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## Integrating Theory and Practice

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*Published in:*  
L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature

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

*Publication date:*  
2008

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
van Veen, K., & van de Ven, PH. (2008). Integrating Theory and Practice: Learning to teach L1 language and literature. *L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 8(4), 39-60.

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# INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE

Learning to teach L1 language and literature

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**Abstract.** Against the background of the central dilemma in teacher education of the relationship between theory and practice, this article presents a teacher education approach that strongly emphasizes the use of theory in learning to teach, on the assumption that teaching is also an intellectual activity, and not simply 'practice'. We take the subject pedagogy, in this case of Dutch language and literature, as a starting point for our approach to teacher education, in an effort to align it as closely as possible with key educational theories. Furthermore, we encourage our students to engage in reflection informed by the theories they have been reading: discourses concerning different aspects of teaching and learning, resulting in instrumental, academic, and critical reflection. Therefore, we present a theoretical framework that is used by our student teachers to understand and examine their teaching. This approach can be summarized in the final task asked of our student teachers: an analysis of their own teaching, using key incident analysis. To illustrate, we describe and illustrate the work of Jennifer, a student teacher.

**Keywords:** teacher education, theoretical frame for learning to teach, subject pedagogy, reflection

## Chinese

[Translation Shek Kam Tse]

理论结合实践

学习教授第一语言与文学

理论与实践之间的矛盾关系，长期以来构成教师培训的重要问题。在这样的背景之下，这篇文章勾勒出一种教师教育的方法，强调教学过程中的理论运用。其假设为：教学是一项知识性的活动，而不只是“实践”。我们以荷兰语言与文学的教学法为起点，试图将我们的教师教育方法，与重要的教育理论进行匹配与对应。此外，我们也鼓励我们的学员，利用他们所学习的理论来进行反思。这些理论关系教学与学习的各个环节，促成了工具性、学术性与批判性的反思。由此，

*Van Veen, K., & Van de Ven, P.H.(2008). Integrating theory and practice. Learning to teach L1 language and literature. L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature, 8(4), p. 39-60.*

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我们提出了学员用以理解与审视自身教学的理论框架。我们以学员的最后一项任务——通过关键事件分析法来审视自我教学，总结这个方法，并对一位学员的成果进行了描述。

#### **Dutch**

[Translation Tanja Janssen]

TITEL: Het integreren van theorie en praktijk; Het leren onderwijzen van taal en literatuur in L1 SAMENVATTING. Het centrale dilemma in de lerarenopleiding is de relatie tussen theorie en praktijk. Tegen de achtergrond van dit dilemma schetsen wij in dit artikel een benadering van de lerarenopleiding waarbij het gebruik van theorie in het leren onderwijzen sterk benadrukt wordt, uitgaande van de vooronderstelling dat onderwijzen een intellectuele activiteit is, en niet slechts 'praktijk'. Als uitgangspunt voor onze benadering nemen we de vakdidactiek van het schoolvak Nederlands, die we proberen zo nauw mogelijk te laten aansluiten bij centrale onderwijstheorieën. Een tweede uitgangspunt is dat reflectie in de opleiding gebaseerd moet zijn op theorie, op discoursen over verschillende aspecten van leren en onderwijzen, wat moet resulteren in instrumentele, academische en kritische reflectie door de student. We presenteren daarom een theoretisch raamwerk dat door onze leraren-in-opleiding gebruikt wordt om hun eigen onderwijs te begrijpen en te onderzoeken. Onze benadering wordt samengevat in de eindopdracht die wij van onze studenten vragen: een analyse van hun eigen onderwijs, aan de hand van sleutelincidenten. Ter illustratie beschrijven wij het werk van Jennifer, een leraar in opleiding. TREFWOORDEN: lerarenopleiding, didactische theorie, vakdidactiek, reflectie

#### **Finnish**

[Translation Katri Sarmavuori]

TITTELI: Teorian ja käytännön integrointi. L1 kielen ja kirjallisuuden opettamaan oppiminen ABSTRAKTI: Opettajankoulutuksen keskeisen pulman, teorian ja käytännön yhdistämisen, poistamiseksi tämä artikkeli esittää lähestymistapaa, joka korostaa teorian käyttöä opettamaan oppimisessa, olettaen, että opettaminen on myös älyllinen toiminta eikä vain yksinkertaista 'käytäntöä'. Me otamme aineen pedagogiikan, tässä tapauksessa Hollannin kielen ja kirjallisuuden, lähtökohdaksi opettajankoulutukseen lähestymisellemme yrittäen yhdistää sitä niin tiukasti kuin mahdollista kasvatuksen avainteorioihin. Lisäksi rohkaisemme opiskelijoitamme reflektoidaan heidän lukemiaan teorioita: diskursseja opettamisen ja oppimisen eri aspekteista ja päätyään instrumentaaliseen, akateemiseen ja kriittiseen reflektioon. Siksi esitämme teoreettisen viitekehksen, jota opiskelijamme käyttävät ymmärtääkseen ja tutkiakseen opetustaan. Tätä lähestymistapaa voidaan esittää lyhyesti opiskelijoilta kysytystä lopputehtävästä: analyysi heidän omasta opetuksestaan käyttäen avaintapahtuma-analyysia. Havainnollistamiseksi kuvaamme opettajaksi opiskelevaa Jenniferiä. AVAINSANAT: opettajankoulutus, opettamaan oppimisen teoreettinen viitekehys, ainepedagogiikka, reflektio

#### **French**

[Translation Laurence Pasa]

TITRE : Articulation entre théorie et pratique – Apprendre à enseigner la langue maternelle et la littérature RÉSUMÉ : A contre courant de la question centrale dans le champs de la formation des enseignants sur l'articulation possible entre la théorie et la pratique, cet article présente une approche de la formation qui accentue fortement le recours à la théorie pour apprendre à enseigner, partant du postulat que l'enseignement est aussi une activité intellectuelle et pas simplement une pratique. Considérée comme le point de départ de notre approche de la formation des enseignants, la didactique, ici de la langue néerlandaise et de la littérature, est abordée en relation étroite avec les principales théories de l'éducation. En outre, nous encourageons nos étudiants à analyser les théories qu'ils ont lues, en s'interrogeant sur les discours relatifs aux différents aspects de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage, leurs implications instrumentales et académiques, leurs limites. Ainsi, nous présentons un cadre théorique utilisé par nos enseignants stagiaires pour comprendre et examiner leur enseignement. De cette approche découle la dernière tâche demandée à nos enseignants stagiaires : une analyse de leur propre enseignement, en utilisant l'analyse d'un incident clé. En guise d'illustration, nous présentons le travail de Jennifer, une enseignante en formation.

