

Exploration

Being a Teacher



Being a Teacher

More focus on personal professionalism

Colophon

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Exploration Being a Teacher

Dear Minister,

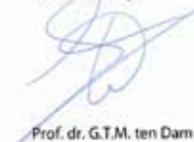
The Education Council notes that little attention is paid to the personal side of teaching as an occupation. Therefore, it has undertaken an exploration of the nature of the professionalism on the part of individual teachers in their everyday practice and (occupational) attitude.

As a social institution, the school is strongly influenced by developments in society. In view of their educational mission, teachers have to connect meaningfully with changes in the lifeworld of their pupils. These changes make occupational situations for teachers more complex, diverse, and unpredictable. The changing occupational context calls for sound professional knowledge and competence, and for personal professionalism that will enable individual teachers to make their own choices in specific practice situations on the basis of their educational values, and to account for these choices to relevant parties. In this way, they can achieve and maintain the necessary authority and space to act professionally.

Personal professionalism of teachers is not always present as a matter of course, but it determines to a considerable extent the quality of teachers' performance in their occupational practice, and consequently the quality of education. Therefore, as to debate and policy-making with respect to reinforcing the professionalism of teachers, the council calls for more explicit attention to the nature of this personal side of professionalism, and to the recognition of its importance.

Together with this exploration, the yearbook for the year 2012 will be published under the title *Wat drijft de leraar?* [*What drives the teacher?*]. In this yearbook, eight teachers from different educational sectors report about what they are faced with in their teaching practice.

Yours faithfully,



Prof. dr. G.T.M. ten Dam
Chair



Drs. A. van der Rest
Secretary

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Abstract

The teacher is of vital importance for the quality of our schools. Hence new (policy) initiatives are regularly taken to further strengthen the professionalism of teachers. These initiatives are chiefly directed to the 'outside' of the profession – the status and respect enjoyed by the occupational group, and much less to the 'inside' of teaching – the attitudes and actions of individual teachers in their daily teaching practice. Therefore the Education Council, in consultation with over 140 teachers and other experts, undertook the exploration reported here, to find out what is required of present-day individual teachers to do their daily work competently and professionally; what makes up their personal professionalism.

In recent decades, society, education, and schools have been substantially altered. Although a number of fundamental aspects of teaching have undergone little change, social developments have made the context of the profession more dynamic and unpredictable. In the present exploration the council describes the challenging and complex occupational practice of teachers, and calls for more attention, in debate and policy, to be paid to the personal professionalism needed for teachers' good performance inside and outside the classroom. For the benefit of debate and policy-making the council submits four considerations.

Consideration 1: knowing what you stand for and staying in dialogue about this with others

Professionalism requires knowing why you are acting the way you do, and what the teaching of pupils in your own school is aimed at. The question is not only what is possible or what should be done in a given situation, but also what teachers themselves consider desirable, valuable, or important. Being aware of their own professional values and goals, and being able to make these explicit, enables teachers to explain clearly to others what they regard as important in their teaching, and why. From this starting-point teachers can account for their actions, achieve authority, and enter into dialogue with others (colleagues, school management, parents, etc.) about their choices.

Consideration 2: complicated practical questions call for wise personal choices of teachers

In their occupational practice, teachers are regularly confronted with situations involving specific pupils, groups, associates, and goals that present complicated questions. No ready-made answers to these questions are available to guide teachers' practice. Teachers are themselves continually required to make (quick) choices in their specific practice situation about what is the most suitable action. From teachers this calls for a well-developed capacity to make judgments: practical wisdom. This practical wisdom is not directly available as a matter of course, but develops in the interaction between experience and theory, and enables teachers to sharply perceive what is going on in situations and what is the essence of them. From this sensitivity to the situation teachers are able to come (quickly) to a decision and to act constructively.

Consideration 3: teachers with a mission use, as well as create professional space

Teachers' professionalism involves that they are not on the sidelines, but exert an influence on the shaping and execution of education on the basis of their own professional values and goals – not only inside, but also outside their own classrooms. Teachers create this professional space when, while pursuing their goals, they connect and cooperate with (the goals of) others outside the classroom. Apart from professional competence this requires from teachers that they

have an insight into the (social) processes and power relations in their school network, and in the way they can influence these.

Consideration 4: critically inquisitive teachers are continually developing themselves

In order to attune to their complex and volatile occupational practice, the development of personal professionalism is bound to be an ongoing matter. On the part of teachers this requires keeping in contact with developments in society, subject matter, and didactics. Furthermore it is characteristic of teaching practice that complex questions and dilemmas pop up for which no best answers are available. Personal professionalism involves that teachers (together with colleagues, researchers, and others) regularly scrutinize these answers to make sure that they were the proper and sensible choices to be made. This critically inquisitive attitude of individual teachers is inextricably bound up with their professionalism.

The teacher is a central factor in the quality of education and ranks highly on all (policy) agendas. Various initiatives are being taken to strengthen the professionalism of teachers. These measures are chiefly aimed at upgrading the status and respect enjoyed by the occupational group, and less at the attitude and practice of the individual teacher. The Education Council undertakes here to explore this personal professionalism of teachers.

1

Mounting debate about professionalism

In its advisory role the Education Council has always emphasized how important the quality of teachers is for the quality of the education system.¹ The professionalism of teachers is a key factor in the realization of good education.² In the present exploration the council inquires into the question what makes up this professionalism in the daily practice of individual teachers.³

1.1

Too little attention paid to personal professionalism of teachers

In recent years, in the Netherlands, the social debate about professionalism in the public sector has become intensified. Especially the subject of occupational honor (regarding it as an honor to practice a particular occupation) has played an important role in discussions. According to authors from different disciplines, professionals in the public sector (such as education, care, relief) have gotten into a tight corner.⁴ These authors describe how public servants working in the frontline of our society (such as teachers, nurses, welfare workers, policemen) feel undervalued and are no longer able to take pride in their jobs. According to them, this 'damaged' occupational honor is the result of a lack of professional elbowroom, an underestimation of their professional knowledge and expertise, and an excess of rules, paperwork, and manuals. In the educational field this has become a prominent issue.

Underestimation of complex occupational practice and professionalism

Society and the world of the pupil are rapidly changing, and schools have to continually attune productively to these changes. In some respects this has made the occupational practice of teachers more complicated: educational subject matter undergoes rapid change, knowledge about how to teach is expanding, research has entered the school, teachers have many tasks in the social sphere, school populations are increasingly multicultural, pupils with special educational needs are integrated into regular classes, etc.⁵ Educational innovations follow one another

1 E.g. Onderwijsraad, 2006; 2007; 2011a; 2011b; 2013.

2 Onderwijsraad, 2012c.

3 With a view to consistency the term 'teacher' was chosen in this exploration for all those teaching in the explored sectors.

4 Tonkens, 2008; Van den Brink, Jansen & Pessers, 2005; Zuurmond & De Jong, 2010; www.beroepseer.nl.

5 Onderwijsraad, 2008.

er in quick succession, and cooperation among teachers has become a necessity in order to meet new expectations and demands from outside the school. Further, the educational context is affected by other developments, such as the rapid development of ICT and competition of other socializing contexts (the street, media).

Many questions and expectations coming to education from the side of government, society, and parents, used to be answered on the level of the relevant denominational group or (school) organization. Boards or managements reacted on the basis of their collective identity, and out of more or less stable values and norms. Although at present, managers often make an effort to spare their teams by dealing with some incoming questions, other questions and unfulfilled expectations end up in the hands of individual teachers. For example, formerly, when parents objected to a punishment imposed on a pupil by a teacher, the school board, and management automatically sided with the teacher and his or her appreciation of the situation. Today this is no longer self-evident, and individual teachers will often have to account to the parents for this decision themselves. In these cases teachers represent their school, to a considerable extent, in contacts with parents and other parties, and have to find suitable answers and solutions. This demands a lot of cooperation, as well as a great deal of involvement, flexibility, creativity, and investment of time.

In recent years educational policy has put a stronger emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency.⁶ As in other occupations in the public sector teachers are required more and more to write out their actions and results and to account for them extensively on paper. Many teachers experience this as an impediment to their teaching tasks, and as a restriction of the professional space and freedom they need to offer good quality education to their pupils.

