Tilburg University

An empirical study of interreligious classroom teaching

Kienstra, Natascha; van Dijk-Groeneboer, M.C.H.; Boelens, Olav

Published in:
REA Annual Meeting 2017 Proceedings

Publication date:
2017

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal

Citation for published version (APA):
Kienstra, N., van Dijk-Groeneboer, M. C. H., & Boelens, O. (2017). An empirical study of interreligious classroom teaching. In *REA Annual Meeting 2017 Proceedings: Learning in Encounter: Crossroads, Connections, Collaborations* (pp. 235-245) https://religiouseducation.net/papers/proceedings-REA2017.pdf

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 13. Jan. 2022

Natascha Kienstra[1,2], Monique van Dijk-Groeneboer[1], and Olav Boelens[1]
[1] Catholic School of Theology, Tilburg University, Utrecht, the Netherlands
[2] Radboud Teachers Academy, Radboud University (RU), Nijmegen, the Netherlands
N.H.H.Kienstra@uvt.nl

2017 REA Annual Meeting, Nov 3–5

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF INTERRELIGIOUS CLASSROOM TEACHING

Interreligious learning should overcome cultural and religious diversity in the classroom by changing perspectives. For this four contexts are important: auto-interpretation of one's own religious tradition, and of foreign traditions; allo-interpretation(s) of one's own tradition, and of foreign tradition(s). In the past empirical research in the Netherlands seemed to indicate that interreligious learning by students is not possible in the classroom. We will present an interreligious exercise and focus on empirical research into this exercise. Interreligious learning was examined by focusing on teaching; 24 religious and world view teachers (student teachers, school teachers and teacher trainers) took part in a workshop with this interreligious exercise for secondary schools and were interviewed afterwards. The largest part of the teachers discuss the own or foreign tradition from their own perspective. Half of the teacher trainers discuss the own tradition from the foreign perspective, and none of the teacher trainers discusses the foreign tradition from the foreign perspective. However, student teachers reached the highest level of interreligious learning and they use more perspectives in an inquiring and debating way of learning. We have an optimistic view that interreligious teaching needs more thorough training, though interreligious learning is problematic at multiple levels (teacher trainers, school teachers and students).

Key words

Interreligious classroom teaching, interreligious learning, religious diversity, activating exercise, dialogue, empirical study

INTRODUCTION

In classrooms in Dutch secondary schools we nowadays find cultural and religious diversity. The Netherlands is, like more western European countries, a pluralistic, multi-religious and secularised country. With its origin in Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, the Netherlands nowadays has high percentages for the Christian religion (40%; in the world 33%), for no religion (49%; in the world 12%), and much lower percentages for Muslim (5%; world 22%), Hindu (0.5%; world 14%), Buddhist (0.5%; world 7%) and 'other religion' (5%; world 12%) (see Johnsons & Grim, 2013, for world percentages; Schmeets & Mensvoort, 2015, for Dutch percentages).

However, when we look at the religious background of schools, it seems as if the secularization process is hardly taking place at all. In the Netherlands, most of the 655 secondary schools are confessional, being either Roman Catholic (153) or Protestant (133), with 184 public schools and 185 other non-public schools (Statistics Netherlands, 2016). But what does it mean to be a school with a religious denomination, e.g. being a Catholic school? Parents do not choose a school for its religious identity, but much more for its

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Copyright remains with the author.

accessibility and quality of education. In 2000, over 40% of non-religious parents chose a school with a religious identity, whereas 20% of religious parents chose public or non-confessional schools (Brenneman-Helmers, 2008, 24).

