



Teacher capacity in pedagogy with regard to diversity in Amsterdam schools

Report of the NAOS study visit 23rd to 24th of March 2017

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1 Introduction

NAOS: background and goals

Countries face challenges in catering for the diverse needs of migrant students and narrowing the gaps in education outcomes between native students and immigrant students. (Inter)national evidence (OECD, 2010) suggest that strategies to raise education outcomes for migrant students need to focus on school level and system level, such as:

- preparing school leaders and teachers to meet the needs of diverse student groups;
- increasing student opportunity to learn language (mother tongue as well as language of instruction) in regular school lessons;
- encouraging schools to build capacity in the area of dealing with diversity;
- making collaboration between school and community more effective.

The central topic in NAOS is professional capacity concerning dealing with diversity related to migration (in all its different forms). Professional capacity includes innovative forms of cooperation between educational professionals and other professionals dealing with children. Sebring et al. (2006) who view professional capacity as one of the fundamentals of school improvement define it as follows:

“Professional capacity encompasses the quality of the faculty and staff recruited and maintained in a school, their base beliefs and values about responsibility for change, the quality of ongoing professional development focused on local improvement efforts, and the capacity of a staff to work together as a cohesive professional community focused on the core problems of improving teaching and learning.” (p. 12).

The objective of NAOS is to strengthen professional capacity in the partner countries and their respective schools. With the ultimate goal to increase educational attainment and reduce drop out and unemployment among groups of migrant children. NAOS is a star that refers to the fundament of a Greek building. By choosing this name, we emphasize the idea that professional capacity is the fundament of good quality education.

The OECD country reviews in “Closing the gap for immigrant students” (OECD, 2010) shows that developing policies and curricular adaptations at the national level is not enough for closing the achievement gap between native and immigrant students. It also needs

institutional changes, made within every school, including changes in school leadership, teaching methodologies and school-home co-operation. NAOS wants to take a deeper look at what kind of institutional changes inside schools are needed by looking at the professional capacity in schools.

NAOS is complementary to the SIRIUS policy network carried out from 2012 - 2014. SIRIUS has promoted and enhanced knowledge transfer among stakeholders in order to improve the education of children and youngsters from migrant background. One of the focal points in SIRIUS was professional capacity. The difference between the SIRIUS activities in this area and the NAOS activities concern the specific focus on pre- and in-service modules for professional development as well as the inclusion of schools in the network.

The current project partners (see below) have been chosen on the basis of complex migration histories (Netherlands and Belgium), language instruction (Estonia and Lithuania), a variety of strategies for building professional capacity (Norway and Lithuania), economic crisis in combination with educational issues (Portugal and Greece) and new EU-countries facing future immigrants and educational challenges (Croatia and Cyprus). All partners in the NAOS network are centres of expertise which will yield critical, theoretical and empirical contributions to the development of knowledge and practice on professional capacity. In each of the countries, the centre of expertise will connect to a set of schools and support the NAOS activities.



The NAOS partners:

Name of the Organisation
Risbo B.V.
Forum za slobodu odgoja
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO
Public Policy and Management Institute
Tartu Rahvusvaheline Kool Tartu International School MTÜ
PAIDAGOGIKO INSTITOUTO KYPROU - CYPRUS PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE
University of Patras
UNIVERSITEIT ANTWERPEN
Algemeen Pedagogisch Studiecentrum
HOGSKOLEN I OSTFOLD

The study visits: content and procedure

A review of the literature ((Severiens, Wolff, & Van Herpen, 2014) shows that strengthening professional capacity with the aim to stimulate school success among diverse groups of migrant students asks for expertise in five content areas.

1. Urban teachers (or teachers in classrooms with diverse student populations) should first of all know about language development in classes of pupils whose first language is not the language of instruction.
2. These teachers should be competent in using pedagogic and didactic resources that support the learning of all their pupils. Diverse classes need different didactic resources and different types of instruction than homogeneous classrooms. If schools and teachers are committed to encouraging the talents of all their pupils they should have knowledge of the use of teaching materials, methods and types of instruction designed for diverse classes.
3. Urban teachers should know about social psychology issues such as stereotyping, teacher expectations and ethnic-identity development issues.
4. Urban teachers that succeed in engaging the parents of their diverse pupils as well as
5. Cooperate with community organisations on a basis of equality will further support school achievement in their urban schools.

The review by Severiens et al (ibid) concludes that if schools are committed to increasing achievement among migrant groups, and closing the achievement gap, they should facilitate high levels of professional capacity in these areas of expertise.

NAOS organizes ten study visits in a period of three years. The general aim of these study visits is to collect and exchange good practices between schools. These good practices concern one of the areas of expertise as described above. In this way, each area of expertise will be the topic of two separate study visits.

Each of the ten partners was asked to choose an area of expertise and indicate two schools with a good practice in this area. During the kick-off-meeting the distribution of areas of expertise was made as follows:

Organizing Partner	Visiting partner 1 (writers)	Visiting partner 2	Theme
Belgium	Netherlands	Greece	School-community relationships/parent participation
Greece	Croatia	Norway	Social psychology
Norway	Netherlands	Cyprus	Language/pedagogy/social psychology
Croatia	Portugal	Lithuania	School - community relationships
Cyprus	Belgium	Netherlands	social psychology/School - community relationships
Estonia	Greece	Belgium	Pedagogy
Lithuania	Cyprus	Estonia	Language/pedagogy
Portugal	Estonia	Netherlands	School-community relationships/pedagogy
Netherlands	Lithuania	Croatia	School-community relationships/language
Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	Pedagogy



Some partners indicated that whereas the distinction in the five areas of expertise could be made on a conceptual level, in practice many schools combine different areas and conduct activities in several areas at the same time. For example, often parent participation and school-community relationships are combined, but other combinations are also possible. The schedule above describes how the areas of expertise are combined in each of the study visits.

The focus during the study visits is on the good practice itself, but especially on the in-service training or professional development activity that supported the development of the good practice. Two general questions guide the study visits:

1. What does the good practice entail?
2. How were the teachers prepared for this good practice?

These general questions are transformed into more detailed questions that refer to the specific area(s) of expertise and are relevant given the context of the study visit (Appendix 1). In general, a distinction is made between questions regarding the context, the goals of the good practice, the activities, and the professional development activities.

The term pedagogy can be interpreted as how the teachers consider the subject matter to be taught in schools dependent on age, type of school etc. One might also call it 'the art of teaching', but that may be a too simplistic approach to the concept of pedagogy, since it raises many more questions than it answers. Pedagogy takes up the "what, why and how" in the subject matter. The 'what' deals about the subject itself, what is exiting and necessary to teach in classrooms, what is the history of the subject matter, it's epistemology, what are central issues within the subject and what is peripheral, what is lasting and still actual to teach and what is obsolete and must be changes etc. The 'why' is about the justification and legitimation of the subject taught in schools, and the 'how' deals with the methodology of the teaching in the classroom, the organisation of the curriculum, facilitation and presentation, increasing and promoting learning. This is also the reason why a teacher must have a conscience attitude to knowing how students learn, be critical and ask questions about their own teaching and who the students are, their colleagues and leadership. In particular we are preoccupied with practice related to how the schools understand and consider implementation of their educational mandate in a multicultural context. Hence, a multicultural approach provides a means to explore how the schools handle challenges regarding values

of respect and recognition, and the adaptation of teaching to individual minority students' needs. Nevertheless, multicultural education is considered to be basic education and it is pervasive and for all students (Nieto, 2004). It is also anti-racist education and education for social justice (ibid.). Multicultural education is a process as it involves primarily relationships between people, and because it concerns such intangibles as expectations of student achievement, learning environments, students' learning preferences, and other cultural variables. Banks' (2004) five dimensions of multicultural education (content integration, prejudice reduction, knowledge construction, equity education, empowering school culture) provide an additional tool to display how the schools conceptualize and operationalize inclusion and diversity (ibid.). Moreover, the equity education dimension opens up for understanding the extent of school leaders' efforts regarding strategies for engaging in and contributing to staff development in order to support teachers' modification and adaptation of their teaching to the needs of the diversity of students.