“Before my classes begin I am not busy preparing my lessons, but answering mails, about a pupil, to authorities with questions, or a new school with questions. In a spare moment, when pupils have physical education, I have to write reports and prepare records, mostly about matters of care, preventing me from preparing lessons or making lessons more challenging. After school there are meetings, consultations, and courses. I have the feeling that I could work till eight o’clock in the evening to get the day’s work done. When I ask myself, looking back, if most of this time has been spent on preparing and giving lessons, the answer is no. Most of the time has gone to meetings, action plans, care tasks, etc.”(teacher special education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

Teachers seem to regard this restriction of their professional space and freedom as a sign that they are not understood and appreciated by authorities.⁷ This feeling is fueled by critical comments from society about teaching.⁸ Through various media these comments focus on issues like the supposed decline of the (knowledge) level of teachers and the length of their holidays.

“When I am talking about teaching, what I hear is ‘easy’, ‘long holidays’, ‘short working hours’; not a lot of appreciation.” (teacher special education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

6 Ball, 2012; Kelchtermans, 2012.

7 Van den Berg, Glebbeek & Bosman, 2012.

8 Vrieze & Van Kuijk, 2011.

Teachers rank highly on the governmental quality agenda

Everybody agrees that the teacher is a crucial factor in the quality of education.⁹ Along with the increased importance of education in our knowledge society, the importance of good, professional teaching has increased accordingly. (Governmental) reports, media, and diverse interest groups put forward various ideas about the make-up of contemporary teaching.¹⁰ Following this trend, government has already undertaken several initiatives to strengthen the professionalism of teachers.¹¹

These governmental measures focus, among other things, on better possibilities for schooling (issue of scholarships and PhD scholarships for teachers), strengthening the quality of teacher education institutes (introduction of knowledge bases and new trajectories), better career possibilities (introduction of a greater diversity in positions within schools), clearer demands on practicing the profession (working out competences, introduction of a competence dossier), or on public recognition (founding a professional association and a teachers' register).¹² It is supposed that these measures will strengthen the professionalism of teachers and enhance the quality of their actions in occupational practice. But the question that precedes these measures is what is the precise nature of the intended professionalism. What does it mean to teach professionally?

Teachers as valued professionals

In his book *Finnish Lessons*, Sahlberg analyses the much-discussed success of the Finnish education system and mentions strong teachers as the most important success factor of their system. He adds that the professional dignity of the teacher and the social appreciation of teaching are fundamental aspects of this success.

In Finnish society, teachers enjoy much respect. Usually Finnish teachers make a deliberate choice for a career in education, with a personal 'moral' mission, resulting from their wanting to work with young people and to contribute to their development. Subsequently, in their professional practice, they have the freedom to pursue their professional goals on the basis of this personal drive. Finnish teachers are strongly attached to this professional autonomy. They are very aware of their professional identity – what sort of teacher they want to be. They see themselves and behave as valued professionals, just as medical doctors and engineers do.

Source: Sahlberg, 2011.

1.2 What makes teachers professional?

In daily usage, professionalism is often synonymous with competently practicing a particular occupation. Car mechanics who work professionally provide clients in the proper way with the desired quality of repairs to their cars. Clients can assess the professionalism of mechanics by the results of their work and the way in which they execute various aspects of their work. In other cases, when repairs are carelessly carried out or customers are not properly dealt with, this behavior is called 'unprofessional'. Often the same usage applies to the professionalism of

9 E.g. Chetty, Friedman & Rockoff, 2011; Hattie, 2003; Hattie, 2009; Mourshed, Chinezi & Barber, 2011; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005.

10 E.g. Commissie Leraren, 2007; Commissie Parlementair Onderzoek Onderwijsvernieuwingen, 2008; McKinsey&Company, 2012; Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2011.

11 Windmuller, 2012.

12 Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2011.

teachers. Professional teachers do their work competently and provide good quality education to their pupils. However, for the teaching profession this gives rise to value-laden questions.¹³ When are teachers acting competently? When do they act well enough to be called professional? What makes a teacher professional? These questions can be answered in different ways.

According to the traditional sociological definition of professions teaching is described as a semi-profession, because it does not conform to all the customary characteristics of a profession.¹⁴ Full professions refer to occupational groups, such as medical doctors or lawyers, which are characterized by an intensive vocational education, a theoretically founded knowledge base informing and directing their practice, their own practice code, and a high level of autonomy.¹⁵ Teaching is not considered a full profession, for example because in the Netherlands admission to the occupation is not controlled by the occupational group itself, and because teaching lacks the autonomy to act independently and according to its own standards. After all, teachers are always constrained by regulations on the part of authorities and their own school organization.

When the same questions about the nature of good, professional teaching are put to teachers, they make clear that they quickly become aware of the level of each others' professionalism. They can tell by the social climate in the classrooms of colleagues, by their interactions with pupils, by the cooperation in their team, by how they talk with parents etc. In short, they can recognize and identify professionalism from the quality of attitude and performance of teachers in their daily school practice.¹⁶

"Whether somebody is a good, professional teacher can be seen, felt, and smelled the moment you walk into their classroom; by the atmosphere in their group or when you see them occupied with pupils." (teacher primary education)

Source: *Conversations with teachers*.

Hence, professionalism represents quality and added value, raising expectations with others and at the same time creating responsibilities and ambitions for professionals.¹⁷ This professionalism brings with it status and respect, but professionals are also expected, individually and collectively, to pursue excellence in their occupational practice.¹⁸ Whereas the sociological definition of professionalism emphasizes the collective and the status of the occupational group, teachers focus on individual attitude and performance in practice. Although these are different perspectives on professionalism they are interconnected and cannot do without each other. Below, these connections are discussed in more detail, leading up to a starting-point for this exploration.

Individual and collective professionalism

In this exploration a distinction is made between the individual and the collective aspects of professionalism. On the one hand, professionalism is embedded in context of shared norms,

¹³ Kelchtermans, 2012.

¹⁴ Etzioni, 1969.

¹⁵ Dean, 1991; Kelchtermans, 2012.

¹⁶ This point came up in the talks the Educational Council held with teachers during school visits and teacher dinners.

¹⁷ Kole & De Ruijter, 2007.

¹⁸ The word 'profession' originally meant taking a religious vow. In a number of occupations, professionals (notaries, medical doctors, nurses, civil servants) take a public vow or oath. Taking such a vow makes moral demands on the professional, and professionals thereby ask for trust in the proper execution of their occupation; Onderwijsraad, 2007

values, and views in an occupational group or school team. There is a collective view of what it means to be a professional teacher, as well as a collective responsibility for maintaining this professionalism. This is aptly exemplified by the proposal to have teachers' qualification requirements reviewed by the recently founded professional association of teachers, the Education Cooperative.¹⁹ On the other hand, professionalism also has an individual side. This is the professionalism of individual teachers, resulting from their personal values and their conception of the teacher they want to be. The responsibility for maintaining this individual professionalism lies with the individual teacher.

The individual and collective aspects of professionalism do not make two separate worlds. What is intended is that individual teachers are constantly operating within the collective frameworks of the occupational group and the school team, and that these, in their turn, constantly seek connection with individual professionals. In this interaction the individual and collective aspects of professionalism can reinforce each other.

Individual professionalism in the care sector

The core of professional practice in the care sector is the capacity to constantly ask yourself what makes up good care for this particular client in this particular situation and, dependent on the situation and together with the client or others (for example representatives of the client, the multidisciplinary team), to make a considered assessment and act accordingly. In this unique situation of the client, the care professional is able to ascertain which general rule, guideline or manual, if at all, might be applicable. If the situation of the client requires this she can also, after due consideration, deviate from established rules, instructions, and routines. In a case where no manual or standard is available, she is able, on the basis of earlier experiences, to recognize general features in the situation and to choose a suitable course of action.

As professionals, individual nurses or providers of care aim at the well-being of the persons who have been entrusted – or have entrusted themselves – to their care. This orientation toward the well-being of the client means that the caretaking profession is morally charged. The question is always: what is good care for this particular client in this particular situation? This question has to be answered in the context of generally accepted social views of well-being for all members of society, and the views of well-being in the occupational group partly resulting from these general ones.

Source: Ethical Commission V&VN.

Professionalism, inside and outside

A second distinction made in this exploration is that between an inside and an outside of professionalism.²⁰ The outside of professionalism refers to what it means to be a professional in terms of status and reputation. How does the outside world look at teaching? Here, some relevant factors are level of schooling, salary, and the (academic) quality of the knowledge base. The inside of professionalism refers to professional performance in the daily practice of teaching, and the attitude, knowledge, and standards underlying this performance. In this case relevant points are the goals that teachers pursue and the quality of their attitude, knowledge, and actions in practice.

