in multicultural classes. The data have been collected in an urban school with 90% students from ethnic minorities. The class of the teacher consisted of 27 students, most of them from Moroccan (16 students) and Turkish (6 students) backgrounds. The other students came form Italy (1), Vietnam (1) and The Netherlands (3), making it a truly multicultural class, however not a class with a clear divide between immigrants and native Dutch students. The class is equally distributed in terms of student gender and is a third year, intermediate general education class (students' age 15). In Dutch secondary education, three streams exist, representing a hierarchy of student ability: intermediate general education, higher general education and pre-university education. Intermediate general education has a four-year curriculum. The following data have been collected:

- two in-depth interviews with the teacher on his general educational attitudes and his expectations, and perceptions of and knowledge about individual students,
- a video recording of one lesson,
- a teacher stimulated recall interview about interpersonal and pedagogical teacher knowledge and attitudes in relation to the teaching strategies and actions in the videotaped lesson,
- students' and teacher's perceptions of the teacher-student relationship, gathered with the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI, Wubbels, et al., 1985; Wubbels & Levy, 1993).

4.2 Analyses

The *stimulated recall interview and in-depth interviews* were transcribed from audiotape. The interviews were then analysed both inductively and deductively. Inductively, statements were classified in themes that seemed to be recurrent and emerged from the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss, 1987). Deductively, concepts were used from the studies in the exploratory phase.

Evidence and support for the teacher's statements in the interviews was sought in the *videotaped lesson*. The videotaped lesson of the teacher was observed on a minute-to-minute basis, resulting in about sixty short descriptions of the verbal and non-verbal behaviour displayed. Non-verbal behaviour was described in terms of face (facial expression, position of the head), voice (volume, pace, intonation), body (use of arms, legs, bending, etc.), space (position in the classroom, distance to students) and eye-contact (see van Tartwijk, Fisher, Fraser & Wubbels, 1994). Verbal cues included type of feedback (positive or negative, aimed at student personality, behaviour or achievement), type of message sent (instruction, question, command, silence, e.g. Admiraal, Wubbels & Korthagen, 1996) and student reaction (on-task or off-task behaviour). For each one-minute observation, a short report was written describing main features of the teacher's verbal and non-verbal behaviour.

In order to get some indication of the effects of the teacher's strategies and actions for the learning environment, we have gathered data on the perceptions of students and teacher on this environment by means of the *Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI)*. The Dutch version of the QTI consists of 77 items which are answered on a five-point Likert scale. These items are divided into eight scales describing the teacher's behaviour concerning leadership, helpful/friendliness, understanding, giving students freedom and responsibility, uncertainty, dissatisfaction, admonishing and strictness. The scales are a representation of a two-dimensional theoretical framework for the teachers' interpersonal behaviour displayed in Figure 1, the *Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behaviour* of Wubbels et al. (1985). In the model two dimensions, *Influence* (Dominance-Submission) and *Proximity* (Opposition-Cooperation) structure the eight scales.
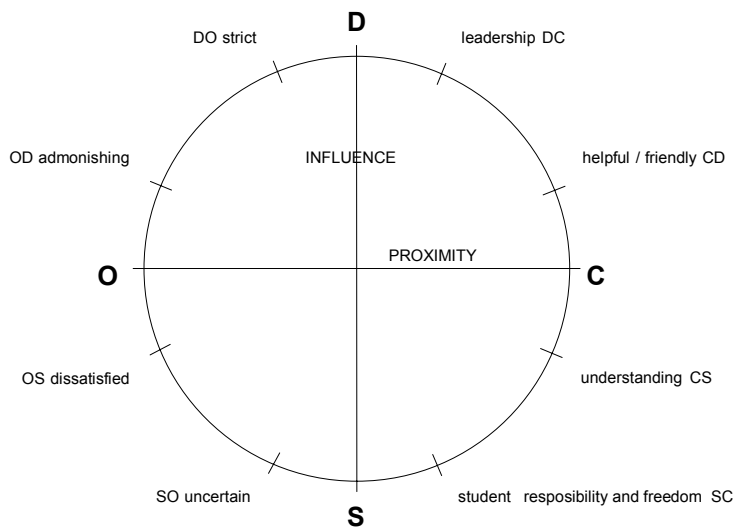
Figure 1. The Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behaviour
    D = dominance; S = submission; C = cooperation; O = opposition.

Several studies have proven the QTI's high reliability in terms of internal consistency of the scale scores and validity in terms of representation of the two dimensional model (e.g. Brekelmans, Wubbels & Créton, 1990; den Brok, 2001; Wubbels, et al., 1985; den Brok, et al., 2003; Wubbels & Levy, 1991). The internal consistencies (Cronbach's α) at class level are generally above .80. The agreement between the scores of students in a single class meets the general requirements for agreement between observer scores. The QTI has been translated into several languages and countries (den Brok, Fisher, Brekelmans, Rickards, Wubbels, Levy & Waldrip, 2003). Each completed questionnaire yields a set of eight scale scores. Scale scores of students from the class have been combined to a class mean.