MOTS-CLÉS : cadre théorique pour apprendre à enseigner, didactique, formation d'enseignants, réflexion

### Greek

[Translation by Panatoya Papoulia Tzelepi]

Τίτλος: Εναρμονίζοντας θεωρία και πράξη στη μάθηση διδασκαλίας της μητρικής γλώσσας και λογοτεχνίας

Περίληψη: Στο πλαίσιο του κεντρικού διλήμματος της εκπαίδευσης των εκπαιδευτικών για τη σχέση μεταξύ της θεωρίας και της πράξης, αυτό το άρθρο παρουσιάζει μια προσέγγιση η οποία δίδει ισχυρή έμφαση στη χρήση της θεωρίας κατά τη μάθηση του πώς να διδάσκεις, θεωρώντας ότι η διδασκαλία είναι και αυτή μια διανοητική δραστηριότητα και όχι απλά μια «πρακτική εφαρμογή». Σ' αυτή την περίπτωση χρησιμοποιούμε την παιδαγωγική του αντικειμένου «Ολλανδική γλώσσα και λογοτεχνία» ως αφετηρία της προσέγγισης μιας εκπαίδευσης εκπαιδευτών στην προσπάθεια μας να την εναρμονίσουμε όσο είναι δυνατό με κυρίαρχες εκπαιδευτικές θεωρίες. Επιπλέον ενθαρρύνουμε τους φοιτητές μας να επιδίδονται σε αναστοχασμό των θεωριών που μελετούν: Συζήτηση σχετικά με τις διάφορες απόψεις της διδασκαλίας και της μάθησης, που έχουν ως αποτέλεσμα πρακτικό, ακαδημαϊκό και κριτικό αναστοχασμό. Παρουσιάζουμε λοιπόν ένα θεωρητικό πλαίσιο που το χρησιμοποιούν οι φοιτητές μας για να κατανοήσουν και να εξετάσουν τη διδασκαλία τους. Αυτή η προσέγγιση παρουσιάζεται εν περιλήψει στο τελικό έργο που ζητείται από τους φοιτητές-δασκάλους: Μια ανάλυση της διδασκαλίας τους με τη χρήση ανάλυσης ενός σημαντικού μέρους. Ως παράδειγμα περιγράφουμε και ερμηνεύουμε την εργασία της Τζένιφερ μιας φοιτήτριας-δασκάλας.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Εκπαίδευση εκπαιδευτικών, θεωρίες διδακτικής, ειδική διδακτική, αναστοχασμός

### Italian

[Translation Manuela Delfino, Francesco Caviglia]

TITOLO: Integrare teoria e pratica. Imparare a insegnare lingua e letteratura in L1

SINTESI: Rispetto all'idea di fondo che il punto critico nella formazione dei docenti sia nella relazione tra teoria e pratica, questo articolo presenta un approccio alla formazione dei docenti che enfatizza l'importanza della teoria nell'apprendere come si insegna, in base al presupposto che l'insegnamento sia anche un'attività intellettuale e non semplicemente una pratica. Abbiamo scelto la lingua e letteratura Olandese come disciplina scolastica da utilizzare come punto di partenza per esplicitare il nostro approccio alla formazione degli insegnanti, nel tentativo di allinearci il più possibile con le principali teorie pedagogiche. Abbiamo inoltre incoraggiato i nostri studenti a farsi coinvolgere in una riflessione basata sulle teorie incontrate nelle loro letture, costituite da varie forme di testi riguardanti aspetti diversi dell'insegnamento e dell'apprendimento, tali da avere ricadute in una riflessione su strumenti, teorie e pratiche. Abbiamo quindi presentato una cornice teorica utilizzata dai nostri docenti in formazione per esaminare e capire il loro insegnamento. Questo approccio può essere sintetizzato nel compito finale affidato loro: un'analisi del loro modo di insegnare tramite l'esame di alcuni episodi chiave. Per illustrare l'approccio, abbiamo descritto e illustrato il lavoro condotto da Jennifer, una docente in formazione.

PAROLE CHIAVE: formazione insegnanti, cornice teorica per imparare a insegnare, didattica disciplinare, riflessione

### Polish

[Translation Elżbieta Awramiuk]

TYTUŁ: Integrując teorię z praktyką. Uczenie się nauczania literatury i języka ojczystego

STRESZCZENIE: W niniejszym artykule, odnosząc się do centralnego dylematu w edukacji nauczycieli dotyczącego relacji między teorią i praktyką, prezentujemy takie podejście do kształcenia nauczycieli, które kładzie nacisk na stosowanie teorii w uczeniu się nauczania, przy założeniu, że nauczanie jest także aktywnością intelektualną, a nie tylko praktyką. Za punkt wyjścia naszego podejścia do kształcenia nauczycieli obieramy metodykę nauczania literatury i języka holenderskiego i staramy się przybliżyć tak blisko jak to możliwe do kluczowych teorii na temat nauczania. Ponadto zachęcamy naszych studentów do wnikliwego zainteresowania się studiowaną przez nich teorią dyskursu dotyczącą różnych aspektów nauczania i uczenia się, czego rezultatem może być praktyczna, naukowa i krytyczna refleksja. Następnie prezentujemy teoretyczne podstawy, które są wykorzystywane przez naszych studentów w celu zrozumienia i sprawdzenia ich własnego nauczania. Podsumowaniem tego podejścia może być końcowe zadanie wykonywane przez studentów: analiza ich własnego nauczania przy wykorzystaniu oceny

kluczowego wydarzenia. W celach ilustracyjnych opisujemy i omawiamy pracę studentki o imieniu Jennifer.

**SŁOWA-KLUCZE:** kształcenie nauczycieli, teoretyczne podstawy uczenia się nauczania, dydaktyka przedmiotowa, refleksja

#### **Portuguese**

[Translation Paulo Feytor Pinto]

**TÍTULO :** Integrando Teoria e Prática. Aprendendo a ensinar língua e literatura L1

**RESUMO:** Tendo como pano de fundo o dilema central da formação de professores que é a relação entre a teoria e a prática, este artigo apresenta uma abordagem da formação de professores que realça o papel da teoria quando se aprende a ensinar, no pressuposto de que ensinar também é uma actividade intelectual e não somente uma “prática”. Tomamos a pedagogia, neste caso na aula de língua e literatura neerlandesa, como ponto de partida para a formação de professores num esforço para a relacionar com teorias educacionais basilares. Além disso, encorajámos os nossos alunos a desenvolverem a sua reflexão com base nas teorias estudadas: discursos sobre diferentes aspectos do ensino e da aprendizagem que originam reflexão instrumental, académica e crítica. Por isso, apresentamos um quadro teórico que é utilizado pelos nossos professores estudantes para compreenderem e analisarem o seu ensino. Esta abordagem pode sintetizar-se na última tarefa que pedimos aos professores estudantes: uma análise do seu ensino através da análise de incidentes-chave. Para o ilustrar, descrevemos o trabalho de Jennifer, uma professora estudante.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** formação de professores, quadro teórico para aprender a ensinar, pedagogia disciplinar, reflexão.