These two sides of professionalism are closely connected and reinforce each other. In this way a professional attitude and performance of teachers in their daily teaching practice could make an important contribution to the status and respect awarded to teachers. In the same way

¹⁹ Onderwijscoöperatie, 2012.

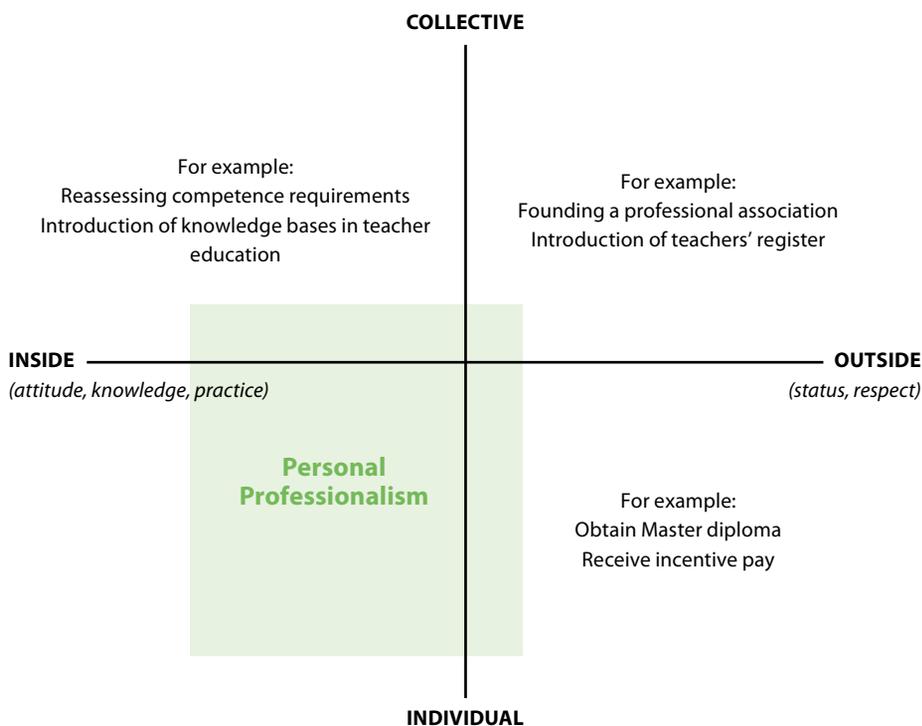
²⁰ Based on a distinction made in Hargreaves, 2000.

higher demands on the quality of teaching could lead to higher quality in the actual practice of teachers.

In current debates and measures personal professionalism remains out of sight

The council has made a connection between the two dimensions of professionalism distinguished above, and looked from this perspective at the current public discussions and government measures for reinforcing the professionalism of teachers. The diagram below is the result of crossing the two dimensions individual-collective and inside-outside. This diagram is not intended as a new model of professionalism, but was used by the council as a framework for its exploration of the professionalism of teachers.

Professionalism of teachers: the exploratory framework of the council



The diagram consists of four quadrants, each of them representing an important element in the professionalism of teachers. In interaction the four quadrants constitute the professionalism of teachers. The quadrants show examples of recent topics in the debate about professionalism and in government measures aimed at reinforcing the professionalism of teachers. The two quadrants describing the outside of professionalism refer to the status and respect awarded to teachers, either collectively, as part of the school, the school board or the occupational group (for example the introduction of a teachers' register), or individually, in their personal teaching practice (for example incentive pay). The two quadrants describing the inside of professionalism refer to the quality of attitude, knowledge, and practice of teachers, either as these are shaped collectively by the school, the school board or the occupational group (for example the formulation of competence requirements), or as shaped by individual teachers in their own daily teaching practice. An example of interaction between the quadrants is a situation in which the formulation of competence requirements for teachers by the occupational group (collective-

inside), by putting a clear demand on attitude and performance of teachers, also adds to the status of teaching and the respect for teaching (collective-outside).

The colored area in the diagram illustrates the personal professionalism with which individual teachers execute their daily work in their school team in a good, professional manner. The greater part of this area covers the quadrant of the individual inside, and partly runs over into each of the other quadrants of the collective and the inside. It does not cover the whole quadrant of the individual inside because part of the inside of the individual teacher is always strongly bound up with the person (for example character traits). This other, completely personal part is of great importance to the authenticity of teachers' practice, but lies outside the scope of this exploration of professionalism. The colored area runs over into the other three quadrants in order to illustrate that the professional practice of individual teachers is, by definition, always in interaction with others – the collective to which they belong (for example school team or occupational group), or the outside where others award them respect or status (for example pupils or parents).

When recent examples from the debate about professionalism and from measures to reinforce teachers' professionalism are included in the diagram, it becomes clear that there is little explicit attention to personal professionalism. Measures in the other quadrants presuppose an interaction with this individual, inside aspect of the professionalism of teachers, but it is not clear what makes up this personal professionalism in the attitude and daily practice of individual teachers. In the current debate and measures the nature of personal professionalism remains implicit and therefore remains, to a large extent, out of sight.

1.3

Question: what is the nature of professionalism in the attitude and practice of individual teachers?

At the present moment, public discussions and governmental measures aimed at reinforcing the professionalism of teachers are predominantly directed to heightening the respect and status awarded to teachers and to the collective occupational group. The council endorses the importance of this endeavor, but notes that interaction of these measures with the individual inside of professionalism is essential. After all, professionalism is to a large extent bound up with the person and has to manifest itself eventually in the quality of the daily practice, knowledge, and professional attitude of individual teachers within their school team.

The council signals that in the Netherlands the current debate and measures aimed at reinforcing the professionalism of teachers pay relatively little attention to the personal professionalism of teachers. What exactly is, at the present moment, expected of individual teachers in order to do their daily work competently? Therefore, the council considers it important to gain a clearer understanding of the personal professionalism of individual teachers. To this purpose it formulates the following question:

What is the nature of the professionalism of individual teachers in their daily practice and (occupational) attitude inside and outside the classroom?

The council concentrates on teachers in special education, primary education, secondary education, and senior secondary vocational education. It further focuses on teachers who have pas-

sed the start-up phase and have been working in practice for at least three years.²¹ In this exploration, the council takes as a starting-point developments in the social context that constitutes the occupational practice of teachers. Central fields of tension in education are explored, with their ensuing practical dilemmas, illustrating the complexity of the day-to-day occupational practice of teachers. The council enquires into the ways that teachers can constructively deal with the complexity and dynamics of this occupational practice. On the basis of this enquiry, it presents four considerations for reflection on the personal professionalism of teachers and policy-making on this issue.

How this exploration has come about

This exploration builds forward on recommendations of the Education Council in the context of professionalism of teachers, such as *Leraarschap is eigenaarschap* [Teachers as owners] (2007), *Geregelde ruimte* [Regulated space] (2012) and *Kiezen voor kwalitatief sterke leraren* [Choosing for qualitatively strong teachers] (2013). In accordance with the question to be explored, the council talked with teachers and management at schools for special, primary, secondary, and senior secondary vocational education. The council also talked with teachers from various schools in these sectors about the nature of their personal professionalism in present and future occupational practice, during two large-scale teacher dinners in Rotterdam and Zwolle.

Additionally, at the request of the council, professor Geert Kelchtermans of the Catholic University of Louvain wrote a memorandum about the professionalism of teachers. Finally the council commissioned two studies in special, primary, secondary, and senior secondary vocational education. The Expertisecentrum Beroepsonderwijs [Expertise Center Vocational Education] carried out an enquiry into types of dilemmas in the educational practice of teachers, and the Interfacultair Centrum voor Lerarenopleiding, Onderwijsontwikkeling en Nascholing [Interfaculty Center for Teacher Education, Educational Development and Continuing Teacher Education] of Leyden University undertook a portrait study of the professionalism of individual teachers.

21 From research conducted with beginning teachers it appears that, in this early phase, they are preoccupied with specific questions in connection with the transition from training to practice, their start als practitioners in an occupation, and the early development of their professional identity; Pillen, Beijaard & Den Brok, 2013a, 2013b.

In recent decades, our society, education, and schools have been substantially altered. Although a number of fundamental aspects of teaching have undergone little change, social developments have made the context of the profession more dynamic and unpredictable. In this complex occupational practice, a strong appeal is made to the judgment of individual teachers, and teachers' authority to make decisions is constantly challenged.