After all data had been described and analysed by the second and third author of this manuscript in terms of the emerging themes, a third researcher, knowledgeable on teaching in multicultural classes, also reviewed the available data and constructed a set of themes as well. While analysis by this third researcher was less detailed than the analysis done by the first two researchers, similar themes emerged. Themes that emerged in both analyses were the importance of teacher verbal and nonverbal behaviour, how to praise or correct/punish students, dealing with group processes (negotiation, intense emotional reactions of students) and taking students' background into account in creating a good teacher-student relationship. Researchers approached the data differently: the first two researchers focussed on experiences and the teacher's strategies suggested to deal with these experiences, the third researcher analysed the data in terms of dilemmas (such as taking students background into account versus not taking it into account in correcting or praising them, adjusting to students versus not adjusting in negotiation processes, et cetera).

Also the teacher involved in the study verified results of the analyses in order to check for missing themes or invalid conclusions (member check, e.g. Miles & Huberman, 1994). The teacher indicated to agree with the analysis and found it to be an adequate representation of his experiences, skills and knowledge. He mentioned, however, several additional points that have been included in the following presentation of results.

Results are presented according to the categories from the exploratory phase of this study. For every category several themes are presented. For every theme we indicate with a number between brackets to what results from our exploratory study in Table 2 the theme is connected. In presenting the results, we start from the interview statements by the teacher. We will illustrate findings with quotes whenever we think this helps to clarify and specify teacher knowledge, attitudes or strategies and actions. We include evidence from videotape analysis on actual implementation of strategies and actions or evidence for lack of implementation, when applicable. If for a theme no videotape results are mentioned, then the tape doesn't provide evidence related to this theme. If applicable for a theme, expectations for the students' and teacher's perceptions of the interpersonal teacher behaviour will be brought up and be checked against the results gathered with the QTI.

5. Results of the case study

Before we present the themes, Figure 2 and Table 3 show the results gathered with the QTI that will be referred to in the following description of themes. For comparison in reasons table 3 also presents the QTI scores gathered from students on a randomly selected group of Dutch teachers (Brekelmans, 1989) further referred to as the average Dutch teacher. The students' perceptions of this teacher are high on scales in the upper-right quadrant of the model, indicating that his style can be characterized as highly dominant and cooperative. The teacher is perceived as moderately providing responsibility to students and moderately strict. The pattern resembles that of a *tolerant and authoritative* teacher (e.g. Brekelmans, Levy and Rodriguez, 1993). They provide the following description for such a teacher (Brekelmans, et al., 1993: 50). "Tolerant/authoritative teachers maintain a structure which supports student responsibility and freedom. They use a variety of methods, to which students respond well. They frequently organise their lessons around small group work. The tolerant/authoritative teacher develops close relationships with students. They enjoy the class and are highly involved in most lessons. Both teacher and students can occasionally be seen laughing, and there is very little need to enforce the rules. The teacher ignores minor disruptions, choosing instead to concentrate on the lesson. Students work to reach their own and the teacher's instructional goals with little or no complaints." In previous research (Levy, Créton & Wubbels, 1993) it has been shown that this type of teacher resembles very much the ideal that teacher have of themselves and the picture that students have of their best teachers. It has also been shown that such teachers are able to get both high student motivation and high student learning achievements (Brekelmans, 1989; Wubbels, Brekelmans & Hooymayers 1991). We therefore can conclude that this teacher is a good teacher.

Table 3.
QTI scales, typical item and the teacher's and students' perception scores for this teacher and on average for Dutch teachers based on thousands of students.

Scale	Typical item	Student perceptions		Teacher perception
		This teacher	Dutch average	
DC Leadership	S/he is a good leader	.82	.58	.80
CD Helpful/friendly	S/he is someone we can depend on	.78	.53	.77
CS Understanding	If we have something to say s/he will listen	.76	.59	.72
SC Student responsibility/ freedom	S/he gives us a lot of free time in class	.56	.46	.42
SO Uncertain	S/he seems uncertain	.35	.37	.25
OS Dissatisfied	S/he is suspicious	.24	.39	.36
OD Admonishing	S/he gets angry	.41	.49	.44
DO Strict	S/he is strict	.48	.36	.64

Note : scale scores range between 0 and 1.
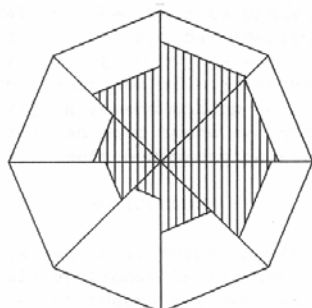
Students' perceptions   Teacher's perception

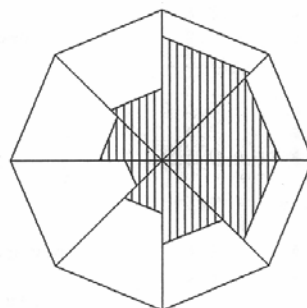

Figure 2. Graphical representation of QTI results of the teacher.