Participants: Tom Tudjman (Risbo), Ronald Nolet (Østfold University College), Sofia Marques Silva (University of Porto), Vanessa d'Egidio visiting scholar at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Maria Teresa dos Santos Borges (visiting scholar at Erasmus University Rotterdam), Pelo Flaris (visiting scholar at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Sabine Severeins (Risbo), Afke Weltevrede (Risbo), Fred Carlo Andersen (Østfold University College, photographer)

The study visit started with a presentation by the organizing partner (Risbo) on education in the Netherlands and the diversity context of Amsterdam. The hosting partner organized and participated in the visit to two schools. The visiting partners were Norway and Porto University. In total, a group of 5 visiting participants took part in the study visit, among which were teachers, teacher educators, and researchers, all with expertise in migrant education. During the two school visits all participants took turns taking notes (observations and notes of interviews), which were shared with the partner responsible for writing the report (Norway). The writing partner has analysed the notes and written the report according to the general questions and the basic categories (context, goals, teaching and learning activities, and professional development).

Content of this report

This report will describe the 10th NAOS study visit that took place on 23rd and 24th of March 2017. Both the introduction as well the school visits will be described in separate chapters. The report will conclude with some general reflective notes.

Super-diversity in the Netherlands

Approximately 20% of the population of the Netherlands consists of people with a non-Dutch origin. This is a relatively large inhabitants' ratio and is predominantly characterized by the post-War surge of economic migrants in the 1950s, as well as a slightly more recent influx of people from former Dutch colonies (Suriname, Dutch Antilles). In addition, people from Turkey and Morocco constitute nearly 5% of the total population. A large number of these people arrived to fill in an increased demand for manual labour.

The situation in the large cities in the Netherlands is different. The 10th study visit was held in Amsterdam, the capital and most populous municipality of the Netherlands. It has 834.713 inhabitants, consisting of 180 nationalities. It can be termed a super-diverse city where the percentage minorities is now 51%. The largest minority groups are more evenly spread, though a significant number of the low SES population lives in neighbourhoods near



Amsterdam Oost (East) and the Bijlmer district (the latter is the neighbourhood where one of the schools we will visit is located).

Context & challenges in Amsterdam

In a general effort not to upset the highly upheld principle of “freedom of choice”, the city council in Amsterdam has ran across a challenge in regards to regulating how parents choose the schools for their children. It is commonplace for middle-class parents to take school reputation and academic achievement as the chief factors when selecting the educational environment of their soon-to-be pupils (Weiner, 2016). This has caused, and is continuing to cause, a vicious cycle effect of good-achieving schools remaining good, and low-achieving schools remaining average. Parents of this socio-economic status most often want their children to go to schools where the other parents of students are of similar background and educational attainment (Boterman, 2013). Most people from Amsterdam will happily declare that they enjoy the diversity in the city, and claim that the Dutch are some of the most tolerant and open-minded individuals in Europe. Yet, that is not necessarily reflected when it comes to strengthening educational efforts.

The government has not officially attempted to de-segregate schools through matching the proportions of culturally diverse and local students among schools in Amsterdam. It is common, for instance, that a mixed-neighbourhood’s schools largely consist of what have been labelled “white schools” and “black schools”. When deciding on enrolment, officials are often not considering student diversity, or at least not placing it near the top of the priorities hierarchy. For the purpose of context and comparison, it is not rare to hear of schools nearer 10-90, or 20-80, as well as fully segregated Muslim-schools in bigger cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

Experience from form our school visit at Lumnion school demonstrated that children in mixed schools perform better in conflict-resolution tasks, as well as in civic skill tasks than children in homogeneous white or black schools. People are becoming more aware that academic achievement has to be seen contextually; for example, a school that performs near the average on nationwide levels but is comprised of students who did not speak Dutch when first entering school, is naturally more commendable than a predominantly Dutch-born student-population school that is performing similarly. Part of the efforts on the side of policy

could then for instance look to promote the choice of the former school for a Dutch-born family over the latter school, on grounds of achieving a better balance, which in the end could very likely prove more beneficial to both the local as well as the culturally diverse students.

The Dutch school system

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for the financing of the educational system, regulation of the general education policy and stipulating admission requirements and structure. It's generally interesting to keep in mind that at all levels (primary, secondary and higher education), a tendency towards imposing fewer rules and regulations has been prominent in the Netherlands, permitting institutions to be accountable but free in the manner they implement government policy.

Primary education serves children in the 4-12 age group and is obligatory from the age of 5. This type of education lasts 8 years and is provided by schools for primary education (basisonderwijs) or special education (speciaal onderwijs). Depending on the individual results and preferences, pupils move on to secondary education (voortgezet onderwijs). At the end of the last year of primary education, pupils select a type of secondary education; the choice is made based on: i) a recommendation from their school, ii) students' own preference, and more often than not iii) a national test known as the Cito-toets. It is worth noting that the popularity of the Cito is in decline, as many within the Dutch society are highly critical over whether it is a representative and equitable measure of student competence (see e.g., <http://www.hpdetijd.nl/2014-01-06/cito-toets-afschaffen-of-niet-de-argumenten-op-een-rij/> for a discussion in Dutch).

General secondary education lasts 5 or 6 years and is compulsory for pupils up to the age of 16. Students can choose between two types of education, both of which start with a junior stage (onderbouw). The onderbouw lasts 2 or 3 school years, depending on the type of secondary education. At the end of the second year, pupils in most school types receive advice on which type of education is best for them to follow. Within general secondary education (algemeen voortgezet onderwijs), there are two types of education: pre-university education (voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs, VWO) with a study duration of 6 years, and senior general secondary education (hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs,



HAVO), which lasts 5 years. The study programme in general secondary education concludes with a national examination in 7 subjects (VWO) or 6 subjects (HAVO). To commence the transition to higher education, all pupils must select one of the four clusters: culture and society, economics and society, science and health, or science and technology. Preparatory secondary vocational education (voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs, VMBO) is the vocational education equivalent in the Netherlands and takes 4 years to complete. It also starts with a basic stage for 2 years, and concludes with a learning track and a sector. The four possible sectors of the VMBO of which students get to choose one are: technology, economics, health and personal care, & agriculture. Within each sector, pupils can select from four learning tracks (leerwegen): the basic vocational track, advanced vocational track, the combined track, and the theoretical track. The theoretical track provides admission to the HAVO and to the vocational training (vakopleidingen) and management training (middenkaderopleidingen) in senior secondary vocational education (middelbaar beroepsonderwijs, MBO). The other tracks do not provide admission to the HAVO, but serve as a good preparation for senior secondary vocational education (MBO).