2 The complex context of teaching

2.1 Society, education and schools are changing

Social developments have introduced large changes in the context of education and schools. Society, education, and schools are no longer the same as they were sixty years ago.²² As social institutions, schools are strongly influenced by these developments. Also their educational mission requires, per definition, that they attune constructively to changes in the social environment of children. On the basis of literary sources and discussions with teachers the Education Council identifies a number of important social developments influencing the educational context in which teachers are working.

In recent years, society and the economy have become more dependent on knowledge and, as a result, knowledge has developed more quickly and become more important. In education, this acceleration is reflected in the pace with which new insights are developed in the field of subject matter and pedagogy. The increased importance of knowledge and education is found at all levels of society. Sound schooling has come to be of great importance for individual success, and for companies, regions and even a national (knowledge) economy, a high-quality educational system is crucial. Hence, at the present moment, many parties take an interest in good education, not least the state.

Since the 1990s, good education in the Netherlands has been linked to (final) results and become more and more subjected to public quality requirements. Dutch schools have the constitutional freedom to shape their own teaching, but policy tends to put more emphasis on educational quality, allowing the Dutch government a larger say in the (pedagogical) make up of schooling.²³ This educational policy is subject to changes and has not always proved consistent. Schools are confronted with substantive educational innovations following one after the other in quick succession and with alternating priorities in educational policy.²⁴

22 Onderwijsraad, 2008.

23 For a full discussion of this development see the council's recommendation *Artikel 23 Grondwet in maatschappelijk perspectief*, Onderwijsraad, 2012a.

24 Bronneman-Helmerts, 2011; Commissie Parlementair Onderzoek Onderwijsvernieuwingen, 2008; *The Salamanca Statement and Framework For Action on special needs education 1994*.

"I think that development is a good thing, only innovations come so quickly one after another. What you hear from many colleagues, and what also worries me sometimes, is not getting a chance to explore and discuss things, to work out an organization for what we have to do. We have to go work on core tasks, these aptitude tests ... Give us some time to develop these and feel at home with them. But no, as soon as we're started, the next change comes up." (teacher senior secondary vocational education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

The quick pace of policy changes in the Netherlands partly coincides with changes at the international level (such as international agreements about placement of pupils in connection with the introduction of the policy measure 'appropriate education', increasing complexity of the managerial field, increased attention of politics and media to incidents that occur in education, and changes in political coalitions and members of government (each of them with their own policy agendas).

During the last two decades, an economic view of education has become dominant in the policy of the Dutch government. Supply-driven policy has given way to demand-driven policy, and policy-making has become dominated by quantitative objectives. This has brought about a more businesslike educational process in schools, in which achievement, testing, and statistical accounting have taken a more prominent place.²⁵ Over time Dutch schools and other educational institutions have received more autonomy to respond to the complex questions confronting them (for example by the introduction of lump sum budgets). On the other hand schools are also more emphatically accountable for their results to government and other interested parties.²⁶ Accounting for these results, they have to show that they are effectively and (cost) efficiently setting goals and achieving the desired results.²⁷

"Some things to be accounted for are early leaving, IBO money, and students' achievements in language and arithmetic. Authorities are afraid that schools are wasting money. This takes a lot of time. More and more, schools are changing into companies. When things are not in order, this costs money. To a certain extent this is a good thing. Formerly all money was earmarked, but now no longer, and everything has to be accounted for. Schools are held accountable only for the figures, not for the way students are taught. For example, what is assessed is only the number of career interviews, not the quality of these interviews." (teacher senior secondary vocational education)

Source: Conversations with teachers.

Also, the school is increasingly regarded as a partner in solving social problems. This is an international trend, known as 'educationalization'.²⁸ In line with this trend, the development of multifunctional schools is encouraged, as these can respond to a diversity of social expectations. This requires that schools and teachers be able to connect and work together with parents and

25 Bronneman-Helmers, 2011.

26 Windmuller, 2012.

27 Ball, 2012; Bronneman-Helmers, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2012; Kuhry & De Kam, 2012.

28 Hooge, Honingh & Langelaan, 2011.

other nearby institutions, in the sphere of day care, sports, art, and culture.²⁹ It is also expected of schools and their teachers that they pay attention to a range of social problems, such as putting down segregation (privileged versus underprivileged children) and the promotion of citizenship and social integration.³⁰

These changes in the (policy) context of education are embedded in the larger context of five central developments characterizing our present and future society: individualization, informalization, informatization, internationalization, and intensification.³¹ These are long-term interconnected changes, manifesting themselves in different ways in different social fields. These broad developments make up the context of education and schools, which in their turn are the stage on which present and future teachers practice their profession.

Individualization

Individualization refers to a variety of long-term and interconnected developments resulting in the fact that in Western societies people are increasingly participating as individuals, rather than as group members. Since the 1960s the once powerful influence of social institutions and authorities has more and more rapidly declined. Life choices used to be strongly determined by society and by the denominational or social group from which people originated, and resulted in more or less standardized life stories.

In former times, the core task of pedagogues (parents, institutions, authorities) consisted in initiating children and adolescents in the existing world of adults, which was regarded as a stable state of affairs. Within their own denominational group and class, people were bound to values and standards also believed to be more or less indisputable. The school played an important role by transmitting and safeguarding these values and standards. In those times what was expected of schools and what tasks were assigned to them was mainly laid down by denominational institutions (churches, political parties, and social organizations). Educational policy was aimed at an honest allocation of rights and means. Government had little to do with the substance of education, and the nature of policy-making was largely administrative, juridical, and centralistic. In this context, teachers were expected to be chiefly devoted, loyal subservient in carrying out the instructions of their superiors.³²

In contemporary society, life choices are largely made by the individual. Individuals make these choices more independently, not only in choosing their schools, partners, or types of relation, but also in the sphere of dress, food, and music. This freedom of choice brings with it a certain compulsion to choose – individuals have to make their own appraisals, and when things do not work out as desired, they are themselves largely responsible. Individuals are regarded as the designers and executives of their own lives, on the basis of choices they have made themselves.³³ All individuals are under an obligation to express and develop themselves. Personal experience and authenticity are regarded as highly important – people want to remain true to themselves and are not easily prepared to follow a course plotted by tradition or environment.³⁴

29 Doornenbal, Van Oenen & Pols, 2012; Onderwijsraad, 2012d.

30 Onderwijsraad, 2012d.

31 Schnabel, 2000.

32 Onderwijsraad, 2008.

33 Schnabel, 2004.

34 Taylor, 1989.

In the educational context, individualization becomes visible in, for example, the emphasis on self-development and the development of individual talents of pupils. Pupils and parents are increasingly asking themselves whether the form and content of the schooling being provided to them are best suited to their individual needs. Moreover, this individual demand is encouraged by the government, in, for example, the introduction of the so-called 'rucksacks' with financial support for individual pupils with special needs.³⁵

Increasingly, schools are expected to provide customized education for individual pupils. This means, among other things, that today's teachers are required to attune their subject matter and way of instruction to their specific pupil population and to the neighborhood in which the school is situated. They must be able to differentiate and attune their teaching to the socio-cultural background, the individual level, and the personal learning style of their pupils, also when these pupils need additional care. To this purpose schools develop internal care structures and participate in cooperation with externals, in order to provide for care pupils and pupils with specific needs.³⁶

Informalization

This term refers to a process, akin to individualization, in which, from the end of the nineteenth century (with a strong surge in the 1960s and 70s), power relations became more equal and manners more relaxed. People no longer automatically accept the formal authority that society has assigned to politicians and authorities.³⁷ Informalization has affected all human relations, such as between employers and employees, parents and children, teachers and students, or government and citizens.