5.1 Monitoring and managing student behaviour
According to the teacher it is more difficult to manage student behaviour (e.g. setting rules and procedures and implementing them) in multicultural classrooms than in more homogeneous

classes. He mentions several causes for this. First, the teacher observed that students with a non-western background tend to respond in a much more *emotional* manner than native-Dutch students do. He acknowledges that, as a consequence, native-Dutch teachers may be more inclined to regard the students' interpersonal messages as personally offending or threatening, and consequently the potential for conflicts is higher than for conflicts with native-Dutch students and in culturally less diverse classes. Secondly, this teacher thinks that *peer group relations* are more prominent then with indigenous students and that especially status differences can play a role. Peer group leaders seem to be very important. Finally, the teacher feels that in the multicultural classroom for many students high grades are very important. This seems to be a result of a combination of the strong pressure from the home environment to achieve well and the importance of maintaining face in many collectivistic cultures (e.g. Hofstede, 1991). The teacher observes that consequently students more often try to *negotiate* with the teacher regarding procedures, their grades for work, feedback received or learning processes, corrections, punishments or tasks given. The teacher acknowledged that students with a non-western background interpreted some teacher behaviours (such as providing independence and responsibility, allowing for discussion, et cetera) as openness to negotiation, although the teacher did not meant them to. Also, teachers are more often confronted with their mistakes or errors. Considering these characteristics, several strategies are employed by the teacher to monitor and manage student behaviour. On the videotape we could see the success of these: during the lesson, students were on-task most of the time, off-task behaviour hardly occurred and usually only during lesson transitions.

5.1.1 Being in control in a central position (4, 6, 8, 10)
Whenever the teacher wants to address the whole class, he feels it is important to have a central position in class in order to foster a working environment. During these moments, it is important that the teacher is in full control of the flow of activities.

> "During such moments, you have to instruct them and to display authoritarian behaviour, because such moments are crucial. These determine the flow of activities for a longer period, and you can't use any distraction during these moments. The instruction should be clear to all at that time. I think I am more dominant during those short central moments, although I take a more supportive and submissive role when I help students during independent work afterwards."

When starting an activity, non-verbal behaviour should include raising ones head and standing upright, verbally indicating that you want to begin an activity.

> "If I start the lesson, I always take a central position in the middle of the classroom. I also literally turn myself towards the students. Walk away from my desk, take a step forward. I always fill myself with air, taking a more upright, standing position, putting my shoulders a little bit back. I also take a waiting position, make sure I have a serious face, almost forcing students in certain directions. […] And talk with a loud voice, when I want to start, so students know it is time to start with the lesson. I want them to be silent, and take my time waiting until they are. I want to have a hundred percent of attention, when I begin the lesson."

From the videotaped lesson we can see that when taking the central position in front of the classroom, the distance between teacher and students was several meters. The teacher varied neutral facial expressions and non-movement of arms and legs with small gestures at certain moments. These included smiling, positive nods and small movements of arms to indicate important content or ask for silence (see Figure 3). The teacher had a standing, upright position during most of the lesson. Also, the teacher had eye-contact with students for most of the lesson.

Figure 3. Nonverbal cues by the teacher.

Figure 4. Some video stills of the lesson with the teacher in 'touching distance' from students.

During the lesson, the teacher took a central position in front of the classroom when providing instructions on task or the lesson plan, whereas he moved between the students during independent or group seat work (see Figure 4). Verbally, apart from silence, it seemed the teacher used instructions or comments as the major type of message. The teacher kept a normal volume during most of the time, raising his voice only once and actually lowering the volume on several occasions. Most of the messages and communication were addressed to the whole class.

In terms of the QTI scales, we would expect this teacher to have a relatively high score on leadership and because of the use of praise, smiling and positive nods also on friendliness. Table 3 shows that this is indeed the case.

5.1.2 Cope with emotional conflicts (1, 5)
The teacher indicated that it is important to interpret emotional responses of students somewhat detached (not to get involved emotionally).

> "Some students can react in a very emotional manner, you have to be prepared for that. But there are differences between students. Sometimes, they use it as a goal, to reach something, because they notice that teachers are afraid of their emotional reactions or avoid conflicts with students. […] I always deal with the conflict, no matter what, but in the beginning it is very hard. But I try to take some emotional distance from their first reaction."