Senior secondary vocational education (middelbaar beroepsonderwijs, MBO) prepares pupils for work or a subsequent study programme. This type of education follows on from the VMBO; the length of the study programme depends on the qualification chosen. Senior secondary vocational education has four training levels: qualification level 1, assistant training (assistentopleiding) has a study duration of an ½ to 1 year and is concluded with an assistentopleiding diploma; qualification level 2 basic vocational training (basisberoepsopleiding) has a study duration of 2 to 3 years and is concluded with a basisberoepsopleiding diploma; qualification level 3 vocational training (vakopleiding) lasts 2 to 4 years and is concluded with a vakopleiding diploma. The management training (middenkaderopleiding) at qualification level 4 lasts about 4 years and is the only level within MBO that provides admission to higher professional education (hoger beroepsonderwijs, HBO).

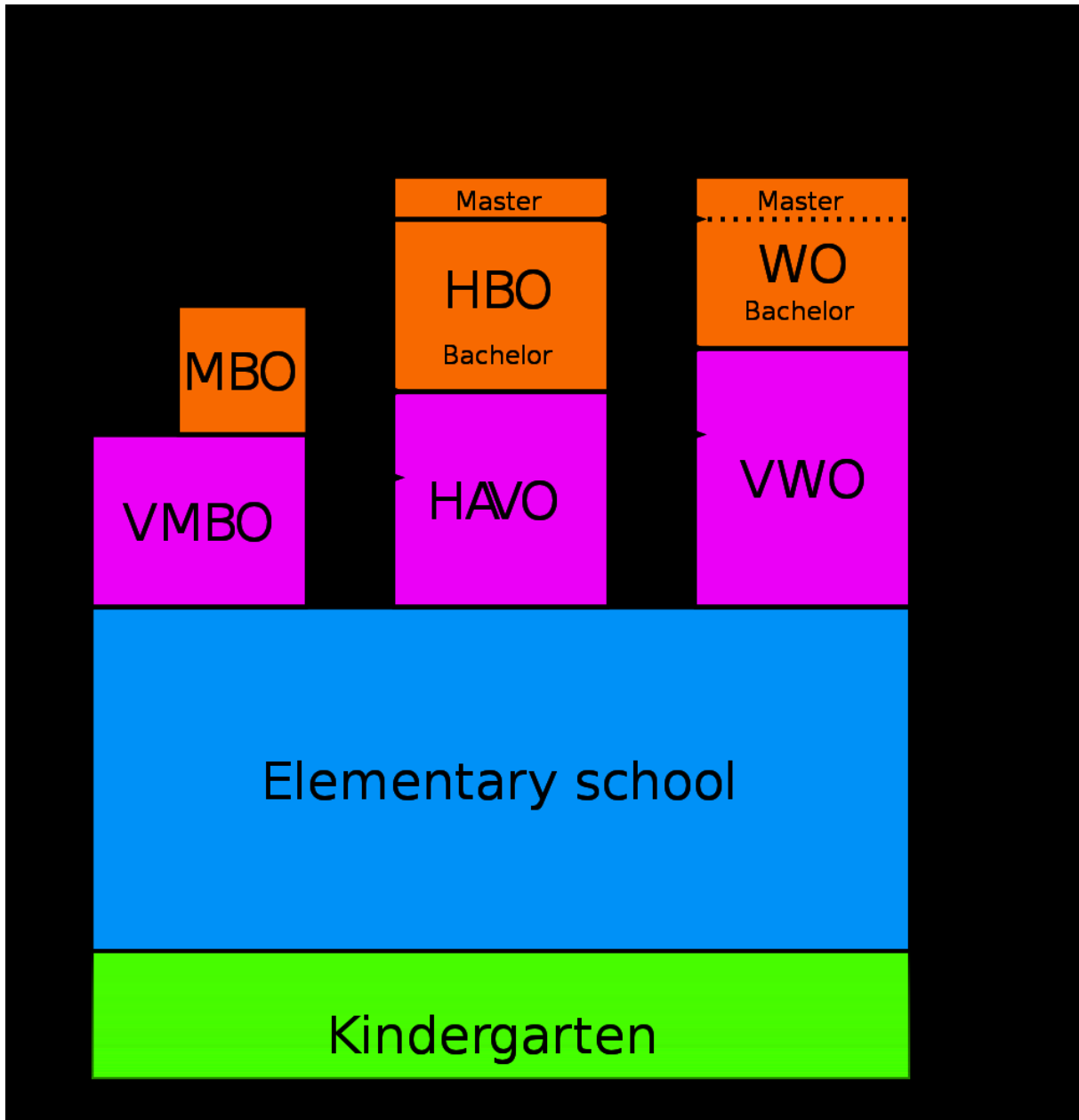


Figure 2.1: schematic overview of the Dutch school system.



2 *School visits*

We made two school visits, at Lumion and de Rozermarn. The first one is a secondary school, situated in West Amsterdam, in the neighbourhood of Nieuw Sloten. The second school is an elementary school, de Rozemarn School, which is located in the Bijlmer district, south-east of the centre of Amsterdam.

School visit 1

We visited Lumion March 23rd. The neighbourhood has a very diverse population with many nationalities, religions and cultures. The school was established in 2012, and serves students taking either of the VWO, HAVO, and MAVO programs.

The school emphasizes personal relationships within the faculty and the students and their families, as well as the formation of a critical social consciousness for its future graduates. It has been so popular in the past few years that a new building is set to be built and accommodate the increasing numbers of students by 2019. The school started with 100 students and has grown ever since. Today (2017) the school has 700 students, 60 teachers, 3 team leaders and a principal. Due to the vast growing student population a new school building is under construction in order to meet the demand for the following years as the school expect it to develop. For the time being, the students are situated in two buildings, close to each other. The teachers are organized in five different teams, where each teacher is responsible for their own students. The tasks the teachers have in their teams are to follow up the students' wellbeing, their grades and contact with their parents, making personal developmental plans for and following up the grades of their students, besides taking active participation in the Lumion Academy.

The goals of the good practice

The goals refer to personalized education, exchange of knowledge, sharing competence, developing the professionalism of the staff, and creating awareness and positive attitudes to the students' diverse backgrounds.

Teaching and learning activities

Interview with the principal

Our findings at Lumion are amongst others that the leadership facilitates the possibilities for teachers to work with their own development as stated above. The weekly meetings during the Lumion Academy gives the incentives to broaden the teachers view on their own professional development as teachers. They discuss pedagogical issues and develop new knowledge on teaching and coaching in order to improve their own standards. Attendance at the Lumion Academy is compulsory for all teachers, and is the main forum for exchange of knowledge, sharing competence, developing the professionalism of the staff, and creating awareness and positive attitudes to the students' diverse backgrounds.

Most classes begin with language exercises and to let the students 'bath' in language. They have introduced 'word walls' where the teachers and the students put the important words (Dutch) used for the lessons on the walls of the classrooms. The lessons start with reading individually from a book etc. for about ten minutes. The teachers divide students into different groups according to their abilities; intensive groups that need additional help from the teachers or from other students (scaffolding), proficient groups (who are self-sufficient and who are able to help students from an intensive group). These groups are not fixed but can be changed depended on the subject matter taught and competences of the student.