As a result of informalization, relations between family members have become more egalitarian. In the Netherlands and other Western countries, negotiation appears to have become the standard principle of education, parents steering a middle course between the strict, authoritarian education they were brought up with themselves (or the highly permissive education of the 1960s and 70s) and the new democratic style. This is not always an easy thing to do and involves a lot of uncertainty for parents. Besides, informalization has contributed to a situation in which processes (working, learning) take place less often on a basis of formal membership of physical, hierarchical organizations, but increasingly take the character of (virtual) networks of individuals cooperating on a basis of equality and mutual attractiveness as to personal profiles and motives. In these networks, people in authority cannot simply derive their authority from the fact that they represent a formal institution (such as a ministry, hospital, or school). They have to earn their authority, for example, by showing that they operate honestly and competently, and to make sure that they do not lose this authority by improper, uninformed, or uncertain behavior.³⁸

In the educational context, informalization is apparent, for example, in the fact that pupils, parents and society do not automatically assign authority to schools and teachers, but that this authority has to be constantly earned anew.³⁹ Also, schools are affected in various ways by new, informal methods of learning and cooperating in (virtual) networks with which they have to link up. This does not only apply to pupils, in their virtual network environment of Hyves, Face-

35 Veldheer & Bijl, 2011.

36 Onderwijsraad, 2008.

37 Wouters, 2008.

38 Van Stokkom, 2010

39 Jansen, Van den Brink & Kybers, 2012.

book, Twitter, and YouTube, but also to teachers who are working in a network as freelancers and are no longer attached to one single school organization for a longer period of time.

Informatization

During the last two decades informatization has boomed, with far-reaching consequences, especially for information and communication. As a result, barriers in space and time have in many cases been taken away. A diversity of ICT-applications has appeared in all fields of daily social life and keeps rapidly developing. In various ways, the process of informatization reinforces the processes of individualization and informalization. For example, through the Internet, individuals are now able to retrieve information from various sources independently and to get into contact with others for their own personal goals. Subsequently, this information enables them to verify, and if necessary to dispute, the judgments of authorities such as medical doctors or teachers.

In the educational context, informatization becomes apparent, for example, in ICT-applications used in schools, ranging from the smart board to digital registration systems. Also, it is important for schools to be able to link up with the social world of young people, in which digital information and communication play an important role, and to prepare them for a society in which this role will become more and more important.⁴⁰

Internationalization

In our time, the world lies readily at hand. Among other factors, informatization and technical developments eroded physical boundaries and made the open economy and society of the Netherlands still more sensitive to developments in Europe and the rest of the world.

In the educational context internationalization shows up, for example, in the multicultural pupil population which strongly developed, especially in urban regions, from the 1970s.⁴¹ At present, in cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam, more than half the schools in primary and secondary education have a pupil population with a majority of non-Western children. These schools have to deal with this cultural diversity and attune their education to pupils for whom Dutch is not their native language. More broadly, internationalization is manifested in education in the way schools are now expected to prepare pupils for an international society and economy, in which, for example, a command of English is required.

Intensification

The intensification of society is a development appearing in the quickened pace and stronger pressure of work and time in daily life, and also in people's desire for intense and intensive emotional experiences. The heightened rhythm of life may, for example, be seen in parents of young children who are both working and making careers. The desire for intense experiences can be witnessed in young people making a world tour after leaving secondary education, or in the attraction of large-scale, collective events (such as royal birthdays, musical events, silent parades, Facebook festivals).

In the educational context, intensification becomes visible, among other things, in the fact that parents of children are ever busy, or that teachers themselves are living under pressure of time. Also, the school may be affected by intensification when pupils give expression to their desire

⁴⁰ Kennisnet, 2012.

⁴¹ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, z.j.

for more intense experiences in the field of music, relations, sex, and their own bodies, sometimes in combination with alcohol or drugs.

2.2 Fields of tension in the occupational practice of teachers

Teaching practice is complicated. Good teaching requires the full attention of teachers during the day. This is not a completely new thing. Over the years, authors have described characteristics of the complexity of teaching: teachers have to pursue different educational goals and functions at the same time, they have to deal with the personal history of every pupil, educational practice includes a variety of activities taking place simultaneously, many situations call for immediate action on the part of teachers, many activities take place in the public eye, and the results of many processes in educational practice cannot easily be predicted.⁴²

The complexity of teaching is also illustrated by the fields of tension which are inherent in the occupational practice of teachers. Partly on the basis of the talks held with teachers, the council distinguishes at least five fundamental fields of tension in which teachers are operating and by which they are regularly confronted with professional choices in their practice.

Tension between different goals of education: qualification, socialization, and personal development
Basically, education has three different goals, which partly overlap one another: qualification, socialization, and personal development.⁴³ Education aims at providing people with knowledge and skills required for further schooling or an occupation (qualification). Also, education aims at integrating pupils into certain social structures, such as society or an occupation (socialization). In view of this goal, pupils are introduced into cultural, social, political or professional practices, traditions, and values (for example citizenship education). Sometimes personal development is mentioned as a separate goal, in order to emphasize that education also contributes to shaping the subjective, autonomous side of the pupil. The goal of education is not only to help pupils achieve knowledge and skills, but also to learn how to live and participate in the social order. Education also has to contribute to shaping individuals with their own assignment of meaning, values, and standards.

In their teaching practice, teachers experience the fundamental tension between these goals. Teachers aspire to satisfactory results for all their pupils, enabling them to start their working life with a proper qualification, and to become competent, critical, and creative practitioners. At the same time, teachers want to prepare these pupils for a (social) role in which they can take part in society as educated citizens. And, thirdly, teachers intend that all pupils develop their personality and learn to make independent decisions. During the day teachers have to assess constantly which is, in a given situation, the desired balance between these goals.⁴⁴ Teachers are trying to find this balance – for example – at moments that they have to assess what, in a specific situation, is best for a particular pupil, or what kind of subject matter and pedagogical approach is most suitable for a group. This field of tension becomes stronger when demands on education are made from outside, obliging teachers to give precedence to one of these goals at the cost of other ones and making it impossible for them to establish the desired balance themselves. For example in the case that high priority is given to improving achievements in the area of language and arithmetic (qualification), it may become difficult for teachers to

42 Den Brok, 2011; Doyle, 1986.

43 Biesta, 2011; Peschar & Wesselingh, 1995.

44 Biesta, 2011.

give sufficient attention to the development of pupils' social competences when they think this is necessary (socialization).

"During meetings most of the time is devoted to how they can make the difference between the central exam and the school exam as small as possible. In lessons more training is done with the subject matter they have to master for the exam ... Increasingly less time remains for personal development ... My love for the work of Couperus [Dutch novelist] was aroused because my teacher could tell such wonderful stories about him and conjure up his writings so vividly. Today there is no longer time for that kind of thing." (teacher secondary education)

Source: *Conversations with teachers*.

Tension between striving for the common good and providing customized teaching

Teachers are held responsible for providing something for all their pupils in common. Education fulfils basic functions for all its pupils and strives after achieving common core objectives and attainments. At the same time teachers are increasingly expected to work custom-made and to attune their teaching to individual needs of their pupils. This field of tension becomes more pressing for teachers at the moment that individual needs in their pupil population become more diverse (for example, in the sphere of care, sociocultural background, or native language).⁴⁵ In this context it is quite a challenge to teachers to do justice to all these individual needs of pupils and, at the same time, shepherd the whole group to the desired common final attainments level.

"I am constantly worried by feeling powerless, because I have to do so many things at the same time, and therefore haven't got enough time for this individual pupil. You always have the rest of the class to deal with when you want to help this one pupil." (teacher primary education)

Source: *Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013*.

Tension between personal involvement and professional distance

Usually, teachers are strongly involved with the well-being and development of their pupils. They have a heart for pupils and their involvement is an important source of motivation. They are aware of the needs of their pupils and it is not surprising that teachers want to look after each of them as best they can. Nevertheless there are situations in which their personal involvement can be at odds with the professional distance demanded of them on the basis of school regulations, standards, and personal well-being. For example, there are requests for aid which can no longer be (exclusively) answered by the teacher. In those cases teachers must ask themselves where their own involvement can or must end and a stronger professional distance is desired.⁴⁶

"You drown if you are not committed, but commitment may also be a pitfall. How to achieve a balance? Sometimes you have as much as seven pupils with special needs in your class. Then you have to make choices. Sacrifice three of them to be able to save four? You cannot save all of them." (teacher senior secondary vocational education)

Source: *Conversations with teachers*.

⁴⁵ Artiles, 1998; Ponte, 2003.

⁴⁶ Aultman, Williams-Johnson & Schutz, 2009; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011.

Tension between directing and guiding the learning process

A traditional and important field of tension in teaching concerns the tension between directing and guiding the learning process.⁴⁷ Teachers can focus their actions on respecting the freedom of their pupils to learn, or on giving direction to the learning process.⁴⁸ In the first case, teachers give guidance to pupils, and in the second they instruct their pupils. On the one hand, teachers must encourage the independent learning of their pupils and provide coaching to them for this purpose, but, on the other hand, teachers also have ideas and expectations about the goals and outcomes of the learning process, and have to give directives to pupils at the proper moment. Teachers are regularly confronted with situations in which tension arises between these two functions and in which they ask themselves to what extent they should give either direction or guidance.