Van Dijk-Groeneboer and Brijan (2013) found, in a survey among students at confessional schools, that the main reasons to choose a school were location (40%), reputation (36%) and atmosphere (30%). The school's identity was seldom mentioned; only 8% of Christian students gave this as a reason. As it was possible to provide more than one answer to this question, these figures show that choosing a school based on confession did not often happen. Thus, in a Catholic school, large amounts of non-Catholic students will be present. A recent study among 1450 students in Catholic secondary schools (Van Dijk-Groeneboer & Brijan, 2013, 5; see also: Faber, 2012; Miedema, Bertram-Troost, ter Avest, Kom, & de Wolff, 2013) carried out in 2013 showed that 36% were Christian, 53.1% non-religious, 3.2% were Muslim, 0.8% Hindu, 0.1% Buddhist and 6.8% had another religion. The 36 % Christians consisted for 16% of Roman Catholics, with the other 20% being Protestant or of another Christian faith. When teaching religious education at a catholic school like this, teachers have to be aware that most students are not religious, especially not Roman Catholic, and therefore often know little about the Roman Catholic faith, tradition, rituals and so on. Still, when directly asking the students whether they call themselves religious a third confirms they do. These are explicitly not just Christian students; there are students who call themselves Christian who not confirm themselves to be religious. Moreover, students who proclaim not to be a church member or part of any other worldview say they are religious.

Having such a pluralistic population inside the classroom, thereby adding that most of the students who call themselves protestant, catholic or Muslim hardly know what it really means to *be* religious, a religious education teacher has a lot of work to do. Mono-religious education is obviously quite impossible dealing with this diversity. Multi-religious classroom teaching of course is a possibility often chosen in public schools. Teaching is *about* religions, in a broad perspective and without learning about the functional dimension of religion for people, because there hardly are any experiences inside the classroom. We consider this as teaching too much from a distance, and therefore plead for interreligious classroom teaching.

Interreligious learning has his own challenges, as Pollefeyt (2007) calls them. What exactly are the goals of interreligious learning? Is interreligious learning only to take place in the classroom or also in the entire school as an institution? With what theological presuppositions interreligious learning has to deal, e.g. the religious truth claims? What kind of teacher is needed for realising interreligious learning? Is the knowledge of their own religious tradition sufficient for students to participate in an interactive learning process? How does interreligious learning relate to the identity of the school? How does interreligious learning take place in a pluralistic classroom, e.g. with atheists in it, and with groups of students having the same religious background? Which pedagogical principles are supportive for interreligious learning, e.g. dialogue, hermeneutics, deduction and induction? Which didactical instruments are needed to realise the goals of interreligious learning? How can interreligious learning be evaluated, thinking of the skills, attitudes and insights?

Religious education is meant to offer topics to the students that help them consider questions like whether they are religious human beings, and what it means to belong to a religious tradition. Learning experiences in the classroom must provide these kind of experiences by entering a narrative dialogue, where the teacher as well as the students tell their personal, biographical stories. Exchanging these stories in a genuine way is significant to the stories of each of them and to every one of them. Then we can state that there has actually been religious-thinking-through (Kienstra, Van Dijk-Groeneboer, & Boelens, 2016). An interreligious dialogue is possible only when the differences between dialogue partners are accepted and the focus shifts towards what is connecting them; such as hope, love, friendship. Then a genuine dialogue can take place and interreligious learning can be fruitful.

It is often said that religious education should contribute to overcoming cultural and religious differences. Thus interreligious learning has become a new branch in religious education (Roebben, 2015, 60). However, earlier empirical research in the Netherlands seemed to indicate that interreligious learning by students is not possible in the classroom (Sterkens, 2001). In the discussion of his results Sterkens (2005, 87) suggested, among others, that this may be caused by the teacher teaching the Islamic tradition mostly from the Christian perspective, because he is not sufficiently able to teach from the perspective of the Islamic tradition. In the Netherlands this has not yet been investigated empirically.

The affective and attitudinal prerequisites for the development of a religious self that consists of multiple perspectives, could be enhanced by a interreligious curriculum aimed at changes of perspectives and interpersonal exchanges of ideas (compare Sterkens, 2005, 85). In the context of the Catholic School of Theology, van Dijk-Groeneboer, Boelens, and Kienstra (2017) developed teaching materials intended to approach the foreign tradition from the perspective of this foreign tradition (instead of a teacher's own tradition). They also investigated the teachers' interreligious learning.