5.1.3 Small and early corrections (4, 6, 7, 10)
Prevention of order problems is important, and should constantly be on teachers' minds.

> "Every student has his own purpose to start disrupting the class. For one student, it may be a display of enthusiasm, such a student in fact is very much on-task, but is a little bit too loud in his reaction. Another student tries to disrupt a process more deliberately, you deal with such a disruption differently."

According to the teacher, the key in preventing order problems is to keep corrections small and of low intensity, thus indicating teacher with-it-ness (e.g. 'I see you are.'). The teacher told that in order to prevent escalating conflicts, whenever a student has broken a rule or displayed disruptive behaviour, some signal should be send, either verbally or nonverbally, that this behaviour was observed and considered to be a violation of the rules. Nonverbally, teachers should send a message of rest and control. This involves the use of small gestures (finger movements, nods, etcetera), gestures that can be easily recognized by students, such as lifting a finger to indicate

silence. It also involves frequent and constant use of facial expressions, such as eye-contact and maintaining a neutral or even serious face. Moreover, when speaking it seems preferable rather to lower ones volume than to raise it, because raising the volume often leads to raising the volume by students. Finally, when speaking, intonation should be clear and the tempo not too high.

> "I use eye-contact to maintain order, with students or the class. And a lot of small gestures, so no pointing but more subtle movements, just putting your finger against your mouth, or lifting your hand a bit."

To prevent emotional reactions that may spoil the working environment, this teacher not only wants to correct students with low-intensity behaviours, but he also sends - directly after punishment or correction - a positive message such as a joke, a smile or acknowledgement of changed behaviour. This may help students to maintain face and therefore react less emotionally.
In the videotaped lesson commands or 'bans on behaviour' occurred only a few times, as did short signals for silence like calling students' names. Nonverbally, corrections were uttered by small movements, such as eye-contact with students, putting a finger before the mouth, pointing at students or making a 'sst' sound when requesting silence (see Figure 5 for some examples).

Figure 5. Some small nonverbal corrections by the teacher.

Often, the teacher also repeated earlier agreements with students, both at the beginning and at the end of the lesson. Other interventions he uses when rules are broken are telling students what he notices when they break rules or disrupt the flow of activities, repeating important instructions and tasks, asking students to repeat questions and instructions and indicating to students which behaviours or answers are desired and expected.

> "In a conflict situation, there are differences in how students experience guilt. In the Western situation, you try to address the internal conscience that is your aim in correcting or punishing. If you punish a student, you want him or her to learn from it. You ask if someone is aware of what he or she has done. But, and this is a crude generalization, if you address a Moroccan or Turkish student, the first student reaction is denial: 'I did not do it'. Things that have not been observed, noticed or proven have not happened. In our Western perception, this evokes a lot of anger, because it is considered lying and that is a principal moral value. But you have to see it differently. So I speak to students and tell them I have noticed, or that I start from the assumption that he or she is guilty."

Sometimes, he shows students what consequences of their behaviour may be, without actually forbidding them (and thus allowing students choice and providing them with responsibility). Finally, the teacher thinks that teachers shouldn't be hesitant to show their feelings and emotions, when students have broken or harmed confidence and trust.
The actions mentioned under this theme indicate that we can expect that students will perceive this teacher as a strong leader and relatively strict, whereas his admonishing behaviour would be somewhat lower than on average. The data displayed in Table 3 confirm these expectations.

5.1.4 Relationship with peer leaders (1)
The relationship with leaders of the peer group is of particular importance for the relationship with the whole class, for example in the case of a conflict with a student of high social status in class he says:

"Because a conflict with one of the leaders in class has very different consequences. The moment I have a conflict with one of the leaders, and I send him to the principals office, so to speak, his sergeant will continue what the leader started, because the group has been harmed. So, it is important to deal with such possible consequences."

If the teacher has a conflict with a student of high status, he will approach the rest of the peer group to signal continuation of the relationship.

"If I send someone out, although it happens rarely, I always go to the other members of his or her social group, and start talking with them. I want to show: 'I have done this, but my relationship with the rest of you is still intact, and let's keep it this way.' So you almost seek the confrontation, but at a low level."

5.1.5 Negotiating with students (3, 9)
Frequent and intrusive negotiations may disrupt class processes and momentum, and may lead to loss of important learning time. The teacher therefore feels it is important (for teachers) to be competent negotiators. Providing sound reasons for judgements, grading, actions, rules etc. is important in a negotiation process. For example, when doing group work, it is important to provide reasons for students why they are grouped in specific configurations. In the negotiation process, it is important to listen to what students have to say and which arguments are given. This does not mean, however, that the teacher should give in; in fact, the teacher should stand behind his or her own judgement and decisions.