"I have a pupil ... who thinks in a fully divergent way and now wants to write an essay on chakras, for which he needs guidance. This topic has to be linked up with a school subject. Maybe with social science ... We spent a lot of time considering what we could do with this, nothing at all in fact, because it doesn't connect with any school subject. Then he says: yes, but why is this necessary? Why can't I just study what I like myself? Then I thought: actually you're dead right. So now I will supervise him. He's going to work out a number of questions for himself and then I will polish them up a little so his essay will have some social dimension ... I keep an eye on the quality, he must come up with a good story, he will have to do some research and with the help of scientific methods." (Teacher secondary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

Tension between one's own pedagogical views and those of others

Education takes place in interaction, cooperation, and connection with others. Colleagues, school management, youth welfare, social work, parents, and other parties have their own views about how a teacher should act pedagogically. Sometimes these views differ from those of the teacher in question. In that case, teachers are brought into a field of tension in which they have to decide to what extent they will stick to their own views and values, or act in accordance with wishes and views of colleagues, parents, and other parties.⁴⁹

2.3

Teachers have to deal with dilemmas inside as well as outside the classroom

In their conversations with the council, teachers indicated that the above fields of tension regularly confront them in their educational practice with complicated issues needing to be (sometimes quickly) answered. Often these issues arise in specific situations, with specific pupils, groups, objectives, and associates. There is no fixed prescription for how teachers should deal with these situations, which are, to a certain extent, unique. They confront teachers with dilemmas in which they can do different things and for which different plausible options are available.⁵⁰ In these situations, teachers have to make a careful assessment themselves and make their own choice for what, in the specific situation, is the most effective and desirable course of action. The dilemmas experienced by teachers in their day-to-day practice inside the classroom

47 Van Kan, Brouwer & Zitter, 2012; Van Parreren, 1965.

48 Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Tzuu, 2007.

49 Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011.

50 Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2013.

(when teaching) and outside the classroom (when cooperating, etc.) give insight into their everyday practice and what is demanded of teachers to act responsibly in this practice.

Dilemmas in the everyday practice of care

Also in other sectors in the public sphere, professionals are regularly confronted with dilemmas. In care, for example, nurses and providers of care strive for good quality care. They want to provide the care that patients and clients need and also to distribute this care fairly. As professionals this is their ideal of providing care. In practice, however, this cannot be done without dilemmas, as it is not clear in every situation what is suitable or best to be done. These dilemmas concern both long-standing ethical questions such as euthanasia and everyday practical activities in the sphere of care.

In recent years, nurses and providers of care are increasingly confronted with (moral) dilemmas. This is caused by various changes in care. For example, there is an increasing demand for transparency and for more extensive administrative accounting in records and reports. Because of this administrative pressure, less attention and care can be bestowed on the client. It is no longer possible to take a walk with the client. On what activities should nurses or providers of care spend their precious time, on providing good care for the client, or on administrative tasks? Also, the changed care assessment brings along more dilemmas. Nurses and providers of care signal increasingly more restricted indications, as well as indications for a lower level of care than in former practice. To what extent should nurses and providers of care provide the care which they consider necessary according to their own standards, and to what extent should they adhere to the indicated care?

Source: Struijs & Van de Vathorst, 2009.

Types of dilemmas in everyday teaching practice in the classroom: who, what, and how?

At the request of the Education Council, a selection of 160 different dilemma situations of teachers in their classroom was analyzed.⁵¹ These situations were observed in the everyday practice of teaching, and selected when teachers indicated that they had dealt with them in a particular way, but had realized afterwards that other suitable alternatives had been available. Hence their choices in these situations were not simply correct or incorrect – they also saw good reasons to react differently. In all, fifty teachers from special, primary, secondary, and senior secondary vocational education took part in this study.

The example below shows such a dilemma situation in the everyday practice of a teacher in secondary education, who chose to adhere strictly to the rules about mobile phones in his classroom, but afterwards saw good reasons to relax this rule in the case of the culprit in question. This teacher considered how far he should have adhered strictly to the rules when his lesson was disturbed by the mobile phone of his pupil going off, and how far he should have reacted more permissively, taking the pupil's excuse for the unintended ringing of the phone into consideration.

⁵¹ Van Kan, Brouwer & Zitter, 2012.

Example of a dilemma in the classroom: keep strictly to rules, or relax them?



Source: Van Kan, Brouwer & Zitter, 2012.

In teaching practice, three types of dilemmas may be distinguished: dilemmas as to who, how or what.

What-dilemmas refer to what pupils have to learn. For example, the dilemma between how far teachers should focus on the curriculum, or on the capacities of their pupils. Should you make the same demands on every pupil as to the quantity of work to be done in a given space of time, or should you adjust demands to the capacities and motivation of specific pupils?

How-dilemmas refer to the way teachers teach and the way pupils learn, and what behavior teachers consider permitted. For example, the dilemma between how far the teacher intervenes in the learning process of the pupil, and how far the teacher leaves room for pupils' initiatives and discovery learning. As a teacher, should you guide pupils all the way through a complex problem in physics, or should you allow pupils to solve this problem individually or in groups?

Who-dilemmas refer to who teachers are as professionals, and how they relate to their pupils. For example, the dilemma between how far pupils are dependent on a teacher in order to find their way in the educational system, and how far pupils can solve problems independently. Do you interfere as a teacher because a pupil threatens to have an outburst of rage, or do you allow this to take its course in order to see if this pupil is able to keep himself under control?

These three types of dilemmas may be subdivided into twelve specific dilemmas with which teachers may be confronted in their classrooms (see frame).

Dilemmas in the classroom

What-dilemmas

1. Focus on curriculum, versus focus on capacities of individual pupils.
2. Striving for maximum results versus being satisfied with less.

How-dilemmas

1. Directing the learning situation, versus leaving room for autonomous learning.
2. Focus on learning, versus focus on working.
3. Correcting the group, versus correcting the individual.
4. Teacher control, versus pupil control of the learning process.
6. Collective attention, versus differentiated distribution of attention.
7. Strict adherence to rules, versus relaxation of rules.

Who-dilemmas

1. Providing special care, versus starting from pupils' own responsibility.
2. Impersonal, versus personal attitude towards pupils.
3. Taking on the traditional role of an instructor, versus that of the practitioner of an occupation.

Source: Van Kan, Brouwer & Zitter, 2012.

All these dilemmas describe two extremes of what a teacher can do in a specific situation. Each of these extremes represents an action which may contribute to the quality of teaching the pupils involved in the situation. Between these extremes, teachers have to strike a proper balance, being regularly confronted with the question how far, in a specific practice situation, they have to choose for one or the other extreme. Apart from occasional exceptions, these dilemmas are of general occurrence in the practice of teachers in the various sectors. In the Appendix, these dilemmas are further described and illustrated with examples from different educational sectors.

Dilemmas in everyday practice of teachers outside the classroom

The current practice of teachers does not stop at the door of their classrooms. Today, in every sector, teachers work together as members of a team and are also increasingly cooperating and interacting with other parties, such as care coordinators, social workers or parents. Teachers' practice outside the classroom is taking an increasingly important place. The conversations of the council with teachers made clear that, in this area as well, teachers are regularly confronted with dilemmas. These dilemmas arise in the interaction between individual teachers and their environment (colleagues, management, subject department, care team, etc.).⁵²

One important dilemma shows up in accounting for professional actions to others outside the classroom. Increasingly, teachers have to account for their professional actions on paper and this can be important for constructively cooperating with others outside classroom. However, teachers may feel a tension between how much time outside their lessons they should devote to reporting and accounting for their professional actions, and how much time to the preparation of their teaching. To what extent should you spend your time on recording all the individual requests of your pupils in their action plans, and to what extent on preparing your lessons for these pupils?⁵³

⁵² Fransson & Grannäs, 2013.