#### **Spanish**

[Translation Ingrid Márquez]

**TÍTULO :** Cómo integrar la teoría con la práctica. Aprendiendo a enseñar la lengua materna y literatura

**RESUMEN:** Este artículo tiene como fondo un dilema básico: ¿cuál es la relación entre la teoría y la práctica en la educación normalista? El estudio presenta una perspectiva que enfatiza fuertemente el uso de la teoría en la enseñanza de cómo enseñar, con base en la suposición de que la docencia es una actividad intelectual y no sólo una "práctica". Tomamos como tema la pedagogía, en este caso del idioma holandés y de la literatura, como punto de partida para probar nuestro enfoque de la educación normalista, para alinearlo lo más posible con las teorías educativas claves. Además, incitamos a nuestros estudiantes a reflexionar sobre el tema, tomando en cuenta las teorías que han estado estudiando y los discursos sobre diferentes aspectos de la docencia y aprendizaje, dando como resultado una reflexión instrumental, académica y crítica. De esta manera, presentamos un marco teórico que puedan ocupar nuestros maestros-estudiantes para examinar su propia enseñanza. Este enfoque culmina con la tarea final que les pedimos a nuestros maestros-estudiantes: evaluar su propia enseñanza usando el análisis de incidentes claves. Para ilustrarlo, describimos e ilustramos el trabajo de Jennifer, una maestra-estudiante.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** educación normalista, marco teórico para aprender a enseñar, pedagogía de sujeto, reflexión.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

A central dilemma in teacher education is the relationship between theory and practice. This has given rise to a number of complaints about teacher education from a variety of perspectives. On the one hand, some say that it is too theoretical and irrelevant to practice. On the other hand, others say that teacher education is often too practical, theory-less and consequently a training course (cf. Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). A strong assumption in the discourse on teacher education is the relevancy of educating student teachers in both theory and practice. Learning to teach requires a lot of practical training, learning by doing. At the same time, due to its complexity, it needs to be theory-informed. However, questions remain. Which

theories are relevant for practice? How do we educate student teachers theoretically? How do we bridge the perceived gap between theory and practice?

In current teacher education programs, a pragmatic orientation to teacher education is becoming increasingly dominant (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; van de Ven & Oolbekkink, 2008). This pragmatic orientation can be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice by educating student teachers practically and excluding theory. Based on Fuller's (1969) notion of concerns, student teachers in their learning to teach process are first focused on practical issues concerning their own functioning in and managing of the classroom, making them less interested in theory.

In this respect reflection becomes a tool used to make student teachers think about their practice. Reflections seem to be focused primarily on practical problems. A characteristic consequence of this pragmatic orientation is that the actual practice itself is often taken for granted, rarely ever disputed (cf. van de Ven & Oolbekkink, 2008).

Next to this increasingly pragmatic orientation, there is also a growing tendency to focus on the person of the teacher. Due to its strong social and interactional nature, teaching itself is assumed to be an activity requiring a high level of personal involvement. Moreover, because it is also a highly moral endeavor, the personal convictions and core qualities of the teacher are assumed to play a very prominent role.

A last tendency in teacher education and in education policies in general seems to be that less attention is being paid to the subject and subject pedagogy in favor of a focus on more general teaching competencies. Based on disputable interpretations of constructivism, teaching is perceived in terms of facilitating learning processes in which the subject content is less central, resulting in an emphasis on general principles of learning, reflection, communication and coaching skills. This is in line with the trend in secondary education to focus more on teaching students learning skills than subject content. Some argue that knowledge changes and rather quickly becomes obsolete.

These pragmatic, personal and general orientations in learning to teach seem to reduce teacher education to a pragmatic training program. Despite the current attempts to build a knowledge base for teacher education (cf. Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Verloop & Lowyck, 2003), these tendencies may prevent students from developing a robust theoretical framework for understanding and reevaluating practice (cf. Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Arguably, this is especially problematic for those teacher education programs situated at the university that aspires to high academic standards.

This paper reports and discusses an approach to teacher education that focuses on providing student teachers with an explicit theoretical framework with which to understand and examine their teaching and practice. We first discuss the main principles and aspects of the program in which we teach. We then illustrate how those principles are enacted by focusing on the work that one of our students produced in the course of this teacher education program.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF OUR APPROACH

### 2.1 *Learning as becoming part of a community*

The main aim of our teacher education program is to educate student teachers to become secondary school teachers in Dutch language and literature or L1 by training them to teach, and guiding them towards the social, theoretical and practical 'conversation' about their work. The term 'conversation' in this respect comes from Oakeshott (cited in Bruffee, 1984: 4-5) and entails a perspective on knowledge, knowledge construction, and how to educate student teachers into the knowledge base of teaching. Oakeshott views knowledge in terms of a conversation, or as social constructions, and education aims to enable people to take part in this conversation and to develop an understanding of the nature of those social constructions. Bruffee elaborates Oakeshott's argument that 'learning is entering a discourse' (Bruffee, 1986), a way of talking, thinking and reasoning constructed by a particular group of people (a discourse community). A tacit agreement usually exists within the community about what counts as valid knowledge, argument, perspective, example and so forth (van de Ven, 2001; Kress, 1985). Different discourse communities have different viewpoints on reality and, in a similar vein, different disciplines can be construed as different discourses.

Teacher education aims to enable student teachers to understand and deconstruct the different discourses on education, teaching, and learning as social constructions. It means that student teachers should be able to understand the social constellation called education. At the same time, it should make them aware that they are dealing with such complex phenomena (e.g. learning), of which knowledge is limited. They should also learn to enter these discourses and to become active members of divergent discourse communities. These three processes require an intellectual attitude or focus aimed at carefully examining learning and teaching from many different theoretical perspectives, or rather, discourses.

Hence, we perceive becoming a member of the teaching community in a Vygotskian perspective. As Kong & Pearson (2005; 226) state:

Learning is a process of guided participation in cultural practices, with support from more knowledgeable members of the community. During this process, learners develop their participatory knowledge and skills and grow to be constructive members of the community.

The teacher educator aims to guide student teachers in this process and help them to understand and speak the language or the way of perceiving teaching.

Such terms as 'theory' and 'teacher community' are complicated because teaching refers to the many divergent theoretical domains, which are often poly paradigmatic, as will be discussed later. Hence, our approach to theory as a means to understand teaching is rather eclectic, as the following aims to demonstrate.