"Sometimes, they see me as the enemy. They start with 'you discriminate me', because you don't want to negotiate with them. If they say something like that, my reaction is very straightforward: 'yes, I am discriminating you, that is my job, isn't it, to discriminate you'. By taking it as a non-serious remark, even making it ridiculous, I show them that I don't appreciate such remarks. I approach such a student also after the lesson, to show him or her clearly when I consider the rules to be broken, which behaviours are not tolerated."

One way to achieve this is to make the decision itself something that is outside oneself or the student, something that is there and both parties have to deal with.

"I tell them what I see, and I am not going to discuss with them over it. The same is true for negotiation: I have made my point or given a grade and I have done it as good and as bad as possible. It is not open to discussion anymore. Unless they can prove that I have made a mistake in correcting, have not noticed anything or that something is open to other interpretations. But in general, a grade is fixed and not open to negotiation. Although from an interpersonal point of view I can talk very friendly about it, it is fixed nevertheless. And by doing so, I also make it an external factor. The grade is something that is fixed, that is not my product but something to look at together."

Moreover, it is important that teachers indicate what they think and how they feel about a decision, what student behaviours they have seen and base their reactions upon. Last, a strategy that may work according to the teacher is to partially reward students and show them that following directions or complying with requests of the teacher can provide the remainder of the reward.
In agreement with what was concluded under the theme 'small and early' corrections, we expect, based on the description of the negotiation processes, that students perceived this teacher relatively strict. Table 3 confirms this result.

5.2 Creating positive teacher-student (and peer) relationships
According to the teacher a warm, understanding and supportive relationship with students may be of greater importance in the multicultural class than in a less diverse classroom. Reasons for this that have already been mentioned may be the pressure from the home environment and the fear for loss of face. Another reason according to the teacher is the harsh environment many students find themselves in, in their neighbourhood, such as the peer groups in which they participate (constantly demanding them to establish their within-group status). According to the teacher, for many students the school is their 'safe haven', a safe place that provides some rest and structure lacking for them outside the school environment.

"The only thing you can give them is a place in which they do not have to prove themselves, like in the streets. Because on the streets, there is a 'macho culture',

in which they have to achieve constantly. Especially for the boys. And when they are at home, they are in fact between two cultures. They have parents that do have interest in school, but that lack the ability to approach school with a more in-depth approach."

As a consequence, the teacher feels it is important to try to establish a cooperative environment, in which students experience trust, confidence and interest in them. It is also important to provide a supportive climate and to maximize contact with students, in order to learn about them and their backgrounds. The teacher mentions several strategies that can be used for this end. One is to take in mind possible subjects or topics that might be sensitive, such as sexual issues, alcohol, certain food-related topics, et cetera. Teachers might warn students when sensitive topics are dealt with and provide some alternative in discussing them. We do not include this one in our analysis because we think this is rather content than an interpersonal strategy.

Several strategies mentioned in this section also play a role in other categories of competence, in particular managing student behaviour. Although strategies such as being in control, avoiding emotional conflicts, and preventing disorder, primarily focus at managing student behaviour, they also may contribute to a positive teacher-student relationship. For example, using small and early corrections helps students to maintain face and downplays the chance of aggression or aggravation of conflict situations and thus play a role in a positive interaction between teacher and student.

We now discuss other strategies that the teacher mentions and that primarily help for creating a positive teacher-student relationship. This means that, in terms of the Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behaviour, it can be expected that students perceive the teacher relatively friendly, helping and understanding. In Table 3, it can be observed that the students' scores about this teacher are indeed much higher than for Dutch teachers on average.

5.2.1 Rewards and compliments (14, 15)
A good relationship with the teacher might be stimulated by small verbal and nonverbal rewards, such as praise, a confirmative nod, a smile or a touch on the shoulder. This also includes such actions as welcoming students and having eye contact with them, when standing at the door at the beginning of the lesson. The teacher feels that physical reactions might be different from student to student, and the teacher agrees that one should always observe if such gestures are appreciated.

> "Physical approaches are very personal, one student likes it, and an other does not. As for myself, I am very physical, touch the shoulder, rub a knee. But I am very aware of how the student reacts to it. If you rub the knee and it goes up, you know it is not appreciated; they don't like it. If you place your hand on a shoulder and you feel the student avoiding contact, you know you should not do it. But some students get more relaxed, they are fond of it. […] and there is a difference between boys and girls. Boys are often more physical, it is almost their way of communicating, punching each other and stuff. As I am a male teacher, I approach the girls more in a verbal manner"

From the videotaped lesson we observed that the teacher showed frequent rewarding smiles and positive nodding. The teacher also had rewarding eye-contact with students often in the lesson. As mentioned, we see on the videotape that often the teacher in "touch-range" of the students, without actually physically touching them.