⁵³ Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

"I often have the dilemma: should I carefully put on paper what I have in mind for this pupil, or should I collect the materials I need and carry out this plan? Too much time goes into administration. In these cases I always have to choose, as there is no time for both. But you are obliged to put your plan on paper, especially if you want an indication for a pupil, that case the plan must be worked out in detail ... In the beginning, I put in a lot of overtime to get these reports done. But there is a limit to this. So I choose. It doesn't become a trashy report, but sometimes not everything is put on paper and I just carry it out. It's a matter of give and take. But at one time you choose for a full report, and at another time for executing your plan." (teacher primary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

A related dilemma that can show up outside the classroom is how far teachers should feel personally responsible for the quality of certain processes and results, and where collective or shared responsibility begins. How far should teachers feel personally responsible for the fact that a pupil with special educational needs cannot get along in their own classroom, and how far can they share this responsibility with colleagues, managers, providers of care and parents?⁵⁴

Another moment of choice can arise in the relationship with colleagues. Teachers may be strongly involved with colleagues, and this involvement may be an important source of motivation and the basis of a closely-knit team. However, teachers may experience dilemmas as to how far they should go to be loyal to their colleagues and the views of their colleagues, about what is best in a certain situation. How far should you go along with your colleagues when they are holding back on the development of a new structure of care, hoping that this innovation will blow over, and how far should you go to put forward your own ideas about improving matters?⁵⁵

A comparable moment of choice may also emerge in the relationship with management. Considering their position in the organization, teachers may be expected to respect the decisions of their managers, and this formal division of roles may lend stability to the policy of the school. However, teachers may experience dilemmas as to how far they should be loyal to managers and their views, and how far they should choose to act according to their own views. How far should teachers accept decisions of managers when they rigorously prescribe the moments for testing, and how far should they decide to resist and plan these moments for testing according to their own views?⁵⁶

Choices to solve dilemmas are not between black and white: different action perspectives are possible

The above list of dilemmas is not meant to be exhaustive, but meant to show that dilemmas in the occupational practice of teachers are inevitable. Indeed, these dilemmas are inherent in teaching.⁵⁷ They illustrate the complexity of everyday occupational practice and what it demands of teachers to act competently and professionally in this practice.⁵⁸ The dilemmas show that professional choices of teachers are only seldom between good and bad, or a choice for one of two extremes. Often these choices are not between black and white. They depend on the features of the specific situation, and teachers may approach these situations from dif-

54 Kelchtermans, 2012.

55 Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011.

56 Kingma, 2013.

57 Kelchtermans, 2012.

58 Fransson & Grannäs, 2013.

ferent perspectives. In the frame below, six of these perspectives are described. From each perspective, teachers pursue a responsible goal in their teaching of pupils. However, it is for the teacher to consider and decide how far the different perspectives and goals get priority in specific practical situations.

Action perspectives in the classroom

- care perspective: pupils have to be protected and to receive proper care and a proper environment;
- personal perspective: pupils are unique and their personal development and needs take a central place;
- contextual perspective: the history, background, and living conditions of pupils have to be taken into account;
- critical perspective: pupils have to be prepared for taking part in discussions as equals and to develop independent opinions;
- functional perspective: pupils have to achieve optimal learning achievements, and their learning potential has to be maximized;
- psychological perspective: pupils' behavior has to be labeled in mental or emotional terms, to ensure that teaching and learning can be attuned to this..

Source: Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2013.

For example, when a pupil has had a very unsettling experience at home on the previous day, a teacher may choose, from a care perspective, to start by making contact with this pupil in a personal way, and not to expect from a functional perspective that this pupil is ready to take an active part in the first lesson of this day. Teachers' choices of the desired action perspective differ from situation to situation, and depend on the features of the specific situation and the assessment made by the teacher in question.

2.4 The teacher as a contemporary and all-time professional

To what extent is it a different thing to be a teacher today, compared to former times? The council notes that certain fundamental aspects of teaching do not differ much from those of sixty years ago, such as the above fields of tension in which teachers do their work and the dilemmas requiring them to make professional choices. At some moments, this makes teaching complicated and challenging, but this is part of the character of the profession. In this sense, teaching is an occupation of all times.⁵⁹

However, the big difference with former times is that the social context in which teachers practice their occupation is strongly subject to change. Today's society is a network society in which people take part in highly divergent short-term connections and groups, which have become more dynamic and international.⁶⁰ In this context teachers, per definition, can no longer work in isolation. Education and schools are influenced by these social developments and thereby the context in which teachers do their work is changed as well. Together these developments reinforce each other and lead to a dynamic, sometimes unpredictable, occupational practice which, for teachers, is seldom the same from day to day and from school to school.

⁵⁹ Kelchtermans, 2012.

⁶⁰ Bouttelier, 2011; Castells, 1996.

For teachers, the primary art (and task) is to connect meaningfully with these changes in the everyday world of their pupils. This requires from teachers that they keep up with developments in society, their subject, and the way their subject is taught. Time and again they have to achieve new theory, and to master and learn to apply a new approach. Hence private and collective views of what is effective keep developing and have to be regularly readjusted.

"This child has ADHD, and you are supposed to know exactly how you should deal with him. And it is considered odd that you haven't thought of putting a screen on the table so this child can work undisturbed. All of this you are expected to know. This is the feeling that makes it so complex, that everybody is constantly pulling at you, that you have to do things in a particular way and that you are expected to find out how to do this in your classroom. After your initial training you are not yet fully equipped to look after your class, there's so many things you don't know yet. This takes some five or six years. But even then it is much and complex." (teacher primary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

Secondly, in such an occupational context, strong demand is made on the personal judgment of individual teachers. Occupational practice is too complex and unpredictable for standardizing actions in manuals and prescriptions. In their – sometimes complicated – practice situations teachers have to assess themselves what is, for the case at hand, the right decision in the interest of the quality of their teaching. For example, teachers have to be able to judge for themselves how far it is desirable in a specific educational situation to follow the established curriculum, or to deviate from this curriculum on the strength of legitimate considerations.

"I have the feeling that I have to adhere very strictly to a fixed plan (lesson program), with the substance of which I am very much in agreement, but because this plan is so rigorously fixed, you can never deviate from it. I consider it professional for a teacher, when he sees that a pupil doesn't cope, to pay more attention to this ... I think that you have to act on what you see ... I need more freedom to do what I think proper to do." (teacher primary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

A third important change signaled by the council refers to the changed authority relationships in society. The authority of a teacher in the eyes of parents, pupils, and others is no longer self-evident and has to be earned again and again. In the first instance, this is the result of the informalization of social relations, but it is also a consequence of the greater importance of education and individualization. After all, high-quality schooling is important for social success and therefore it is important that the talents of every pupil are optimally developed. For example, from this social background, many of today's parents do not simply accept a message of the teacher that their son or daughter achieves below average. During Conversations with teachers, these parents are no longer satisfied by being informed about school matters, but come forward with their own questions and, if necessary, challenge views and actions of teachers.

"Three times a year we have talks with parents. For me this is very intensive, because you have to make clear to parents how their child is achieving at school, what their child is able to do and often what it is not yet able to do. For example a child who has underachieved for spelling for four years. Then parents ask how this is possible. I explain that he has a very small vocabulary, doesn't learn for his tests at home, etc. But then those parents ask what I am going to do to improve this." (teacher primary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

The changing occupational context calls for a personal professionalism on the part of individual teachers, which will enable them to make their own choices in practice situations, to account for these choices to all concerned, and in this way to achieve and maintain the necessary authority for their actions. The council calls for more explicit attention in debate and policy-making for what this personal professionalism amounts to and for recognition of its importance.

3

Personal professionalism inside as well as outside the classroom

3.1

Dealing with the complexity of local occupational practice calls for personal professionalism

The council concludes that the school, as a social institution, is greatly influenced by a number of social developments. On the basis of their educational mission, schools and teachers have to attune meaningfully to these changes in the everyday world of their pupils. Further, these developments have increased the complexity, diversity, and unpredictability of occupational situations.

No fixed 'recipes' exist for achieving adequate performance in such an occupational practice and teachers constantly have to make reasoned assessments in order to decide what, in their specific local practice situation, is the best course of action. While large demands are made on teachers' own practical judgment, the authority on which they base those decisions in their current educational practice has become less self-evident. Teachers have to earn their authority in the eyes of pupils, parents, and other parties over and over again.

This changed occupational context demands of individual teachers, apart from sound knowledge of their subject and competence, a certain level of personal professionalism enabling them to make their own choices in specific practice situations, to account for these choices to those concerned, and in this way to achieve and maintain the necessary authority for their professional actions. Personal professionalism presupposes, per definition, that teachers do not make these choices in isolation. In making these choices, individual teachers always look for interaction with the (development of) collective values and goals of their team, school, occupational group or government.