In line with the previously mentioned study we integrate the effects of interreligious learning and the contexts for changes of perspectives. Thus four perspectives are important (Sterkens, 2005, 70). The first perspective is the *auto-interpretation of one's own religious tradition*, for example: a Christian reflects on his own Christian tradition. The second perspective is the *auto-interpretation of foreign religious traditions*, for example: a Christian looks at the Islam as a Christian. The third perspective is (are) the *allo-interpretation(s) of one's own tradition*, for example: a Christian interprets or criticizes the Christian tradition from the perspective of the Islamic tradition. The fourth and final perspective is (are) *the allo-interpretation(s) of foreign tradition(s)*, for example: a Christian shifts his perspective to that of the Islamic tradition and reflects on the Islamic tradition.

A NEW EXERCISE: AN INTERRELIGIOUS PASSPORT

On the 17th and 18th of January 2017 a conference took place in the Netherlands about orthodoxy and fundamentalism in religious and world view education. In this conference we twice gave a workshop to teachers to guide them in developing an interreligious teaching practice. A third workshop was given to student teachers. During the 2016–17 academic year, these student teachers were enrolled in a methodology course of religious education at the first authors' university. The workshops dealt with making their own passport and using it in dialogues. The activating exercise *Passport: Let's talk about the real stuff* was embedded in a theological discourse (note, not in a religious studies discourse, see Baumfield, 2002). Each individual elaborated an interreligious encounter passport. These passports were first discussed in smaller groups and then in a plenary evaluation. The preparatory material that we had developed was conveyed to the teachers in such a way that they could use it immediately in their classroom (Imants & Oolbekkink, 2009).

The procedure employed for the exercise *Passport: Let's talk about the real stuff* ran as follows. First there is an introduction about an assignment that is usually given for the school subject: "Create a world view passport, containing the following elements: name, age, place of residence, composition of family, faith, friends, hobbies, three nicest television shows, favorite music, my best quality, a less good quality, I can really be happy with, I want to become later, what I like about this school, which I like less". Then the exercise is embedded in a theological discourse. An interreligious encounter passport is being prepared and the most essential elements of it are discussed in the classroom. These elements are values, stories and role models, who am I inside, who do I want to be and why? Subsequently the students are asked: “Above you can see an example of a world view passport. You have to write another passport yourself: an interreligious encounter passport. Please write them on this worksheet.”

The worksheet then starts with individual thinking: “Create an interreligious encounter passport, containing the following elements: name; age; What kind of work do you / Where do you work; What's in your backpack of personal experiences, what do you take with you from your biography; What is your faith? What does your answer mean.” After this there is time for a dialogue in a small group: “For example, how do you, as a Christian, view your own Christian tradition? How do you, as a Christian, look at Islam, for example? How would you look at your own Christian tradition from the Islamic tradition? As a Christian, how do you view Islam from the Islamic tradition? Which aspects do you particularly address in religion (Biblical stories, rituals, insights, figures from church history, etc.)? Please be specific here. How does this backpack affect your interests? What expertise do you have in your backpack for the backpack of students?” This worksheet ends with a plenary evaluation: “How do you prevent conflict, racism? Is this passport finished? What have you learned: did you learn to listen and to express yourself?” Using a questionnaire we interviewed the teachers at the end of the workshop about the way and the level they had learned, and which perspectives they adopted.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Questionnaire

In questionnaires 24 religious and world view teachers (6 student teachers, 5 Christian and 1 skeptic; 12 school teachers, 10 Christian and 2 no religion; 4 teacher trainers, all Christian; and 2 with an unknown status, with one Christian) indicated when they expressed themselves most explicitly about religion: during the instruction, the thinking about and writing of their own interreligious encounter passport; or during the dialogues in the smaller groups and in the plenary evaluation.