5.2.2 Re-establishing rapport (12)
As has been mentioned in the section on managing student behaviour, opportunities for conflict and interruptions are abundant and the occurrence of corrections can be relatively high in multicultural classrooms. When students are corrected or punished, this may corrupt the positive relationship. Students with a non-western background often may regard corrections as personal attacks and humiliation. After 'punishment' (which may include behaviours ranging from calling the student's name to sending students out of class) the teacher therefore always re-establishes the relationship with the student by means of a short student-teacher interview. Also, to the rest of the class it is shown that the relationship has been restored and that everything is 'back to normal' again.

> "What I always do, if there is an intense conflict, is that I, after the lesson, go to the student, if necessary, and talk with him or her about it. 'This is not allowed in my lesson. Do you understand why? If you have problems, how do I want you to solve them? To approach me.' You send the message that a nice relationship can be continued, if the student complies. You more or less confirm the relationship with the student. 'I was mad at you, but not any more, I want to help you'. […]

My role is to re-establish the relationship. The student can enter my lesson again. Because, such a student leaves the classroom with the idea that the relationship has been damaged. And that it happened publicly, in front of his or her classmates. I notice that if I don't speak to such a student, I also keep distance physically, nonverbally. Tension remains between us. And the class notices this, and is forced to do something with this tension. And that may result in new conflicts. […] If I didn't get the chance to speak to such a student before the next lesson starts, I take the student outside, even if this means chaos and mayhem for the students left in the classroom. I feel that repairing the relationship is extremely important, the student and I have to walk back into the class arm-in-arm, so to speak. We have to show, also to the rest of the class, everything is normal again, and you don't have to choose sides in this conflict any more. Because, a disturbed relationship with one student may lead to a disturbed relationship with the entire class. But it is also important that you show that you are in control of the situation, that you determine what is allowed and what is not."

5.2.3 Feedback (13, 14, 15)
Providing constructive and adequate feedback that is presented at the right moment might enhance trust and confidence in the teacher-student relationship. On the other hand, critical feedback cannot be avoided, but this may hurt the relationship and consequently obstruct safety. The teacher therefore wraps negative feedback between positive remarks.

"If you provide adequate feedback, you first say something nice. In fact, you confirm your good relationship with the other and give him some respect. After that you give your points of critique. And you always end with a positive remark, another confirmation of the relationship. This plays a role in Dutch communication, although it is of minor importance compared to Moroccan or Turkish culture."

The teacher also feels that when correcting students it is important to refer explicitly to the behaviour and not to the person. Rather than providing students with negative feedback, it might help to ask other students to join in and give assistance with respect to answering questions or completing tasks. When correcting or punishing a student, the teacher tries to compensate with a positive action, such as a joke, reward for compliance, et cetera.
In the videotaped lesson, we observed that the teacher varied in giving positive and negative feedback: although feedback was not given often (we only observed five instances during the lesson), the teacher sometimes provided personal and positive feedback; if negative feedback was given, this concerned student behaviour such as disruptions or off-task behaviour.

5.3 Teaching for student attention and engagement
The teacher notices first that many students in the multicultural class have *a short attention span*, which may easily lead to distraction and order problems. He feels that, as a consequence, teachers in the multicultural classroom tend to avoid techniques like whole-class discussion and co-operative learning. Not only do they seem to be afraid that those techniques might result in the 'street wise' students with a non-western background taking over control (by putting the volume of their messages before the content, for example), they also fear quite the opposite, that native-Dutch students have a language advantage and therefore may dominate discussions. According to the teacher, the short attention span is partially something general, that can also be seen with average Dutch students, but also something caused by problems related to the level of language comprehension and even by low expectations of teachers and others for non-indigenous students. Some strategies mentioned in section 5.1 about monitoring and managing student behaviour (e.g. helping student to focus on rational arguments and asking students to repeat questions and instructions) also help to promote student attention and engagement. The numbers in brackets in the next sections therefore also refer to that category.

5.3.1 Providing structured variety (16, 4, 6, 8)
To prevent attention problems, this teacher feels it is very important to provide students with a clear lesson structure and therefore to prepare a lesson very well, not only from a content, but also from a process point of view. In order to be able to provide structure it is also important to grade and correct tests and tasks with great care and very accurately. Such structure might be provided by a lesson plan on the blackboard (which activities will be completed during the lesson), by telling the students what will happen during the lesson and by reminding them several times during the lesson.

> "You make students responsible for the lesson, if you put the lesson plan on the blackboard. If I do, it is not only my process, but also a process for the students, things that have to be done during the lesson. […] It provides me with a sense of involvement. It think that also applies to students."