## 2.2 *The centrality of subject pedagogy*

Our teacher education program aims to educate student teachers as teachers in the specific discourse of a school subject, in this case Dutch language and literature (L1). The subject teachers teach, especially in case of secondary education, is assumed to be a core element of their professional identity in many ways (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1994; Siskin & Little, 1995; van Veen, Slegers & van de Ven, 2005). For most teachers, the subject strongly affected their motivation to become a teacher, and continues to profoundly influence their job satisfaction. Furthermore, the subject and its academic background are assumed to have a strong impact on how people think and behave in their work. The nature of the academic subject as well as the nature of the school subject traditions influence teaching practices: the way teachers prepare and plan their lessons, teach, and communicate with their students. A strong relation to the epistemological basis of the subject and the subject's pedagogy (Nystrand et al. 1997) seems to exist. In sum, the subject and the subject pedagogy are at the very core of secondary school teaching and should therefore be taken as central in the teacher education program. We observe this relationship in the school subject L1 (in this case 'Dutch') as a poly-paradigmatic subject. Each paradigm represents different discourses which can be distinguished by the different meanings they present for core concepts like 'language', 'literature', 'writing' and so on. They also present different (most times tacit) discourses on teaching and learning (Sawyer & van de Ven, 2007).

This centrality of the subject and subject pedagogy in a learning to teach program seems to contrast with the tendency in current teacher education programs and in education to emphasize general skills such as social-communicative, problem solving, and reflection instead of subject content knowledge and subject pedagogical skills. Some argue that to qualify students for future jobs, those general skills are more useful. To teach students these skills, teachers act as facilitators of students' learning processes rather than subject experts who focus on specific knowledge construction. Therefore, in many teacher education programs, aspects other than subject pedagogy increasingly gain more attention: classroom management, learning and development psychology, membership in school organization, general reflection skills, personal and professional identity development. The problem is not so much that student teachers are educated in aspects other than subject pedagogy, but that subject pedagogy becomes displaced as the different aspects are treated separately, offered in different courses, often taught by different teacher educators, and often dominated by an emphasis on practice.

Our perspective is that it is artificial to separate most of these aspects, because they strongly relate to each other (we refer again to Nystrand et al. 1997). For instance, classroom management often relates to the choice of subject content and pedagogy. The psychology of student learning also relates to the nature and content of a subject. Therefore, because of the strong interrelationships of these aspects, and because of the centrality of the subject in secondary school teachers' work, subject pedagogy and other educational aspects should be strongly integrated in the curriculum.



Some practical implications of this curriculum integration of subject pedagogical and educational elements are that our sessions at the university are integrated, meaning that the classes combine subject pedagogy and related educational aspects. For instance, when studying the discourse of grammar education, a case of a grammar lesson is used. This case, showing a teacher explaining grammar to his students, is studied from different theoretical perspectives (e.g., L1-theories, educational theories about interaction in the classroom), because the case does not only refer to the discussion on grammar education but also to teaching strategies, interactions, classroom management, expectations, and students' perspectives, for instance. Finally, the class sessions are organized and taught by both the subject pedagogy expert and an educational expert. This team teaching potentially creates a learning environment in which student teachers are exposed to different perspectives and discourses, creating a new discourse on education<sup>1</sup> together.

### 2.3 Reflection: both pragmatic and academic

As in many current teacher education programs, reflection is perceived as a central tool for student teachers to think critically about their teaching. In our approach (see Sturm, van Veen, Slegers & van de Ven, 2003; van Veen & van de Ven, 2005), theory becomes an integral part of reflection. It is explicitly stated that pre-service teachers reflect on their practice using professional knowledge. Furthermore, theory takes a central place in the way reflection is 'taught' and 'practiced'. Our operationalization of reflection (Sturm, 2003) is largely based on the distinctions of 'reflective teaching' from Zeichner & Tabachnick (1991), each representing a different perspective or bundles of discourses:

*Instrumental reflection*, which refers to the organization of the lesson, the effective application of methods, skills, and technical knowledge, the interaction, etc. In general it refers to acting in the classroom.

*Academic reflection*, which refers to the use of subject pedagogical and educational theories to understand the content, the underlying principles and mechanisms of teaching and learning, and the implications of certain teaching strategies and curricula. In general it refers to the use of theory in the reflection process.

*Critical reflection*, which refers to moral, ethical, and esthetical reflections and other normative criteria to think about such aspects as the social function of education and the consequences of one's teaching for the well-being of others.

As mentioned, reflecting on practice bridges the gap between theory and practice. However, theory and practice are often unjustly perceived as unrelated and or at best as having a strained relation. In our approach to learning to teach, we perceived

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<sup>1</sup> A consequence of having only two teacher educators in the graduate school, who are mentoring the student teachers the whole year together (instead of having many teacher educators involved due to the many different topics in the curriculum), is that it enables us to establish a strong relationship with student teachers. Good teaching, as Watzlawick's second axiom argues, is based on the quality of the relationship between teacher and student, and especially in the case of learning to teach, this relationship is very important due to the often very intensive nature of this learning process for student teachers.

theory as relevant to helping student teachers understand their practice. Scholes argues that: “Theory is not the superego of practice, but its self-consciousness. The role of theory is not to prescribe laws but to force us to be aware of what we are doing and why we are doing it. Practice without theory is blind....” (Scholes, 1985: 88; cited in Sørensen, 2002: 90).

Practice needs theory, as theory needs practice. Reflection needs theory because it raises questions, undermines long-held beliefs, introduces ambiguities, reveals complexities, and sets new tasks. Theory assists the process of analyzing and understanding practice and opens new possibilities. At the same time, practice also contributes to theory because it can function as a laboratory where theory is tested, refined, adapted and criticized (Phelps, 1991).

We assume that all three levels of reflection need to be supported and stimulated by both the teacher educators and the supervisor/mentor in the school. Most student teachers focus on instrumental reflection, which is understandable in light of the challenges of learning to teach, but they need more support to reflect in academic and critical ways.

Few would quarrel about the importance of these levels of reflection. Disagreement, however, may occur about the timing of the introduction into a teacher education program. Most programs gradually introduce these levels, yet most attention is paid to the instrumental level and less attention is paid to the academic and critical levels. One rationale for this is based on Fuller's notion of teachers' concerns (Fuller, 1969), namely that a development in concerns can be distinguished in the learning to teach process, starting with a focus on oneself and issues of survival and control to a focus on students and their learning processes. However, this development does not imply *per se* that student teachers are not yet open to academic and critical reflections in the beginning of the program. Since our student teachers have Master's degrees in at least one academic subject, they have been reading academic studies and theories. Furthermore, and more importantly, to become reflective practitioners, they need a framework to understand the new areas of practice and theoretical discourse. While their apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) makes most student teachers experts in being students, they often have an ill-informed conception of the goals and the complex nature of teaching and learning from the perspective of teachers (Kelchtermans, 2002). Finally, a major risk of not introducing them to theory in the beginning of the program is the possibility of confirming the common perception that teaching is just a matter of practical issues and hardly an intellectual matter. Suggesting that teaching is only a practical and non-intellectual matter also risks being perceived as a 'soft' discipline and thus, losing status and respect in the academic community and society.