The religious and world view teachers also indicated which way of learning fitted most closely to the exercise that was used. Following Kienstra, Karskens, and Imants (2014) and Kienstra et al. (2016) we distinguished three ways of learning. These approaches are learning through narratives and conversations (connective truth finding, CTF), learning through inquiry (test-based truth finding, TTF), and learning through juridical debate (JD).

They were also asked which perspectives were discussed in the dialogues in the smaller groups and in the plenary evaluation, i.e. an auto own tradition, auto foreign traditions, an allo own tradition, and allo foreign tradition(s).

Last, it was asked what level of interreligious learning was reached by the teachers in the dialogues. To qualify such levels, higher-thinking skills were adopted (compare Baumfield, 2003, i.e., evaluation, critique, thinking about one’s thinking). These levels entail testing, producing criticism, and reflecting, where reflecting is the highest level (Kienstra et al., 2014; Kienstra, Imants, Karskens, & van der Heijden, 2015).

Consent forms were distributed to teachers to sign (see American Psychological Association, 2003, *as amended* 2010, 10). The teachers were informed about (1) the purpose of the research; (2) their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research (one teacher withdrew after the workshop, in the interview); and (3) whom to contact for questions about the research.

Individual results

Table 1 presents the descriptive findings for the 24 teachers. The topics in the table follow the order they had in the questionnaire.

In the last column of Table 1 we find that teachers state that, for the Design variable approaches, learning through narratives and conversations (CTF) is realized most often (22 out of 24 times), and learning through inquiry (TTF) and learning through debate (JD) less often (3 and 4 out of 24 times). Notice that some teachers used more than one approach.

Only two teachers state that all four Perspectives, *auto own tradition, auto foreign traditions, allo own tradition* and *allo foreign tradition(s)*, are realized in their workshops (teachers 4 and 22), and another four teachers see three perspectives in their workshops (teachers 7, 20, 23 and 24). The other teachers state that less than three perspectives are found. In the last column of Table 1 we find that 'auto own tradition' is observed most often (18/24), followed by 'auto foreign traditions' (16/24). The two other perspectives appear much less often ('allo own tradition', 6/24, and 'allo foreign tradition(s)', 6/24). We did not find an order in the perspectives, i.e., we did not find that observing one specific perspective implies finding another specific perspective.

W.r.t. Interreligious learning by teachers, *testing, producing criticism* and *reflecting*, we distinguish 'testing', from the latter two, which are higher-order levels. 'Testing' appears less often (3/24) than 'making criticism' (4/24) and 'reflecting' (9/24). Thus higher-order levels are mentioned by more than half of the teachers (13/24). For the three teachers mentioning 'testing' the level of learning is adequate. Seven teachers did not indicate any of the three levels, with leaves us with an ambiguous interpretation that it is unclear whether the highest level reached by them is lower than 'testing', or that they missed this question for other reasons (for example fatigue, it was the last question in the questionnaire).

When we compare the realizations of the four variables, the Design variable is realized most often (23 times at least one approach is used), followed by the auto Perspectives (18 and 16 times), followed by Interreligious learning of a higher-order level (13 times). Realization of the allo Perspectives seems most difficult (6 and 6 times). The variable Perspectives has to do with the domain specific context. On the one hand the interreligious perspectives were sufficiently clear to the teachers and it is likely that the teachers are working from their own Christian tradition. On the other hand, the teachers are less often referring to the foreign tradition from the perspective of this foreign tradition, and to their own tradition from the foreign perspective.

Comparative case study

We adopt a mixed-methods comparative case study methodology (Yin, 2014), wherein teachers are compared. This comparative case study is carried out by analyzing Table 1 with the quantitative tool correspondence analysis (CA, Greenacre, 2007; compare Kienstra & van der Heijden, 2015, and Kienstra, Van Dijk-Groeneboer, and Boelens, 2016). Correspondence analysis (CA) is a popular statistical tool for a graphical, descriptive representation of data, in particular categorical data, in a multidimensional space. It will help us in comparing teachers.