The school has chosen a schedule with bulks of lessons of four hours in a row. The reason for this is that when teachers have students for a longer period, they are more able to adjust their lessons to the needs and the rhythm of the personal learning process of the student. It is common for schools to use a schedule where the lessons will only last for one hour and then to break up in the middle of something that actually needed more time, especially for students that are not nearly as good as native Dutch speakers. All the teachers that were interviewed during our visit comprehended this fact. An important credo at the Lumion is that all teachers have a personalized approach to 'see each student'. As a consequence the students have only two 'classes' a day, lasting for four hours each, and the lessons are interdisciplinary where students are working in sessions. Through these measures the school is encouraging the students to adapt the concept of 'independent to self-responsible learning'.

Interview with the teachers

Some important remarks that were made during the interviews with the teachers on the question on how they would describe their school 'credo', one teacher answered and others nodded:

The students need to feel confident, safe and secure in school. Every student must feel to be respected for his or her background, religious and cultural. In order to obtain that are the (unwritten) school rules. These rules (counts for both students as the teachers and leaders) are: 'show respect', 'no bullying', and 'no fights'.

In other words, the teachers made it clear that school does not want to have 'a street culture' in their schools. On the question of who made the rules and who decides what is to be done when these rules are broken, the answer was that the teachers, often in a team, decide what response or reaction should be given in each case. However, the school has not experienced many episodes of problematic behavior, and it seems that students fully respect the rules of the school. Although there have been some minor episodes, they were solved in accordance to the principles of the school rules. These episodes were not merely based on ethnic, religious or cultural differences, although there was observed a certain tension between the Turkish students after the attempt of a coup d'état against Erdogan in 2016.

The teachers express that they are aware and conscience about the diversity of the student population that consists of 28 nationalities born in 17 different countries. Even though the teachers are aware of the great diversity of the student population, they do not want or choose to make a point out of that during the lessons or elsewhere in the school. They want to see the students as individuals or rather as persons (the personalized approach) 'without color'. In our interviews the teachers made a point of not addressing diversity, and state that every student are to be treated equally. 'Diversity is not an issue' as one teacher stated during one of the interviews at Lumion.

Interview with the students

The students emphasize their teachers' care and love for them. They express that they are closely followed up by their teachers, and they appreciate the teachers' personal approach. Still, at the same time, the students report that they feel that the school is very Dutch in its'

approach, especially when it comes to discussing different world political issues. They say that their education (i.e. the teaching) is too Western-oriented and takes too little attention to the countries they feel they are a part of. The students who were chosen to be interviewed came from Morocco, Turkey and Indonesia. On the question whether the students would like to see and have less Western-oriented approaches to Geography, Social Science and History, they agreed that is that what they would like to. As one student expresses:

I think it would be great if we didn't just learn about the Dutch history, but more about the world, even if we don't discuss about the Dutch history it's mostly European History or America. It would also be great to learn a little more about Asia, for instance

Professional development

The Lumion Academy is held once a week in the afternoon, on every Tuesday. The Lumion Academy meetings assesses the students' development, and they have sessions where the teachers are learning from each other through coaching, digital learning and teaching in sessions. Sometimes the school leadership calls in external expertise on issues where expertise is needed, addressed during the Lumion Academy meetings. The school has, with other words developed a culture for sharing expertise amongst each other. Each teacher has a personal development scheme they have to fill in, consisting of four levels on the following issues:

Mastering (the lessons), coaching (the students), (class) leadership, research development and reflections (on their profession). The outspoken goal of the school is personalized education.

School visit 2

The second school visit took place on March 24th at de Rozemarn School in a district which in previous years was considered deprived, and its inhabitants (and consequently young students) often viewed through a deficit prism. Bijlmer has been described as a neglected area, home to a large number of ethnic groups of low socioeconomic status (SES). The last few years increased efforts (artistic & civil) have improved the district reputation significantly.



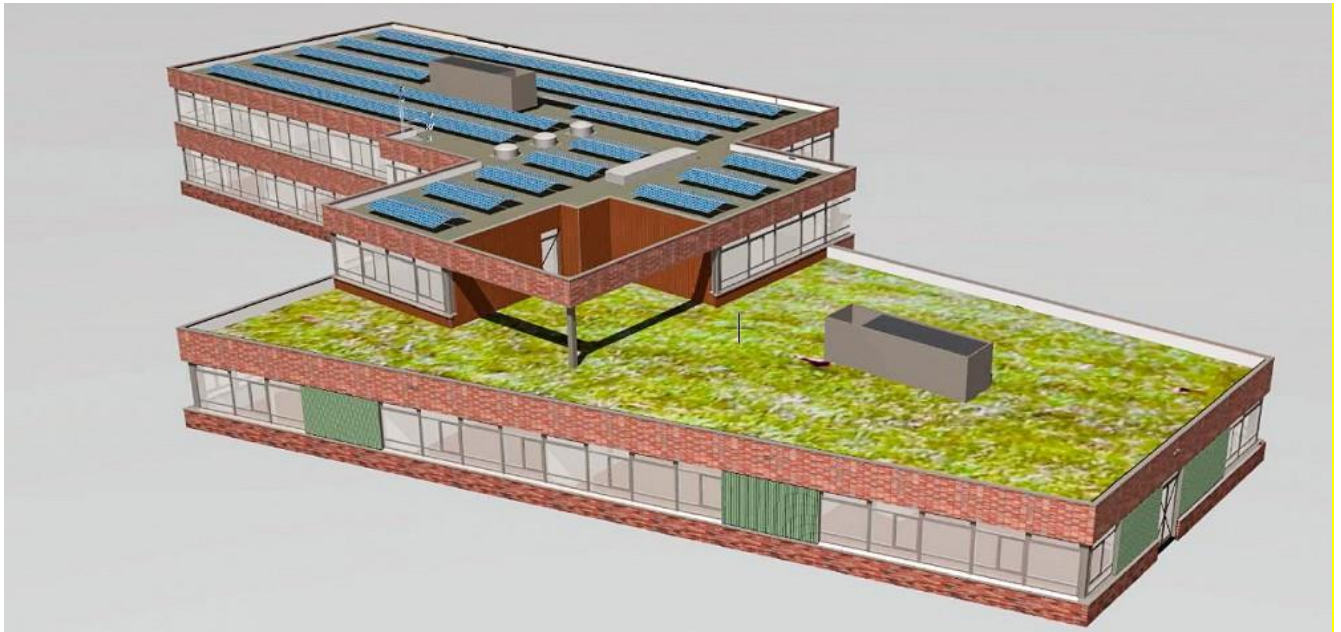
De Rozemarn has received positive evaluations on academic achievement, and is a self-proclaimed “art-magnet school”, as well as a school focusing on active and competitive sport. It is a school that prides itself on being open to all, regardless of the economic status of the parents or the ethnic group that a student belongs to. There are 320 pupils at the school, 28 teachers, one principal and one assistant principal. Although most of the students are born in the Netherlands, there are very few children with Dutch parents. The biggest groups origin from Morocco, several African countries, India, Pakistan, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Surinam, and Cuba. During the visit, we spoke with the principal and the co-principal, two

teachers, and pupils. The principal and the assistant school principal took over their classes when we interviewed the teachers.