The question, however, that follows from this discussion, is how to encourage student teachers to reflect in instrumental, academic and critical ways throughout the whole program and which theories to use. We discuss this last question first and follow this with the design of the program and the pedagogy to support these levels of reflection, illustrated by a student teacher's final assignment.

### 3 A THEORETICAL FRAME FOR UNDERSTANDING TEACHING L1

We use the term 'theoretical framework' to refer to a range of theoretical and empirical conceptions of subject pedagogy, teaching, student learning, and educational goals such as L1 language, psychology, sociology, and educational research. All derive from academic literature and research that grows and sometimes changes over time as new research emerges.

We are aware of the lack of a common theoretical framework in teacher education and the many divergent perspectives in this field (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Reis, 2005). Our approach using theory to reflect on teaching practice can be situated in an interpretative research tradition (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In general, three theoretical frames function as a lens to understand and examine teaching and learning in the program.

The first refers to the many divergent knowledge elements or schemas needed to teach, that together, illustrate the complexity and multidimensionality of education. Clift (1991) provides an extended example of how these integrated knowledge elements or schemas are present in one lesson. Possible elements in teaching Dutch language and literature are as follows:

- Subject content knowledge within the field of the academic discipline related to the school subject, e.g. linguistics, literature studies;
- Knowledge within the field of educational studies, e.g. knowledge about teaching and learning, designing lessons, classroom management;
- Subject pedagogical knowledge: How to deal with poetry in the classroom and what kinds of questions to ask in the assessment of reading abilities? This kind of knowledge relates to content, learning activity and ways of working. The core question is how to teach students to use a subject specific perspective for dealing with language and literature;
- Knowledge about the school subject, especially knowledge about the specific topics of the school subject and the different opinions on those topics, e.g. the differences between an analytic or holistic perspective on language, a Saussurian dyadic or a Bahktinian triadic perspective; should literature be limited to 'High', elite literature, or should it also include children and youth literature, for example; is literature 'books' or are other forms of fiction involved; which approaches to reading and writing should be used - top down and bottom up approaches, product oriented or process oriented methods, cognitive process or social process means to writing;
- Knowledge on learners e.g. learning styles; (a) Knowledge on educational contexts, the importance of socialization, socio-economic background, immigrant children, etc.; (b) Knowledge on educational aims and values, and their historical and ideological background and development: personal development, Bildung, reproduction of cultural heritage, development of competence for economic growth, promoting equality between groups of people (cf. Immesen, 2000); (c) Views and beliefs about interaction with students, about the school subject, about moral and ethical discourses concerning education and society.

A second theoretical frame used to understand the complexities of teaching, and especially to reflect on the different layers and actors involved is Goodlad's (1979) distinction in curriculum domains. We interpret Goodlad's curriculum domain distinctions to refer to more or less independent discourses with their own text conventions, concepts and argumentation. The *ideological* and the *formal* curriculum formulate 'oughts' and 'shoulds'. The *perceived* curriculum represents what a teacher thinks that the curriculum should be. The operational curriculum is the totality of enacted learning activities and communicative events, what actually goes on hour after hour, day after day in schools and classrooms. This curriculum is difficult to grasp. It is the complex passing interaction between teacher and students, and between and among the students. Still more difficult to grasp is the *experiential* curriculum—what students actually experience. The gap between rhetoric ('theory') and practice can often be located and examined in the relation between the formal and ideological curriculum, and the operational and experienced curriculum.

A third theoretical framework is the school subject itself. Content and function of L1 education (the school subject Dutch in The Netherlands, English in the UK, etc.) continue to be objects of ongoing debates. These can be perceived as paradigmatic discussions. Each paradigm differs from other paradigms by subject topics, teaching and learning activities, and topics and activities. Each paradigm can also be characterized by its hidden perspectives on teaching, learning and educational objectives.

The history of L1 teaching reveals different paradigms arising in different periods and striving for dominance. Old paradigms are never replaced totally by new ones, rather, they often maintain a status of strong alternative. Currently, the school subject L1 remains a hotly paradigmatic debate among a number of orientations: literary-grammatical, developmental, communicative and utilitarian<sup>2</sup>.

These different theoretical frames are summarized in Figure 1 (Appendix A), which provides a tentative conceptual framework, originally designed by Jan Sturm (Sturm, 2005), a colleague in our teacher education program, and called Jan's bins<sup>3</sup>. The authors slightly modified the frame.

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<sup>2</sup> *The paradigmatic battle for dominance must be understood from more general, social-economic and political debates on social and scientific power. Matthijssen's (1982) theory on rationalities and Englund's (1996) concept 'metadiscourse' are suitable for understanding these debates. They reveal which kind of cultural capital is dominant during a certain period. Using Matthijssen's concepts, these cultural capitals can be formulated as a literary-religious, a technocratic and a communicative rationality. Englund distinguishes between a patriarchal conception of education, a scientific-rational and a communicative one. Dominant school subject paradigms represent the dominant cultural capital, at least on the level of rhetoric (cf. van de Ven, 2005; Sawyer & van de Ven, 2007).*

<sup>3</sup> *As Sturm notes, the term 'bins' comes from Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 28), who write "(...) bins containing a lot of discrete events and behaviors. When we assign a label to a bin, we may or may not know how all the contents of the bin fit together, or how this bin relates to another one. But any researcher, no matter how inductive in approach, knows which bins to start with and what their contents are likely to be. Bins come from theory and experience, and often from the general objectives of the study envisioned. Laying out those bins, giving each a*

#### 4 PEDAGOGY OF OUR APPROACH

To understand our approach to teacher education, it is useful to provide some context information about the specific program. The one-year teacher education program is part of a graduate school of teaching of a Dutch university. The student teachers already have a Master's degree in a particular subject (an official requirement).

The program consists of weekly meetings at the graduate school (each Monday), and two to three days of teaching in secondary schools. In the schools, student teachers are gradually introduced to teaching and after a half a year, have their own classes to teach. All student teachers have mentors at the schools who coach supervise, and support them especially with respect to how to teach and organize a classroom.

In the first two weeks of the program, we introduce a frame of reference or a theoretical frame. The student teachers study five main discussions in the literature on teacher education in the subject of L1 (including our pedagogical approach in learning to teach; the content of the school subject related to the current reforms; moral and social aspects of teaching; student learning theories; and L1 subject pedagogy).

During the year, the study of subject pedagogical and educational topics increase. Crucial in this is the pedagogy used to help student teachers study theories and apply them to their classroom practice. Each topic studied uses academic literature (theories, empirical studies) and student material related to their classroom practices. We discuss this literature at weekly Monday classes lasting between two and four hours.