Also, he feels that a variety of tasks and classroom activities is important, including frequent and repeated central, whole-class moments.

> "I try to vary my teaching methods. I always plan some central moments. Those moments are needed to get some whole class attention. Such moments usually involve deadlines for tasks that students are working on. […]

An additional element that helps students to focus and be challenged is providing them with (short) deadlines or timelines.

> "I try to use time as an instrument, for building some challenge element. By providing some time pressure, they sense something else will start in the near future, so, it is important to act now, pay attention, et cetera."

Finally, this teacher wants purpose or goals of activities to be explicit and clear to students, particularly with respect to the short term. In this respect, short activities that aim at partial (end) products are to be preferred over longer activities that aim at one, all-inclusive end product.

> "I always tell students the purpose of tasks or teaching methods, why I want them to do something or why they cannot decide group compositions by themselves. Teachers often don't communicate their goals. If they do, students only know the long-term goals, but not why they have to do a certain task, why a certain teaching method is used. I think you should always be able to explain such things to the students."

From the videotaped lesson, it is clear that the teacher provides structure, although in this one lesson not all aspects mentioned in the interview were present. The lesson plan was put on the blackboard by the teacher and discussed with the students. The lesson consisted of a short lesson start; followed by an instruction on group work (ten minutes) and actual group work (20 minutes). The group task consisted of checking homework by means of answer sheets. After the group work ended, the teacher provided instruction on individual work, which was followed by a short period of individual work, consisting of reading a text passage in their book. The lesson ended with instruction on a short project students had to work on during the upcoming lessons. For this purpose, the teacher involved students at the beginning of the lesson in choosing group members for the project, based on their own perceptions of certain skills and characteristics, such as creativity and working with computers. Instructions, comments and tasks were given frequently.

5.3.2 Listen and probe (17, also attitudes and knowledge: 18, 19, 21, 22)
In order to be able to foster student attention and engagement teachers should connect to their students. They need to listen to stories and problems of students whenever possible, both with respect to their schoolwork as well as with things that are not related to school. This not only involves observation during classroom activities – the importance of group work as an opportunity of observation is mentioned -, but also speaking students after the lesson, in the hallways, contact students' parents.

> "I can only have respect for someone, if I know much about him, if I know his problems or issues. And that means a lot of talking. Sometimes, a conversation of two minutes is enough, and you can learn a lot in two minutes. There are important moments, when they enter class, when they are in the hallways, when they are working independently or in groups. During those moments you approach a group and observe them, even if they are talking about topics that are not related to the task or lesson. It is important not to end such conversations immediately, but just listen a short period, what are they talking about. […] A lot of listening to students and colleagues. When you are walking during a short break, if you walk pass a group, just greet them, make a short remark. They are also your students after your lesson, you are also interested in them outside the classroom. […] You observe them continuously. […] observing the reaction of a class, is something you do all the time. When you are giving instructions, you pay

attention to whom is listening, which students are off-task, start talking with their neighbours, are reading their agendas."

In the videotaped lesson we observed that, most of the time, the teacher moved between students' seats and took a non-central position. As a consequence, distance between the teacher and the students was small in many instances, often the teacher was in "touch-range" of the students (without actually physically touching them, see also Figure 4). Although he spoke during about half of the observed moments, there was plenty of time when the teacher was silent, listened to students or observed them. The teacher had many conversations with individual students or small groups and regularly varied with respect to the students addressed. Questions were asked on a regular bases.

In terms of the scales of the QTI, the previous description suggests that this teacher will be rather high on leadership and probably also on friendliness and understanding (the latter because of the possibility for students to choose). Table 3 shows that this teacher is seen much higher on these three scales than Dutch teachers on average are.

5.4 Required teacher attitudes and knowledge (18, 19, 21, 22, 24)
As can be seen from the foregoing, this teacher has a lot of practical knowledge (Meijer, 1999) about his students, for example about their emotionality, short attention span, the importance of peer leaders, et cetera. He seems to be aware of many of the multiple factors that are important for the learning environment in a multicultural classroom (24 in Table 2). From the list in Table 2, we only didn't find explicit reference in the interviews to the language problems and the authority problems for female teachers. The teacher's knowledge is partly based on observation, listening and probing of students, partly on reading about these children from non-western background and partly based on common folk knowledge or prejudices.

When discussing individual students seen on tape, the teacher seemed to know much about them individually, especially with respect to their performance and school career, main personality characteristics and background situation, such as influence of parents, brothers and sisters or other family members. The teacher also displayed knowledge on group structures in the class, status positions of individual students within and between these groups, as well as main group characteristics or changes in group memberships.