The school construction obviously displayed that the school was established in 1977. A completely new de Rozemarn school will be ready from August 2017.



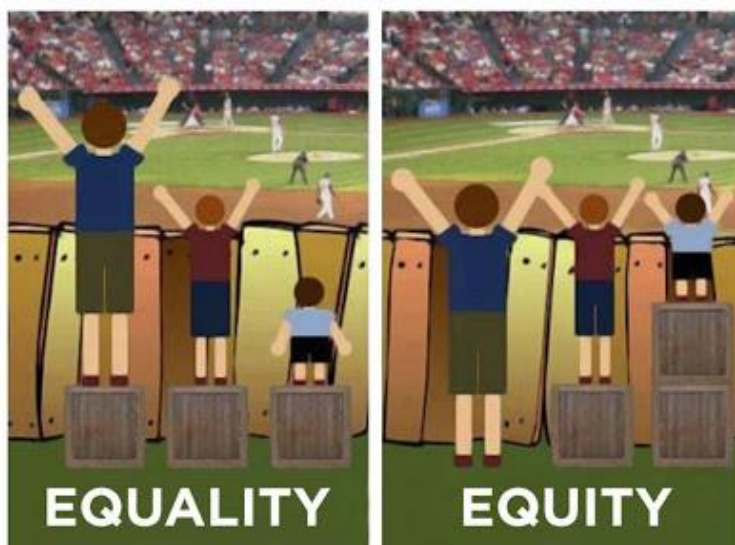
The Rozemarn School 2017



The Rozemarn School 2018 future project picture

The goals of the good practice

This school was selected because it emphasizes the importance of equal opportunities to succeed for all pupils, and for its good work and high ambitions for the highly diverse student population. A guiding question for the establishment of the school's goals refers to ensuring equal opportunities for all students.



The principal and assistant principal emphasized the increased risk growing up in poverty with regard to lack of resources leading to low education level and less chance to get a job. Moreover, the socio economic background may often also affect the opportunity of entrance to the housing market and even participating in social life. The principal and assistant principal presented the school's understanding of diversity as related to ethnicity, cultural background, cognitive skills, socio economic background, and identity. They emphasized that from their point of departure dealing with different forms of diversity begins with a vision of education and results in giving good education.

In sum, de Rozemarn school displayed the school's goal to be that all students ought to receive an education which gives equal opportunity for all students to succeed based on equity and the recognition and respect for the students' diverse preconditions. In the next chapter we present the school's perceptions of how to obtain the goal through teaching and learning activities.

Teaching and learning activities

Interview with the school leaders

The principal and the assistant principal in their presentation of the school underscored the importance of acknowledging the wide range of diversity within the student population. They scheduled how they dealt with the differences, with reference to the needs of the students and their parents, the vision and the goal of the school, the wide range of possibilities which were anchored among the teachers at school, the cooperation with partners outside the school, including parents, and the policy and organizational forms of the school. The principal emphasized:

The ever-increasing gap between poor and rich in the neighbourhood and its effect in our school and classroom. The involvement and commitment of parents at the school. How can we shape parents as educational partner? We are aware that we are often found for emergency services. We continue to formulate the possible help questions and ambitions. Part of the causes of the challenges we experience in school are sometimes outside of the school itself and there are also limits to what the school can contribute to the development of her students.

Nevertheless, the school leadership role in teaching and learning activities was presented as initiating policies on an integrated process, setting clear goals, develop clear procedures, roles and task, and creating appropriate conditions for employees and other stakeholders.



Furthermore, the school leaders presented the school's vision on education, formulated as increasing opportunities for children starting from behind (the majority of their peers), develop and cultivate multi-ethnic team in a safe environment, acting in a timely manner, targeted on yield and quality. The principal and the assistant principal further emphasized that de Rozemarn ought to be a school in society, which means that it needs to take the diverse context surrounding the school into account when planning, doing and evaluating teaching and learning activities.

We asked what kind of rights the students have when it comes to language acquisition, referring to the Norwegian school law, which give students access to mother tongue teachers and subject teaching in their first language. The principal remembered the curriculum for foreign students (Turkish, Spanish etc), and that the government had skipped it several years ago. He referred to private initiatives and some classes on Saturdays organized by themselves, without any financial support from the school.

With reference to equity, pointed out the paradox of working for equity without having the possibility of using an interpreter when talking to parents who could not understand Dutch or English. The school leaders agreed. The principal helped with Spanish speaking parents, though, but acknowledged the challenges with parents of Urdu or Arabic as their first language.

We brought up the question of colorblindness, exoticification and celebration of different cultures through festivals, food, art and clothes. They asked that they saw the challenge of exoticification, and stated that they preferred to "pay attention to differences half way". Their goal was to actively pay attention to everybody. Likewise, "The important thing is that they feel that they are worth something, that they matter. And we are very well aware of these ditches." Nevertheless, an important issue when it comes to focusing on differences is language.

'Good readers make good citizens', the principal pointed as an argument for focusing on language, referring to vocabulary as a predictor of reading skills. Therefore, he stated, it is important to identify challenges and initiate early interventions, and let teachers, and school leaders, cooperate to find good opportunities, for example teaching time extension. In turn, conditions for this may be continuity in school policy and high quality education.



“We try more than average to increase the social skills of our students, so that they can grow into full-fledged active citizens of Amsterdam”, the assistant principal stated, adding: “We want to prevent our students from developing an image that education does not pay, but walking other paths does.” De Rosemarn also invest much attention to language and computing.

Besides the school leaders stated that a lot of attention and appreciation are given to other talents than language and computing, such as football and other activities outside school. This is considered relevant regarding the positive role models, which will be available for students to identify with. Moreover, as the school leaders pointed out, “an actively involved neighbourhood, grows into an actively involved neighbourhood resident, and an actively involved people from Amsterdam”. Likewise, referring to the school’s role with regard to democracy and citizenship, “with a “student council” we aim to increase the democratic awareness among our students.” The school leaders pointed out that they want to give the best education for the students to be ready for the society. The principal referred to economic resources as a restricting aspect, and the need for him to providing more money to the school. He actively was looking for funding for more teaching materials, best possible learning conditions, equipment for the playground, recruiting good teachers etc by meeting policy makers. When asked if he thinks that school leaders need particular training or skills to lead a school like this, he answered:

Yes. Must be a negotiator, look for opportunities to invest for your school, although nobody pays me for that, but I need to be in contact with politicians, lobbying. That is legitimate. To have open door, show empathy, entrepreneur. – It means that you must look for the means beyond what the government provides. Look for opportunity to get the best for the students.

One driving force for the initiatives mentioned above was that he feared that teachers at de Rozemarn would take the opportunities to take a job in a different school if the conditions for doing a good job were absent. However, he emphasized that “this school has teachers with a mission, and I do not think they will leave easily.” When it comes to recruiting teachers, the school have many applicants, but, as the principal underscored:

Not all are fit for our standards. We need to know why they apply for a job in this school district and this particular school. We need to know if they really want to bring the kids further. You cannot apply for a job here because you cannot find another job somewhere else.

The interview with two of the teachers gave a clear indication of dedication to their mission of giving the students an equity and inclusive education.