Student teachers prepare the classes. They read theoretical and/or empirical texts as well as documents on daily practice such as classroom cases or products produced by secondary L1 students. These documents handle the topic under discussion (e.g. grammar teaching) from different and sometimes contradictory perspectives, thus introducing some cognitive dissonance.

At the beginning of the class meeting, the student teachers formulate their most important concerns, thus setting the agenda. The meeting itself is to a large extent characterized by collaborative dialogue in which the student teachers enter the respective discourses presented in the readings. We also discuss their site-based classroom experiences, trying to clarify these experiences through the theoretical framework.

#### AN EXAMPLE FROM THE PRE-SERVICE L1 CLASS:

Before the class, the student teachers read on the pros and cons of grammar teaching, including empirical studies on the effects of grammar teaching on writing and reading skills. They read texts on the hidden definition of language in the

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*descriptive or inferential name, and getting some clarity about their relationships is what a conceptual framework is all about".*

tradition of grammar teaching. From these perspectives, and from perspectives on classroom interaction, they discuss this case and create their own perspective on grammar teaching.

At the beginning of the school year, the student teachers study a case involving grammar teaching in a classroom in the first level of secondary education. This case has been audio-taped and described in a written report of verbal and non-verbal interactions of the lesson. The teacher in this case blames a student for presenting a wrong answer on a question on parsing. The answer does not match the definition of the curriculum guide. The student's answer could also be correct, however, using the definition presented in schoolbooks for primary education.

To stimulate reflection and especially the use of theoretical frameworks, the program has a narrative component. Reflection starts with a description of what happened in the teaching-learning situation, e.g. a classroom written report of the verbal interactions. This narrative approach is in line with a current discourse on teacher education that emphasizes the power of the narrative (cf. Kelchtermans, 2002; Denning, 2000; Haugen 1996). Methodologically, the narrative serves to transform the operational curriculum into text (Sturm, 1990). By transforming the interaction between teacher and student into a text (a narrative), education becomes more easily accessible for reflection and analysis. The analysis is based upon the method of key incident analysis and the metaphor of the 'iceberg'.

The key incident analysis, derived from ethnographic research traditions, refers to a method of analyzing a large set of qualitative data, such as a teaching lesson, by selecting key incidents (described in extensive detail into written reports including all verbal interactions, and if possible, also the non-verbal interactions). A key incident "is key in that the researcher assumes intuitively that the event chosen has the potential to make explicit a theoretical 'loading' " (Erickson 1985, 108). It is also key because it represents the nature of someone's teaching: what is typical for someone's teaching, someone's subject pedagogy or classroom management approach, etc. For instance, a key incident can occur at the beginning of a lesson, or at the moment a teacher starts to explain subject content, or reacts to questions of students.

The key incident can be analyzed at different levels from different perspectives using the theoretical frames presented. It can start with what is happening in the classroom: How do pre-service teachers understand the interactions or perceive what transpires? What is the effect of the teacher's actions on the behavior and learning of the students? The analysis can focus on the professional knowledge and perceptions of the teacher on classroom management, subject content, subject pedagogy, etc., and their relationships with the interactions in the classroom. In that way, the analysis of a key incident reveals more than the teacher's actualized know-how. An incident also offers the opportunity to reconstruct the conceptual basis of that know-how and that teaching-learning situation. Furthermore, key incident analysis illuminates more general principles of language pedagogy or hidden cultural-educational models. In other words, an incident can be seen as an iceberg, the top of it functions as a *pars pro toto* for its under-the-surface hidden layers (Herrlitz, 1994; 2007; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Tripp, 1994). An incident analysis offers the possibility to reveal "the deepest - and most uncertain - level of analysis (...) those 'taken-for-granted' assumptions which, although rarely or never explicitly invoked or

discussed by participants, nevertheless define the process of 'doing education'. We have called these kinds of assumptions 'educational ground-rules'" (Mercer 1991: 51).

In our program, we confront the pre-service teachers with their own educational ground rules. For that purpose, their 'final task' becomes critically important.

## 5 FINAL TASK: EXPLORING ONE'S OWN TEACHING AND TEACHING BELIEFS

To illustrate our approach described, we present the final task which involves an examination of the student teacher's own teaching practice and underlying perceptions. It aims to understand personal teaching behaviors, professional identity, teaching and learning context and their place within the different professional and academic discourses. The task requires explicitly reflecting instrumentally, academically, and critically as it brings together the practices and the theories studied throughout the year.

Concretely, the task requires the pre-service teachers to audio record about ten lessons and to choose one lesson as a unit of analysis. The recording is transcribed to a written report of the lesson (showing the verbal and if possible non-verbal interactions). The recording and the written report are sources of analysis as are the lesson preparations, a report and evaluation of the lesson, students' reports and evaluations of the lesson, and curricular material. In addition, the student teacher first analyzes the knowledge sources used in this lesson, similar to the analysis of used and needed knowledge. Clift (1991) provides an example of a young teacher called Lesley, who is learning to teach secondary school English (an article already studied and discussed in the first week of the teacher education program). Secondly, the student teacher discusses and analyzes her choices such as classroom management, subject content, and subject pedagogy. The subject content is analyzed using Goodlad's distinction in curriculum domains as well as the relevant literature studied during the year regarding the specific L1 content.

Third, the student discusses and analyzes problems or incidents related to content, pedagogy, and other educational elements. With both the analysis of the choices and the problems, the teacher illustrates using excerpts of the written report, and if possible, combines this with other data sources. Although not always possible, ideally the student teacher identifies a key incident that represents her way of teaching and thinking, using the iceberg method to analyze the different meanings.

Finally, the teacher describes herself in terms of her professional identity: How she perceives herself as a teacher in Dutch language and literature (self-image, task perceptions, motivation, self-esteem, etc., cf. Kelchtermans, 2002), and, how she perceives her own professional development using the previous analysis to illustrate. This description of self as teacher can make use of both educational concepts and subject pedagogical concepts. In addition, she provides evaluations and feedback of students, colleagues, mentors, and her school administrator. The complete analysis is discussed with the teacher educators and the other teachers (and ideally, with the

mentor of the school) over the course of several sessions. In the next section, the case of Jennifer provides a vivid illustration of this final task.

### 5.1 Jennifer's analysis of her teaching: an example.

Jennifer<sup>4</sup> is a pre-service teacher, 26 years of age who joined the graduate school of teaching after obtaining her master's degree in Dutch language and literature. What follows is a summary of her final analysis, starting with her reasons for choosing the specific lesson, followed by her reflections on her choices, problems, goals, her own behavior and perceptions, and finally her role in the subject department. While the summary is our interpretation, we attempted to reflect Jennifer's original report of her final analysis, (8731 words).