Table 1

Descriptive findings for Context variable, Design variable, Perspectives and Interreligious learning by teachers

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Total
I. Context variable																									
Teacher characteristics																									
Student teacher	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
School teacher	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Teacher trainer	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
II. Design variable																									
Approaches																									
Connective truth finding (CTF)	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	22
Test-based truth finding (TTF)	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Juridical debate (JD)	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	4
III. Perspectives																									
Auto/allo of own/foreign tradition(s)																									
Auto own tradition	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	-	0	1	1	1	1	1	18
Auto foreign traditions	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	16
Allo own tradition	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	-	-	0	1	0	1	0	1	6
Allo foreign tradition(s)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	6
IV. Interreligious learning by teachers																									
Highest level reached																									
Testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Producing criticism	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Reflecting	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	9

In the graphical representation of teachers, teachers (rows in Table 1) that are close in proximity indicate similarity and the presence of levels of common variables. Likewise, columns that are close in proximity denote the presence of similar variable levels, and thus indicate that they were used by the same teachers. Hence, the graphical representations of the teachers (rows) and levels (columns) are closely related. Apart from a scaling factor, the teachers are included in the mean of the levels used by them, and the levels are included in the mean of the teachers in which they were used.

Table 1 was analyzed using correspondence analysis (CA). We made minor adjustments by recoding the four perspectives into variables counting the number of times auto, allo, own and foreign were used. For example, teacher 1 has scores 2 on auto, 0 on allo, 1 on own and 1 on foreign. This recoding makes it easier to interpret the four perspectives in Table 1 in terms of the two variables (auto/allo and own/foreign) that make up these perspectives. In Figure 1, each variable is placed on a separate horizontal line, beginning with teacher characteristics and ending with the highest level. There are separate lines for auto/allo and for own/foreign. The 24 scattered dots along the bottom line represent the teachers.

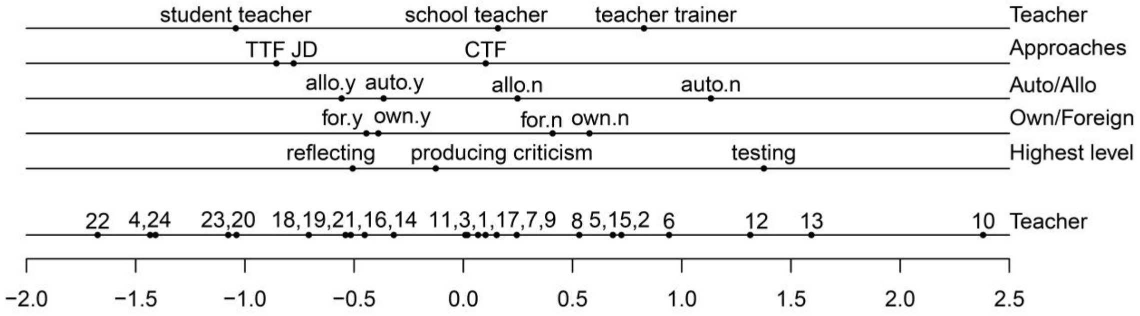

Figure 1. First dimension of the CA of Table 1.

Overall, the dimension displayed in Figure 1 distinguish more effective teachers on the left from less effective teachers on the right. Teachers on the left (the lowest line indicates that these are teachers 22, 4, 24, 23, 20, and so on) have more often as highest level of interreligious learning ‘reflecting’, they mention more often perspectives including ‘foreign’ (label for.y), ‘own’ (own.y), ‘allo’ (allo.y) and ‘auto’ (auto.y). They mention the approach TTF and JD relatively more often. They turn out to be the student teachers.

On the other hand, teachers on the right (teachers 10, 13, 12, 6, 2 and so on) indicate as highest level ‘testing’, and they less often mention ‘own’, ‘foreign’, ‘allo’ and ‘auto’ (indicated by labels ending with .n). Among these teachers CTF is found relatively more often, and among these teachers the teacher trainers are overrepresented.