Pupil activities at Rozemarn illustrating focus on creativity and open mindness.

Interview with the teachers

The teachers initially emphasized what they had experienced regarding motivation for learning, stating that the minority students “really want to learn...., and they learn from their parents to respect the teachers.” This was something they appreciated as teachers.

We asked how the students’ diverse backgrounds impact how they plan and teach. They underscored that to origin from different places is very normal, not something strange. “They have different background, but we see children, not color of the skin.” Sometimes they ask students to explain how they deal with different issues in their parents’ country of origin. They explain themes, history, words etc. At Christmas or Easter they have a dinner when they prepare food which fits all groups. For example, halal. They also keep in mind important days, for example celebrating the ending of slavery, and the end of Ramadan. Sometimes the teachers use the students’ background and let them tell about different aspects from their background. Likewise, although it does not happen very often, but for example if a student speak Arabic at home, sometimes his/her language is being used in school during a teaching session.

We asked how they were able to approach equity education when there are many who have low Dutch linguistic proficiency. “How do you make students understand the content of a subject, for example?” They use pictures to explain, and try to “do the things that you explain”. When our question regarding use of a mother tongue teacher came up, we had to explain more thoroughly what we meant by a mother tongue teacher. The acknowledged that they did not have mother tongue teachers. However, they explained. “These students are small kids, and we use lots of material, pictures, models and other artifacts. Besides, we have parents who speak English, and most of the students know at least some English.” A comment from one of the teachers indicates that linguistic proficiency is highly crucial: I have children with parents who do not speak Dutch, and their parents do not understand one word. Not even English. An interpreter would have helped a lot in such situations.” Yet another important point was made with reference to the challenge of helping the parents to understand the Dutch school system about the structure, expectations, parents’ role, the school’s role etc.

The teachers also mentioned several important points about approaching the teaching and learning for the students, such as discussing social skills, preparation for the larger and global society, speak out high expectations, computer programs, and the use of different learning arenas outside school.

At de Rozemarn professional development of the staff in order to cope with linguistic and cultural diversity is reported as a crucial part of the activities to create an equity and inclusive school.

Professional development

The quality of teachers and the education offerings are central. De Rozemarn aims to be an active and especially involved part in the neighbourhood. After all, over 95% of our students live within 600 meters of the school. The school ensures optimal attention and guidance of the students. This requires a proactive and enterprising attitude. “This is precisely why more education needs to be invested in our area, so that the best staff can work with the best resources in the best school buildings”, the principal pointed out. The school shed light on the fact that aggression has to be addressed, so that the school's and local residents' staff are feeling well enough. The school provides a supplementary educational offer, including

aims at increasing of the social skills and social integration of the students and their parents in the neighbourhood. De Rozemarn cooperates with various partners in the local district to develop an extra-curricular programme offered to promote the social integration of the students. The school is particularly preoccupied with investing in starting teachers.

Interview with the school leaders

The school leaders emphasized the importance of parent involvement as highly important with regard to linguistic and cultural diversity. The parents really want to get involved, but have difficulties because they have to work a lot in order to survive and supply the whole family. Besides many also do not know how they can help their children with school work. Some parent may also believe that as long as the child is at school, it is the school's full responsibility to deal with education. And they do not have to or want to interfere. However, the school emphasizes that both the parents and the school are responsible for education and raising the child, and that it is a question of doing this together in cooperation. The school leaders reported about frictions in cooperation which in turn was a question of professional development:

Well, there may be some friction., because the teachers are used to have their class and their class room, and they decide what to do....So when we allowed parents to come to see in the class room, there were some tension, yes....But we want the parents to come to the class room, where they can help and support. After all they are the experts on their own child. We want (principal) to stand as a good example – to have an open door policy. For example, if parents complain they shall know that they can come to my office, and I will invite them to talk to the teacher and discuss what to do. And they can all sit in my office and discuss with me. We have run a training program about how to deal with the difficult conversation. All the teachers have been through that program.

In particular, when it comes to professional development, the school leaders argued that young teachers need more training, skills and knowledge to deal with differences and complexity. They emphasized that when it comes to communicating with different cultures:

It starts with asking questions, it starts with opening your mind – these are important skills that they often lack from teacher training. Be interested in other cultures, because they will not leave. This is their home, and they have come to stay. We need to realize and acknowledge this as a fact.

Regarding the efforts to increase the teachers' intercultural skills, for the principal, it seemed to be a question of time. "No, I do not have the time, but if we see there are problems, I give them literature to read and talk to them."

Through the interview we became aware that the two school leaders were particularly interested in the themes that we wanted to discuss with them. At the end of the interview, we asked how come they seemed to be are so interested in these matters. The principal ironically answered that he is an expert since he is born and raised in Amsterdam, with parents from Surinam. The assistant principal replied that her parents also came from abroad, and working in this area made her recognize some things that she had experienced herself, and that made her particularly dedicated to the work.

As we left the school leaders' office, we noticed the photo of Martin Luther King jr.

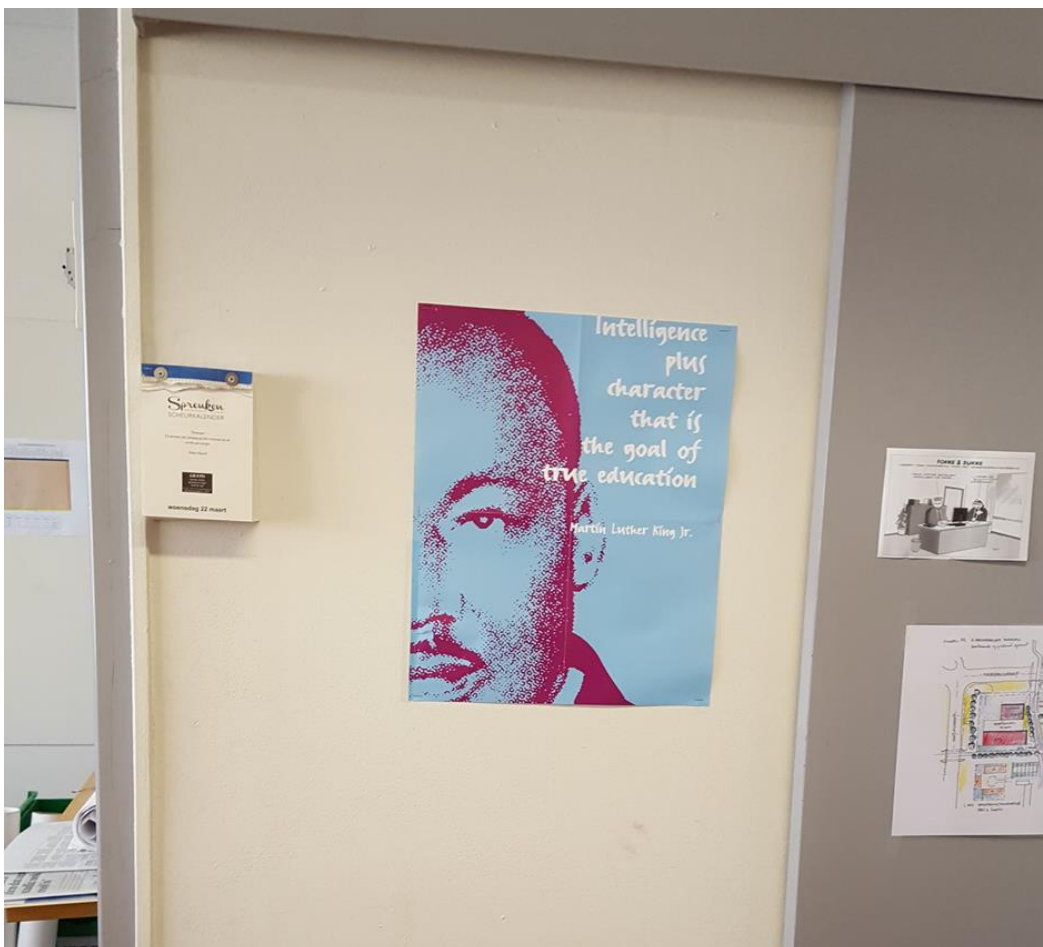


Photo of Martin Luther King jr. from the principal and assistant principal's office.