As a starting point, Jennifer selected a lesson in Dutch literature. Her reasons for choosing this are related to her ideal images of a teacher of L1 and her changing relationship over the year with this group of secondary students. Inspiring lessons in Dutch literature in secondary education constituted her ideal image of being a teacher, and made her choose to study Dutch literature at the university. At this point, she is very aware that teaching L1 involves much more than teaching only literature. Actually, since literature teaching is only a part of the curriculum, she realized that Dutch literature time is very precious. Her reflections made her wonder whether she actually really valued those lessons.

Her second reason for choosing this lesson related to a change in working climate in this group due to adopting a different pedagogical approach. A few months before, she perceived the working climate in this class as negative which impacted her teaching. In response, she reorganized her lessons and used methods that stimulated students' active and self-regulated learning processes. The working climate improved, which, in turn, affected her teaching behavior.

The main aim of the lesson was a group discussion about a novel by Dutch author, Leon de Winter, entitled, *'De hemel van Hollywood'* [*The heaven of Hollywood*] included in the teacher's guide on literature analysis. The Department made the decision to read this book since all students purchased the book at the beginning of the year (a special publisher's offer). The author is known as a writer relatively easy to read, though nobody in the subject department had actually read the book. Because the students had to express their own opinions about the novel in a reading report within two weeks, Jennifer decided to have a group discussion.

The class consisted of a group of 21 students (11 girls and 9 boys), about 16 years in age, in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of pre-university education<sup>5</sup>. The lesson took place one morning, from 10:50 to 11:35 am. Jennifer negotiated some agreements with several students who repeatedly misbehaved by not paying attention, talking too much, and disrupting her lessons. The transcript that follows, involves two girls, Milou and Marlon:

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<sup>4</sup> The name is a pseudonym. The student teacher gave permission to the authors to report and discuss her work in this article.

<sup>5</sup> See for detailed information about the Dutch educational system:  
[http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/eurydice\\_2006\\_en.pdf](http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/eurydice_2006_en.pdf)



- Teacher Ok, today we would talk about the book you all read, 'The Heaven of Hollywood'. We would talk about it today, if you had any questions about it...
- Milou & Marlon  
Teacher *(talking with each other)*  
Milou and Marlon, do you still have our agreement in your mind?
- Milou & Marlon Yes
- Teacher So, I would say, let's start! Who would like to say something about the book?
- Martijn  
Teacher *(raises his hand)*  
Martijn?
- Martijn Yes, about the last part, then suddenly they turn the whole story up side down again, stating this is possible, and this is possible...
- Teacher You say: they turn the story up side down. What do you mean exactly? It sounds rather negative...

*What follows is a conversation between Martijn, the teacher and some other students about who exactly is the main character. Because the main character gets different names in the story and after the last part it is not clear at all anymore who the main character is. The teacher starts to change her questions, asking the students about the title and the structure of the book because it looks like a movie script.*

- Teacher What's the book's structure actually?
- Frank There are a lot of flash backs
- Teacher Yes, is it one big flash back? Or...uh... how many parts does the book have?
- Frank *(is silent)*
- Teacher What's the first part about?
- Frank About the robbery and so on
- Teacher Yes, about how the robbery on that group of the casino is being done... But does the structure of the first part remind you of something? It looks pretty much like a movie script, doesn't it? How can we know that?
- Frank *(is silent)*
- Teacher Who remembers the first sentence of the book?
- Frank *(whispering)* who remember a first sentence anyway?
- Teacher The book starts with the sentence *(teacher takes the book)*... Nicole, can you please read the first sentence out loud
- Nicole *(reads out loud)* If this was a movie, then...
- Teacher Exactly... What is actually described in chapter 2 till chapter 31? Who remembers? Susanne?
- Susanne Also about the robbery...
- Teacher Yes, something is told about that robbery but what else is being told?
- Susanne It is a flash back, about how they met and how they will do the robbery
- Teacher Yes, exactly, it is one big flash back to the time before the robbery
- (the conversation continues like this for a while)*
- Teacher Why actually is the book called 'The heaven of Hollywood' and not... uh...for instance 'The heaven of New York'?

Jacky	Because it is the name of that script from that woman...
Teacher	What actually can you tell about that woman and the main characters? What do they have in common?
Jacky	They are all actors
Teacher	Yes, indeed, they all had a career as actor, and just to return to the title, why Hollywood? What is Hollywood?
Jacky	That's where they make movies
Teacher	Hollywood is the world of glamour and glittering, isn't it? That's where it happens. There, you can become famous and it is indeed the place where they make movies. It's actually a fictional world, isn't it? There, things happen that don't happen in real life... What is truth? That's the theme of the story. You were just talking about a movie script... but.. uh... are there other things in the book that refer to movie scripts?... There a few in the book... ( <i>Teacher takes the book</i> )... Let's see, where was it again? Do you remember? Just take the book and look it up... uh... Simone?
Simone	Uh...
( <i>Bobby is one of the few who takes the book</i> )	
Teacher	Bobby?
Bobby	On the last page, it says 'fade out'
Teacher	What is a fade out?
Bobby	That it slowly disappears
Teacher	Yes, that's something you see quite often at the end of a movie, don't you? That the screen slowly turns dark... that's a fade out...

Jennifer's analysis starts with instrumental reflections about her assumptions about her students' previous knowledge (she assumed everybody had read the book which was not true), and the pros and cons of the method of group discussion. Reflecting on the dialogue between her and the students, she observes that she plays a central role by repeating and paraphrasing everything the students say (even trying to say the same thing in three ways, making it less clear in the end), and by posing questions to the students. In her view, her talk predominates, making the dialogue almost a monologue. She felt she was playing squash: playing the ball (question) against the wall (student) and immediately the ball returns.

Wondering whether she took the students seriously enough, she begins to analyze her teaching goals. She thinks she reacted to every student comment because she wanted to stimulate the quiet students to join the discussion. Furthermore, she wanted to show that having different interpretations of a novel is allowed and that she valued expressing personal interpretation.

In contrast, she also wanted the students to see that the structure of the story related to the content, and that she assumed the students would not notice this relationship. This prompted her to formulate closed questions to get the right answer. The intended group discussion changed into a teaching moment where she wanted to teach them something. Her way of asking closed questions to maintain control over the conversation indicated that at the end, she actually tells the students

all the 'answers'. Afterwards, she reveals she does not know whether the students really understood the novel. She did not check this because she expected to read this in their final reports.

She also asked many content questions: the book itself provides few, if any, answers. The book itself was more complicated than expected (by her and her subject colleagues), and discussing such a book, or discussing novels in general, turns out to be quite complex. Her perception of literature interpretation precluded whether an interpretation is good or bad, but she noticed that both the students and she herself seemed to have this need. At this point, she realized that she actually should not have given so many answers, but should have asked more open questions to stimulate students' thinking.