The two most extreme teachers (in terms of effectiveness) serve as examples to clarify the CA. Excerpts from the most-effective teacher (i.e., 22), which was a student teacher, follow.

Student teacher 22: The most effective

Questionnaire responses from this student teacher are described below.

The questionnaire contained a question concerning when a teacher expressed himself most explicitly about religion: during the instruction, the thinking about and writing of their own interreligious encounter passport; or during the dialogues in the smaller groups and in the plenary evaluation.

- This student teacher wrote: “During the dialogues in the smaller groups and in the plenary evaluation”.

The questionnaire contained a teacher-behavior question “What did your workshop leader do during the exercise, how did she support what happened?”.

- This student teacher wrote: “[The workshop leader] was giving space to participants to express themselves”.

Other remarks:

- “Thus you better get to know yourself and the position of others”.

Teacher trainer 10: The least effective

Teacher trainer 10 was the least effective. The following are responses from this teacher on the questionnaire.

The answer to the question concerning when a teacher expressed himself most explicitly about religion: during the instruction, the thinking about and writing of their own interreligious encounter passport; or during the dialogues in the smaller groups and in the plenary evaluation.

- This teacher trainer wrote: “During the dialogues in the smaller groups and in the plenary evaluation”.

The answer to the teacher-behavior question “What did your workshop leader do during the exercise, how did she support what happened?”.

- This teacher trainer wrote: “[The workshop leader] was giving little guidance”.

Other remarks:

- “Not enough time”.

DISCUSSION

The results raise a number of questions. First, in this study, teachers were examined in various learning contexts among different workshop groups. However, the obvious question is whether the results for the six student teachers, 12 school teachers, and four teacher trainers generalize to other teachers? We consider this question by focusing on the summary of the results as displayed by the correspondence analysis. An important feature of this analysis is that there are teachers where the highest level reached was reflecting, and teachers where the highest level reached was testing. The display shows, for example, that reflecting goes together with student teacher, auto own tradition, auto foreign traditions, allo own tradition and allo foreign tradition(s) and debating (JD). Testing goes together with school teacher and teacher trainer, the absence of the four perspectives and learning through narratives and conversations (CTF). These relations observed for the student teachers fit with the theoretical perspectives of using higher-thinking skills in religious education (Baumfield, 2003), and the effectivity of discussion (Hattie, 2012) and debating (Kienstra et al., 2015). For this reason we expect that the positive results for the six student teachers will generalize to other student teachers, and that the less positive results for the school teachers and the teacher trainers will generalize to other school teachers and teacher trainers. We acknowledge that we can only be certain about this by doing further research. The methodology used in our study is already well established, and future research requires data from a larger sample of teachers.

Second, how can we interpret that student teachers appear to be more effective? For example, the most effective teacher 22 is a student teacher and we consider his responses in the questionnaire to be a good example of interreligious learning and engagement. However, notice that the younger age of a student teacher can be the explanatory factor, but also the period in which younger people have grown up, i.e., the cohort they are in. American (Putnam, 2007) and Dutch sociological research (Engbersen, Snel, & 't Hart, 2015) found in longitudinal research that there is less engagement among early ethnically less diverse groups, there is more engagement among more recent ethnically diverse groups, and there is less engagement among the current ethnically more diverse groups. If we link this with the age cohorts of the teachers and the immigration movements in the Netherlands, then school teacher and teacher trainers could belong to the cohort of early ethnically less diverse groups (less engagement goes along with fewer perspectives and fewer effective interreligious learning) and student teachers to more recent ethnically diverse groups (more engagement goes along with more perspectives and more effective interreligious learning). If this interpretation is correct, then the challenge lies in the contemporary students who belong to current ethnically more diverse groups where there is possibly less engagement. Precisely where the interreligious problems and therefore the need for active engagement is the greatest, relatively few students are engaged.