Interview with the teachers

The school's staff have study days, to follow up what happens in school, and they get extra lessons how to manage different topics. They refer to how to prepare children to look at art, and to be open minded, for example by asking a question like – what can we do with a shoe?



What can we do with a shoe?

We asked the teachers if they had topics about diversity. They answered no, but they have had “something about managing critical conversation.” One of the teachers (with a migrant background) emphasized that when it comes to linguistic and cultural diversity “I see them as children, and sometimes I tell them that they have to work harder because they are immigrants. When I am teaching I do not think of ...you are from there, and you are from there.” The teacher also said that sometimes she needs to tell the children that color and difference are relevant, because employers may look for last names when hiring new labor.



She claims that she has to orient students about the fact that they have to work hard in order to convince that they are good enough since they are immigrants.

In the interview one of us challenged the teacher to pretend that they were in a position to convince a highly qualified colleague from a different school to apply for a job at de Rozemarn. The teachers emphasized Rozemarn as a “very special school”, which have several challenges, such as diversity among parents. However, as the teacher explained, together as a team, they learn by discussing different subjects, such as identifying blind spots, social rules, how to cooperate to handle challenges. Likewise, the teacher emphasized the good collaboration among the colleagues in sharing and helping each other.

Interviews with the students

We interviewed seven students from the Rozemarn school. They were all, except from one student who was chosen by the teacher because of her English skills and being talkative and doing well at school, members of the student board. Their family background was very diverse coming from Ghana, Surinam and India; all were born in the Netherlands and most of them speak often Dutch at home, even though it seems that they master their parents’ languages.

During the interview they were asked several questions dealing with how the teachers and the school deal with diversity, pedagogically. In all aspects it seems that the teachers are taken their family background not only into account, but also uses their cultural knowledge actively during the lessons. On the questions how the teachers use their cultural competences some students explain that the teachers when a topic is raised ask students to enlighten the class about the specific topic. That might be matters of food, rituals, weddings etc. The students explain with examples of what and how the teachers go about, and how they feel about that. This confirms the statements the teachers and the school leaders made in their interviews.

We asked questions about the lessons whether the teachers are open for taking up racial issues, like the Dutch slave trade in History lessons, or using the student competences in Geography, they all (except from one nine year old student that has not reached that stage in history yet) nodded and spoke out that these kind of themes are discussed and spoken about

and that they even have gone to Central Amsterdam to the Golden Bench along the Herengracht (Herengracht) on an excursion, showing how the Dutch slave trade accumulated wealth on behalf of the black slaves transported from Africa (amongst Ghana) to Surinam, the Dutch Antilles and both south as north America.

The students seemed very aware of their cultural family background and they demonstrate and show both respect and pride. One question we asked was how they feel who they were; Dutch or Surinamese or Indian or Ganesh, and all of them were aware of the mixed identity. This gives us the notion and the impression that the teachers work actively on identity issues on a rather conscious and a high diverse level. We asked question on issues about what the students learn, and if they get support from their parents for the schoolwork, but most of the students made it clear that this was not necessary since the teachers are very good in explaining the content of the subject being taught.

We also asked question on deprivation and if the students are aware of the status of the surroundings they live in. One student answered that the Dutch welfare system is so well organized that they actually hardly experience poverty since the (local) Government offers the deprived support when needed. Besides the school offers activities to the students in their spare time, especially on Saturdays. No fines or membership payment has to be given to a sports club etc. Many students take advantage of this offer the school gives, where they can do sports, designing fashion clothes, and other cultural activities.

Finally we asked questions about their experiences on racial issues in school or elsewhere, and they made it very clear that no such issues are relevant at school, there is no bullying (which is seen as a great difference compared wither schools, or so they believe) but many of them have experienced racial discrimination outside school hours, close to home (neighbours) or in the streets where they live.



4 Summary and discussion

As noted in the introduction, NAOS' objective is to strengthen professional capacity in the partner countries and their respective schools. The following summarizes the findings and briefly discusses potential improvement with regard to teaching and learning activities, and professional development.

The school visits had the focus on pedagogy. In order to achieve personalized education, exchange of knowledge, sharing of competence, developing the professionalism of the staff, and creating awareness and positive attitudes to the students' diverse backgrounds, Lumion school have a great variety of approaches. In particular Lumion school emphasizes personal relationships within the faculty and the students and their families. Its focus is on the formation of critical social consciousness for its students. An important asset is that Lumion has developed compulsory meetings once a week called "The Lumion Academy", where pedagogical, didactical, organizational, and other matters are discussed. One crucial focus is coaching and developing pedagogical competence for the teachers and the staff. Another activity the school uses to facilitate teaching and learning is that they have a schedule that makes it possible for both students and teachers to follow a lesson for a long period of time. The schedule consists of four hours in a row. Moreover, several classes have language exercises in order to let the students 'bath' in language. Likewise, the introduction of "word walls", makes it possible for teachers and students to put important words (Dutch) used for the lessons on the walls of the classrooms.

Although the staff at Lumion is aware of the possibility of exoticification by highlighting the cultural and religious background of the student, it seems that they took pride in diversity. However, as a consequence, one interpretation may be that this may lead to colour-blindness.

Therefore there are two pitfalls to consider. One is about exoticifying (to make something exotic or what often is characterized as "couscous pedagogy" the differences in cultures and religion etc., by picking out certain exotic features of a population, highlighting that as representatives for that culture, religion etc. placing students on a pedestal for a moment. This would be a pitfall at de Rozemarn, but they seem to counter this by being conscious of it. Otherwise, this may lead to, and add to prejudices towards that certain culture or religion etc. Considering the position of a person (the teacher) it is ontologically impossible to place one

selves into the genuine other (the student) since their status, position, background, possibilities and experiences are different from one another. All teachers and students have different life-stories and interpret their lives differently from the others (Young, 2011). Therefore it is impossible to oversee the differences between peoples and not to take notion of their structural position in life (and at school). This refers to what we conceptualize as super-awareness.

The other pitfall is merely the opposite of exotification. This pitfall deals with 'Silent Diversity', i.e 'colour-blindness', which implies that one must have faith in the idea that it is possible for a human being to be objective and neutral. Objectivity and neutrality are often used as words of honour. Nevertheless, they are not only difficult (if not impossible) to obtain (i.e. to leave one own ethnocentricity and relativize their own cultural capital) but it is also a problematic issue.