Reflecting on her urge to provide the right answers, in this lesson and in other lessons, she concludes that she likes to please the students, especially when they annoyed her, asking for the right answer after she said that many interpretations were possible. Jennifer failed to explain this point of view to the students. She is aware that this urge of her students for 'right' answers is typical for their age. Moreover, she realizes that she actually cannot tolerate dissonance, and often takes their comments personally instead of professionally. She concluded that her feelings of insecurity (as the student evaluations seem to confirm) make her talk too much. She also realized that this was actually the first lesson in which she discussed a novel, and that she somehow underestimated the complexity of it. Moreover, she had hardly used group discussion methods before.

Jennifer's analysis also contains an extended description and discussion of her own teaching behavior in general, the change in learning climate and the way she handles students who misbehave. She bases her analysis on students' and her own evaluations, using the QTI-questionnaires on teacher interaction (Brekelmans, Wubbels & Créton, 1990; cf. Wubbels, Brekelmans, den Brok & van Tartwijk, 2006). Her analysis also contains some critical reflections on these questionnaires.

Jennifer also wonders about her contribution to the general development of her students. Her intentions that her students would become familiar with fiction in general and this novel in particular (since this novel discusses the tension between the fictional and the real world) would stimulate their cultural development, and encourage them to reflect individually and together. Her analysis concludes that she probably did not really accomplish these goals, that her lesson actually might have been counterproductive, though one student wrote in his final report that this lesson especially helped him to understand the novel and helped him make his report.

The conversation with her students had an impact on her own perceptions of the novel. She reveals that she actually did not like the novel (the decision to read this book will be discussed later). She did not like the genre and found the structure too artificial. However, as she reports, some students' interpretations made her actually appreciate the novel more.

In her final analysis, she does not reflect on her dislike of the novel in relation to the lesson, though in discussing her analysis with her teacher educators and colleague student teachers, she started to understand that it impacted her teaching behavior and the interaction with the students. Her dislike dampened her enthusiasm and motivation, her initial reaction to the students' answers, and also her urge to

control. The lesson would have been very different had she chosen a book she (and the majority of the students) had appreciated.

At the end, she discusses the decision taken by the subject department about the book and her own role as a colleague. Present when the decision was taken, she did not dare to object. Initially she agreed with her colleagues. After reading the novel, however, Jennifer despaired, because as she writes in her analysis: "the book is really horrible (for many reasons)". However, as a pre-service teacher, she tries to adapt to the subject department requirements as much as possible, and felt too inexperienced to state that the novel was inadequate. Moreover, since so many subject department decisions were changed, she did not want to confront her students with another change or risk her own credibility in the eyes of her students.

However, as she explains in her analysis, a few weeks after the lesson, she raised the question in an L1 department meeting about why the novel was chosen. This led to the revelation by all colleagues that the novel was not a good choice. Moreover, they acknowledged that, considering the aim of lessons in literature, it actually is unnecessary to make all students read the same book. Furthermore, they discussed the general aims of their literature education and how they actually define story analysis and interpretation. They concluded that they followed the Teacher Guide on literature analysis too narrowly. The teachers noted that they aimed for students to enjoy reading novels, to discover literature's complex expression of emotions, to allow many different interpretations and to see literature education always as a dialogue. Jennifer writes that she completely agrees and that a group conversation to discuss the novel with her students was indeed a good choice.

In general, this analysis of Jennifer's own teaching behavior illustrates how she uses different theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning. She shows an awareness of how her biography influences her image of being an L1 teacher. She is also aware of different aims of literature education. She understands the problems students may experience with the literary repertoire of a text. She recognizes the possible conflict between 'the teacher's text, and 'the students' text'. She acknowledges the differences and the different functions of open and closed questions and is aware of the distinction between monologic and dialogic interaction and the role of students in these forms of interaction, and the relation to the objective (and the possible result) of the lesson. She also perceives the position of a student teacher in a subject department, and her own role as a starting teacher in a classroom of students. Her initiative to discuss the choice of the novel in the subject department meeting, which can be seen as a micro-political action, shows her growing professional awareness.

## 6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The strength of our approach in providing a theoretical framework suggests that student teachers become more aware of their context, of the many ongoing and changing discussions in L1 language and literature, subject pedagogy, and educational theory, of how much and how little there is to know about learning and teaching. In other words, it provides a framework for understanding and examining

their practice. Student teachers also become familiar with using theories and research literature related to teaching and education.

The gap between theory and practice is bridged by using recent and relevant theories and research. Furthermore, we introduce the theoretical framework at the beginning of the program and throughout the year. Finally, in all tasks the student teachers are challenged to rethink their practice using theory. Hence, all subject pedagogical and educational theoretical notions are strongly related to the daily classroom and school practice.

A possible criticism remains that the focus relies too heavily on theory and research, which, in a one-year program, compromises preparing teachers adequately to teach and organize learning environments. In our experience, such a criticism can only be avoided if the program at the graduate school keeps a strong focus on student teachers' practice, and integrates with and is attuned to, the teacher education program in the schools, where the schools are largely responsible for training the student teachers in the daily teaching practice and supporting them in their daily teaching problem.

A source of such criticism seems to be that many teacher educators fear theory and thus adhere to a strong practical orientation. This fear is perhaps based on awareness of the scepticism of teachers frustrated by theory they have encountered as concepts prescribed to teachers instead of theory supporting teachers to understand their own practice (cf. van Veen, 2008).

One condition for this approach is that teacher educators have a familiarity with and focus on theory. Beyond that, it actually assumes a particular conception of what teachers are or should be. Many conceptions of teachers' professional identity can be found such as being educated practitioners, artists, autonomous professionals, intellectuals, change agents. In our view, teachers, especially the ones with an advanced academic education, should be considered academics in the sense of having an intellectual orientation to teaching and learning. Self-evidently this should be without neglecting the most important element in teaching, namely the relationship with students.

More specifically, teacher educators should be experts in both theory and practice, having a deep integrated understanding of both. Moreover, they should be experts in the pedagogy of the relationship between the two: explaining theory to (pre-service) teachers, applying theories to their practice reflexively, and showing how teachers' practice can be understood using theory. The gap between theory and practice might become non-existent when the right pedagogy is applied.

A final remark refers to the quality of student teachers' theoretical framework. The assumption that an elaborate framework is needed to understand all complexities of teaching and learning even after completing a one-year teacher education program does not result in 'connoisseurs' (Eisner, 1991). Despite limited knowledge and experiences, pre-service teachers might not see everything from a limited perspective. However, we believe that our approach provides them a place to start on an intellectual inquiry that can last a whole teaching life.

## AUTHORS' NOTE

Besides the authors, many others were involved in the discourse, which led to the construction of this teacher education program. In addition to the many student teachers in Dutch language and literature of the Graduate School of Teaching, especially the one student whose work is reported in this article, two other names need to be mentioned, namely Peter Slegers, and especially Jan Sturm, who both were involved as teacher educators.

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#### APPENDIX A:

#### FIGURE 1: A TENTATIVE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING TO TEACH L1