> "I think, if I know which problems or concerns are involved with what students,
> I can react adequately to each student. My concern is in the first approach to
> students. The background of the student plays, either conscious or
> unconscious, an important role in how I interact with a student, because it
> helps me in gauging the effects of my actions towards them."

The teacher also mentions the importance of awareness of classroom processes and the teachers own role in these. He acknowledges, for example, that gauging the effect of behaviours in a multi-interpretable environment is a skill that beginning teachers have to acquire in the new context of the multicultural classroom.

A comparison of the teacher's and students' scores on the QTI scales (Table 3) makes clear that the teacher has a pretty good sense of how he comes across and what effects his behaviour has on students. The teacher has a slightly lower perception of his strictness and a slightly higher perception of providing responsibility and freedom to students. Knowledge and sense of students' perceptions is regarded an important element of interpersonal competence in multicultural classes (e.g. Hajer, 2002; Ting-Toomey, 1999). When confronted with the report of his class and his self-perception on the QTI, the teacher indicates to recognise himself in the outcomes and reports on what he has learned reflecting on them.

> "Yes, yes... I recognise myself. If I look at myself, the way I am teaching, this is
> an adequate description. […] I think I was more cooperative and dominant [CD],
> although I have moved a little bit more to the dominant aspect lately. Despite the
> fact that I now use more methods to provide students with independent and self-
> directed learning. […] In the beginning, I felt being dominant and being
> cooperative as some kind of contradiction. But it also relates to the central
> moments in the lesson, during those moments you have to take a dominant
> position in order to get them to work independently."

Finally, rather than lower expectations, it seems for this teacher to be important to keep expectations high, keep good pace in the lesson and address students at their level of intelligence and achievement.

6. Discussion

This study investigated interpersonal teaching competence through focus group interviews with teachers who had a particular interest in the specifics of teaching in multicultural classrooms, followed by an in-depth study of one teacher who was considered to be an expert in teaching in multicultural classrooms. The results from this study are interesting in several respects.

First, we were able in the case study, to illustrate and refine many of the results from the focus groups that in their turn were confirmations and refinements of results from earlier studies on teacher interpersonal competence. The focus groups yielded an overview of teacher actions and strategies, attitudes and knowledge that might be important for teaching in multicultural classrooms. The statements in the case study reflecting the teacher's knowledge and cognitions were confirmed by observation from videotape, in particular with respect to nonverbal behaviour. We thus have described potential important aspects of teacher competence in a more detailed way. These aspects relate to managing student behaviour, creating positive teacher-student relationships, teaching for student attention and engagement and teacher knowledge and attitudes. They include for example being aware of the multiple factors that influence life in multicultural classrooms, being personally interested in every student and school and class social structures, being a strong leader, dealing with emotional reactions of students, negotiating with students, preventing distraction and off-task behaviour, and building trustful relationships. The teacher investigated in this study displayed several behavioural strategies and an elaborate knowledge base to deal with these issues. Many of these strategies consisted of variety in teach methods, the use of nonverbal behaviour and techniques to obtain knowledge regarding students' background. The themes and strategies found to be of importance with this teacher fit well into the existing knowledge base on interpersonal competence for the multicultural classroom (Derriks, et al., 2002; Hajer, 2002; Renkema, et al., 2000).

Second, the study results indicate that competence in teaching a multicultural class generally can be considered to be an aspect of generic teaching competence. We have compared the results presented in Table 2 and from the case study with elements of teacher competence mentioned in books on educational psychology (e.g. Woolfolk, 2001; Brophy and Good, 1986) and on teaching strategies (e.g. Freiberg and Driscoll, 2000). The aspects mentioned in our study have been mentioned before as important for good teaching in every classroom. This is particularly true for the importance of clear and structured lessons, of giving feedback and of correcting students. A more detailed analysis is possible to illustrate the connection between our results and those mentioned in studies on teaching strategies. For example, the comments on the theme of being in control are in line with the results of van Tartwijk et al. (1998) on the moments in class where the teacher is in a central position. During these moments, it is important that the teacher is in full control of the flow of activities. The importance of early and small corrections and of re-establishing rapport with students after corrections or problems is in line with the study of Créton, Wubbels and Hooymayers (1989) on escalating classroom situations. It is, however, our impression that the multicultural classroom puts heavier demands on the teacher competence than a less diverse classroom, e.g. because so many difficult factors are play a role simultaneously.

The conclusions of this study are based on a small-scale investigation and cannot be generalized. It is important to keep in mind that these refer to a multicultural classroom with only a few native Dutch students. Future research will have to be conducted to investigate if the elements of competence that seemed to be important in this study are a comprehensive set for the interpersonal aspect of teaching in multicultural classes. If this appears to be the case, then there are implications for teacher education programs. This study makes clear what knowledge and attitudes teacher candidates must have or acquire and what teaching strategies should be trained.

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