There are indications that Lumion tries to bridge the challenge of silent diversity by personalizing the relationship between the teacher and the student. In Lumion the students are seen personally (not individually as such), but that however does not necessarily take into account that different people (students) have different needs, they have different cultural and social capital (Bourdieu) and it is crucial to understand (as teachers) and act accordingly and properly to these differences, by using the students' assets, advantages and competences and cultural capital. The 'color blind' approach builds also up under the idea of homogeneity. This might easily develop into the misunderstanding between what was so clearly emphasized at Rozemarn, the importance of differentiate between equality and equity.

By not recognizing diversity and heterogeneity as something useful in classrooms, as a tool to enrich the students, may lead to a belief that objectivity is possible in dealing with "the other". However, since we all are influenced by our own (dis) conceptions, it is merely impossible to exterminate our own positions and dispositions.

Interviews with the students at Luminon indicate that diversity is not felt as an issue at school. The students emphasize that teachers seem to be reluctant to use their backgrounds, their expertise in the cultures they represent. Moreover, the students claim that they are not seen as grateful contributors for the enrichment for both students and teachers. Even though the students mention interest in discussion, certain topics from presumably their



own cultural background, i.e. where their parents come from, like Morocco or Turkey, the teachers are reported to be somewhat restrained when it comes to opening up for discussions in the classroom. Furthermore, the students express that the school spends little time on issues relevant for them. The teaching is experienced as based on the traditional Dutch and Eurocentric way of thinking. Even though the school leadership has taken important measures to develop the school into a diverse institute, pedagogically there are indications that teachers still teach the subject matter (social science, geography or history, subjects that would suit very well to create reflections and metacognitive skills), with a rather traditional Eurocentric, Dutch approach. Thus, it seems to be that the school doesn't take in to account the background of the students.

In sum there seems to be a potential for strengthening the focus on developing an empowering school culture, i.e. the process of restructuring the culture and organization of the school so that minority students may experience educational quality and cultural empowerment. Likewise, there may be a potential to help students to understand, investigate, and determine how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is developed. One recommendation may be to deepen the knowledge and consciousness about the significance of linguistic minority students' linguistic and cultural background for learning and inclusion.

At our second school visit, at de Rozemarn, there are indications of a school culture where teachers and school leaders focus on creating learning environments that empower all students, how race, class, ability, or disability affect a student's ability to learn, who is marginalized, disadvantaged, excluded, and who is included and privileged. This may be illustrated by the school leaders' will to meet and confront policy makers and work toward reacting and alternate political and social imagination rooted in radical democratic struggle (Weiner, 2003). School leaders and staff had established initiatives to advocate inclusive strategies and involve all staff members and parents. In addition to ensuring that student learning is a priority, collective strategies was developed, and a common understanding of what it means to develop an inclusive school for minority students seemed to have been formed. One potential improvement may be the attention to expand the facilitation of students' ability to understand Dutch concepts in school subjects. It takes several years to develop a new language sufficiently for learning purposes. The students are put at risk of



lacking optimal learning conditions in school (Cummins, 2001) when the teaching is exclusively given in Dutch.



5 References

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Appendices

Amsterdam Questionnaire

Pedagogy

Main focus: goals of the good practice, the activities, professional development

	TEACHERS	PRINCIPAL
CONTEXT	<p>-Have you in your school experienced any form for bullying, rasism and/or other expressions of xenophobia amongst colleagues, students and/or parents?</p> <p>-How do you acknowledge racism in your school?</p> <p>-What is the context of your school/classroom?</p> <p>-What kind of group formation is made within school? (intercultural, homogeneous, etc)</p>	<p>- How will you describe the school</p> <p>- What are the characteristics of the school?</p> <p>-How would you describe the school's student population?</p> <p>-Who are described as minority students?</p> <p>-How would you describe the local context of the school, such as the quality of living, employment/unemployment, among the students' parents, socio-economic conditions for parents and students?</p> <p>-What are the school's basic values (e.g. visions of the school)?</p> <p>-How may I recognize those values?</p> <p>-Have you in your school experienced any form for bullying, racism and/or other expressions of xenophobia amongst colleagues, students and/or parents?</p> <p>-What is the history of the school concerning (projects in the area of) social psychology and Language?</p>



<p>GOALS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is the general school approach/ vision to diversity? -How may I recognize those values? -What's the background of this approach -What are the goals of these practices? -Focus on process or progress? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is the general school approach/ vision to diversity? -How may I recognize those values? -What's the background of this approach -What are the goals of these practices? -Focus on process or progress?
<p>ACTIVITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How do you reach these goals? -What are the main activities? -Do you have any specific measures with regard to avoid racism and discrimination at school? -Specific methods of developing self-identity to students? - Are there any curricular topics/tools/methods addressing the topics about racism, acceptance, tolerance, diversity? -In what ways are teaching methods and materials used to make students aware of their attitudes towards each other and towards 'other' cultures, and to promote understanding and tolerance - How to you make use of examples and content from a variety of cultures in the school's curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How do you reach these goals? -What are the main activities? -Do you have any specific measures with regard to avoid racism and discrimination at school? - How do they detect and minimize the reasons of social inequalities? -Specific methods of developing self-identity to students? - Are there any curricular topics/tools/methods addressing the topics about racism, acceptance, tolerance, diversity? -In what ways are teaching methods and materials used to make students aware of their attitudes towards each other and towards 'other' cultures, and to promote understanding and tolerance
<p>RESULTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To what extend do you reach the goals? -Do you feel satisfied with the activities? (teacher's perceptions). -Why/Why not? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To what extend do you reach the goals? -Do you feel satisfied with the activities? (principal's perceptions) -Why/Why not?



	<p>- In what ways do you consider minority students to be included?</p>	<p>- In what ways do you consider minority students to be included?</p> <p>-Does school keep data of students' perspectives/attitudes about "otherness" (racism, acceptance, tolerance, diversity)?</p>
<p>PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION</p>	<p>-How do you acknowledge bullying, racism and/or other expressions of xenophobia at school?</p> <p>-Is there an explicit or implicit training program/ policy at school?</p> <p>-How are you as a teacher supported to understand, investigate, and to determine how cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives and biases in the disciplines affect the construction of knowledge?</p> <p>-How do you get prepared for the activities?</p> <p>-How is the relationship between administrative tasks/ pedagogical tasks/ professionalization?</p>	<p>-What kind of preparation does the school offer to the teachers?</p> <p>-How do you support teachers to understand, investigate, and to determine how cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives and biases in the disciplines affect the construction of knowledge?</p> <p>-How do teachers influence on decision making in daily work?</p> <p>- How do school leaders open up for teachers to influence?</p> <p>- How is the relationship between administrative tasks/ pedagogical tasks/ professionalization?</p>

Language

- Any specific measures with regard to minority students with lack of elementary education from their country of origin?
- How do you deal with students that do not speak the Norwegian language well enough to follow the lessons? Do you place them in own groups? Or do you leave the students in the same classroom as the native Norwegian speakers?



- Does this school have specific tests to measure the Norwegian linguistic proficiency for minority students? If you have, what kind of tests do you use?
- Is there one among the staff, or a group of people, who has a specific responsibility regarding teaching and learning for minority students the Norwegian language?