Similarly, if we compare our study with the study of Sterkens (2001), we find a comparable interpretation problem. I.e., Sterkens studied primary education in 2001 where we studied secondary education in 2017. Where Sterkens had difficulty to accomplish interreligious learning, this may be due to the cohort and, roughly speaking, the cohort of pupils of Sterkens in 2001 is the current group of students now.

Third, Kienstra et al. (2015) found that connective truth finding (CTF) is not always the most effective truth-finding method. In a later small-scale study (Kienstra et al., 2016), students learned most effectively using CTF through a form of debate during a bibliodrama exercise. A bibliodrama exercise as well as an interreligious exercise can be categorized as a CTF approach (Van Dijk-Groeneboer et al., 2017). In the study we discuss in this paper, teachers learned most effectively during an interreligious exercise (CTF) through a form of debate. Connective truth finding (CTF) could be effective because the connective truth finding (CTF) approach goes along very well with religious education.

Finally, w.r.t. teacher behavior, the student teacher 22 reports in the questionnaire that the workshop leader was 'giving space'. Would this explain the effectivity of the workshop leader? More research is needed to study this, but in another study we also found that the specific contribution of an effective religion teacher is to show understanding, give space and listen (Kienstra et al., 2016). In a recent empirical study into a related area, democratic citizenship education, Schuitema, Radstake, van de Pol, and Veugelers (2017, 26)

> "… underline the importance for teachers to think carefully about what they want to achieve with a classroom discussion, and to be aware of the different ways they can conduct a classroom discussion, the different roles they can take, and what the consequences of their behavior may be for how the discussion proceeds. A discussion aiming to confront students with different perspectives on controversial issues may demand a different approach from a discussion that aims to foster authentic discussion among students."

We agree with these authors that teacher behavior is an important topic for further research.

CONCLUSIONS

The results from the questionnaire show that the largest part of the teachers discuss the own or foreign tradition from their own perspective. Sterkens (2005) suggested that interreligious learning by students may not be not possible in the classroom because teachers teach the Islamic tradition mostly from the Christian perspective, as they are not sufficiently able to teach from the perspective of the Islamic tradition. Our findings are in line with

Sterkens suggestion. Even though we present an interreligious exercise to the teachers, almost all of them did not make use of the four auto-allo of own-foreign perspectives. An optimistic view is that interreligious teaching needs a more thorough training than we offered to the teachers, using only a single workshop. We have an optimistic view because two teachers *were* reporting that the four perspectives were used.

Other results from the questionnaire are that halve of the teacher trainers discuss the own tradition from the foreign perspective, and that none of the teacher trainers discusses the foreign tradition from the foreign perspective. This may be why interreligious learning by students is not possible in the classroom: when teacher trainers are not able to take the foreign perspectives, how can we expect the school teachers to do so? And when school teacher are not able to take the foreign perspectives, how can we expect students to do so? We conclude that we bump up cultural and religious diversity in classrooms, because interreligious learning is problematic at multiple levels (teacher trainers, school teachers and students).

In the context of curriculum studies, this study also illustrates a gap between the intended and the attained curriculum (McKenney & Reeves, 2012, 139). The Passport exercise was meant to bridge this gap. However, we were not able to bridge this gap in a single workshop. Given that the teachers differed in the number of perspectives they reported, we expect that more training will produce better results. More exercises like this can be used in training school teachers, and in designing new lesson materials in religious and world view education.

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association (2003, as amended 2010). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct.* Washington, APA.

Baumfield, V. 2003. "Democratic RE: Preparing young people for citizenship." *British Journal of Religious Education*, *25*(3), 173-184.

Baumfield, V. 2002. *Thinking through religious education*. Cambridge: Chris Kington.

Brenneman-Helmers, H. M. 2008. "Vijftien jaar onderwijsvernieuwingen in Nederland." *Parlementair onderzoek Onderwijsvernieuwingen, Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 31* 007 nr.7. Den Haag: Staatsdrukkerij.

Engbersen, G., Snel, E., & 't Hart, M. 2015. *Mattheüs in de buurt: over burgerparticipatie en ongelijkheid in steden*. Rotterdam: Kennis Werk Plaats Leefbare Wijken.

Faber, M. 2012. *Identity dynamics at play.* A theoretical and empirical analysis of the concept 'religious identity of a school' within a religiously diverse context in the Netherlands. PhD-thesis. Utrecht: Utrecht University.

Greenacre, M. (2007). *Correspondence analysis in practice* (2nd ed.). Boca Raton: CRC.

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers. Maximizing impact on learning.* London/New York: Routledge.

Imants, J., & Oolbekkink, H. (Eds.) 2009. *Leren denken in de schoolvakken.* Antwerpen: Garant.

Johnsons, T.M., & Grim, B. J. 2013. *The world's religions in figures.* Malden/Oxford: John Wiley and Sons.

Kienstra, N., Dijk-Groeneboer, M. van, & Boelens, O. 2016. "Religious-thinking-through using bibliodrama: An empirical study of student learning in classroom teaching." In: *Conference proceedings world congress religious education*. Pittsburg.

Kienstra, N., Imants, J., Karskens, M., & Van der Heijden, P. G. M. 2015. "Doing philosophy effectively: Student learning in classroom teaching." *PLOS ONE* 10(9): e0137590. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0137590.

Kienstra, N., Karskens, M., & Imants, J. 2014. “Three approaches to doing philosophy: A proposal for grouping philosophical exercises in classroom teaching.” *Metaphilosophy, 45*(2), 288-319.

McKenney, S., & Reeves, T. C. 2012. *Conducting educational design research.* Oxon: Routledge.

Miedema, S., Bertram-Troost, G., ter Avest, I., Kom, C., & de Wolff, A. 2013. “Scholen zonder kerk.” In: *Ontkerkelijking…nou en? Themanummer Religie en Samenleving 8*(1), 184-205.

Pollefeyt, D. 2007. “Introduction”. In: D. Pollefeyt (Eds.), *Interreligious learning* (x-xxv). Leuven: Peeters.

Putnam R. D. 2007. “E pluribus unum. Diversity and community in the twenty-first century: The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture.” *Scandinavian Political Studies 30*(2), 137-174.

Roebben, B. 2015. *Inclusieve godsdienstpedagogiek. Grondlijnen voor levensbeschouwelijke vorming*. Leuven: Acco.

Schmeets, H., & van Mensvoort, C. 2015. *Religieuze betrokkenheid van bevolkingsgroepen*. Den Haag/Heerlen: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

Schuitema, J., Radstake, H., van de Pol, J., & Veugelers, W. 2017. “Guiding classroom discussions for democratic citizenship education.” *Educational Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/03055698.2017.1373629.

Statistics Netherlands, Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. 2016. Den Haag/Heerlen: Statline (last accessed 9 December 2016).

Sterkens, C. 2005. “Multireligiositeit als voorwaarde voor effectief interreligieus onderwijs? Empirische resultaten vanuit een sociaal-constructivistisch perspectief.” In: *Interreligieus leren op de basisschool. Perspectieven op vakontwikkeling en schoolontwikkeling*, 61-93. Budel: Damon.

Sterkens, C. 2001. *Interreligious learning: the problem of interreligious dialogue in primary education.* Leiden: Brill.

Van Dijk-Groeneboer, M., Boelens, O., & Kienstra, N. 2017. *Geïnspireerde lessen. Vakspecifieke werkvormen voor onderwijs in godsdienst en levensbeschouwing***.** Tilburg University: PrismaPrint.

Van Dijk-Groeneboer, M., & Brijan, B. 2013. *Kerk uit zicht? Jongeren inspireren!* Utrecht: Faculteit Katholieke Theologie.

Yin, R. K. 2014 (1st ed. 1993). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.