The council concludes that this personal professionalism of teachers is not always present as a matter of course, but at the same time determines to a considerable extent the quality of teachers' performance in their occupational practice, and consequently the quality of education. Therefore, the council recommends paying more explicit attention to the nature of this

personal side of professionalism and to the recognition of its importance. To this purpose the council submits four considerations.

3.2 **Four considerations in thinking about personal professionalism of teachers**

Consideration 1: Knowing what you stand for and staying in dialogue about this with others

Because of the large demands made by current teaching practice on the personal judgment of teachers, personal motives and the professional identity of teachers have gained major importance. What do you stand for in your occupation? What teachers consider important, which goals they pursue in their teaching, and what kind of teacher they want to be largely make up the basis of the individual choices they make from day to day in their local occupational practice. Together with the necessary professional competence, personal professionalism originates in the mission, values, and identity of individual teachers. These basic features are closely connected with teachers' intrinsic motivation for the profession and their involvement in teaching, and to a considerable extent give direction to their actions and attitudes in everyday teaching practice.

This personal core of professionalism is constantly developing during a teacher's career, in continuous interaction with developments in the occupational context. From teachers this demands that they are consciously aware of this personal core and, when necessary, that they are able to make this explicit to other parties in their educational environment (colleagues, parents, managers, etc.). In this way teachers are able to enter into dialogue with others about the 'why' of their actions and explain why they chose, in specific situations, to act as they did. Skilful handling of this kind of dialogue about the goals and underlying values of their professional actions will enable teachers to a considerable extent to achieve authority in the eyes of parents, pupils, and other parties. Moreover, in this dialogue about values and goals, teachers can always look to interaction with the (development of) collective values, goals, and views of their school organization or occupational group. To begin with, this dialogue should be facilitated close to the practice situation, and be encouraged by local schools and their governing bodies.

Consideration 2: Complicated practical questions call for wise personal choices of teachers

In their occupational practice, teachers are regularly confronted with situations involving specific pupils, groups, associates, and goals that present complicated questions and dilemmas to them. No ready-made answers to these questions are available and teachers are therefore themselves continually required to make (quick) choices in their specific practice situation about what is the most suitable action. These choices are not black and white, and often there is a number of equally plausible alternatives. For teachers to do the right thing in the right way in concrete educational situations demands practical wisdom: making a (rapid) assessment balancing the different alternatives; the collective frameworks and values of school, occupation, or government; their own professional values and goals; and the features of the specific situation. Teachers who are able to make such balanced and considered choices show professionalism in their actions and gain authority in the eyes of parents, pupils and other parties.

This practical wisdom comes about in a continuing interaction between teachers' experience, expertise and (existing) knowledge. In this interaction, teachers gradually develop more and more 'feeling' for situations in their occupational practice. They increasingly recognize the important features of situations better and more quickly, and react more and more adequately to these situations. Practical wisdom plays an important role in the quality of professional per-

formance, but, by being implicit and specific to situations it is not easily measurable with the help of standardized, generic instruments.

In order to appreciate practical wisdom, it is important for schools to look for new, creative approaches in their supervision and evaluation of teachers, approaches that allow insight into the extent to which teachers have developed practical wisdom in their teaching practice. Besides, development of practical wisdom calls for (shared) reflection on practice situations and on examples of good practice in training and professionalization.

Consideration 3: Teachers with a mission use, as well as create, professional space

The mission of teachers does not stop at the door of their classrooms. Teachers are important players in the field of education, and they need professional space in order to pursue their educational goals and values outside the classroom and to contribute to the making of education as members of the professional learning community of their school.

One aspect of personal professionalism is that teachers both use and create this space. The professional space of teachers is extended by their connecting and cooperating with others outside the classroom. In this cooperation trust in the relationships between colleagues, and with managers and other parties, plays an important role. One way in which teachers may enhance this trust between colleagues, and with school management, parents, and other parties, is to account regularly for the activities they undertake. On the basis of their intrinsic motivation and expertise they can also achieve a leading role in school activities that contribute to their professional goals. This involves always looking for connections between personal goals and goals of the collective (team, school, occupational group). From teachers this demands professional competence and an insight into the (social) processes and power relations in their school network, and the way these may be positively influenced.

Consideration 4: Critically inquisitive teachers are continually developing themselves

Society, education, and occupational practice are continually on the move. Personal professionalism requires that teachers keep up with these changes, and time and again find answers to new questions that emerge in their practice. To this purpose, together with colleagues, researchers, and others, they look critically and inquisitively at their own practice and professional actions. When teachers take a critically explorational attitude and undertake (cooperative) practice-oriented research into important and urgent questions in their educational practice, their (collective) practice and personal professionalism develop continually.

This critically inquisitive attitude and competence ensure that other aspects of personal professionalism keep developing as well. It enables teachers to continue their exploration of who they want to be as a teacher, and so further develop their identity; to critically scrutinize their values and goals and become more and more proficient in making these explicit in their dialogue with others; to keep looking critically at their experiences in the light of existing knowledge, and so continue to reinforce their practical wisdom; and to gain new insights into educational topics and issues, so that, on the basis of this expertise, they can achieve leadership and influence in school activities and are able to use and create professional space. Teachers who keep looking critically in this way (together with others) at their own actions in educational practice and, when necessary, readjust these actions to developments in the occupational context, help to guarantee educational quality, and achieve authority and respect in the eyes of all parties concerned.

Personal professionalism has its roots in the mission, values, and identity of individual teachers. These features are closely connected with teachers' motivation and involvement in occupational practice. To a considerable extent they give direction to teachers' actions and attitude in occupational practice, in continuous interaction with collective values of the school organization and the occupational group. When competent teachers rely on these features when they enter into a dialogue about choices in their occupational practice, and, when they account for these choices to others, they can achieve authority for their actions.

4

Knowing what you stand for and staying in dialogue about this with others

4.1

Teaching as a value-laden mission

In teaching practice, many situations call for a quick solution. For example, how do teachers go about restoring discipline in their classroom? Teachers cannot avoid these technical 'how-questions'. They are of common occurrence, they are important, and they require an immediate response. As a teacher you have to step in (quickly), otherwise your classroom is demolished.⁶¹ In the press of daily practice teachers run the risk of just solving these 'how-problems'. In those cases, why they choose for a particular action is not considered.

"When you are working for more than twenty periods, you are in an action mode. You must do everything all the time, everything is important, and tomorrow you have to be there again. So you have no time to sit down and think things over." (teacher secondary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

Knowing what you stand for as a teacher

For teachers, answering the value-laden 'why-questions' in their teaching is of fundamental importance for adequately answering the many 'how-questions' in their occupational practice.⁶² What do you stand for as a teacher? Professional performance requires that you are well aware of what you are doing and what your teaching is aimed at. After all, teaching is not only a matter of what is possible, or what has to be done, in a given situation, but also of what a teach-

61 Van Kan, Brouwer & Zitter, 2012.

62 Kelchtermans, 2012.

er regards as desirable, valuable, or important.⁶³ For example, why does a teacher in senior secondary vocational education explain an assignment to his group in the way he is used to doing this in the everyday practice of his own business, and not according to the manual?⁶⁴ Perhaps he wants to get in touch with the everyday world of his pupils, all of whom are doing work placement. So his choice of how he presents his instruction is driven by his view of the why of his teaching – he considers it important and valuable in his teaching to get through to his pupils and to motivate them. Such a professional goal or value determines the way he deals with this situation. In practice the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of teachers’ actions are closely connected. Professional performance of teachers requires a competence enabling them to constantly make a connection between the ‘why’ and the ‘how’.

Teachers need a clear personal answer to the ‘why’ of their choices. The particular way in which they choose to work out their teaching is determined to a considerable extent by their underlying views of who they are or want to be as teachers (their identity), the values and goals they want to pursue (for example, attuning to the specific background and characteristics of each pupil), and their subject knowledge and pedagogical stock-in-trade.⁶⁵ Also these views are often closely related to the reason that a teacher chose teaching as an occupation, and why a teacher stays in this occupation. These views make up the educational mission that teachers pursue in their teaching: in their transmission of knowledge and their dealing with pupils.⁶⁶ Commitment to this mission lies at the heart of teachers’ involvement and motivation in their occupational practice.⁶⁷

“I became a teacher because each time I got near a school something started stirring inside me, making me feel very good. School is a place where I can get a lot of satisfaction. The core of my work is that I get the best out of children. Allowing children to do this themselves. This gives me a kick. When I see that children are able to get the best out of themselves, are able to do something, get their teeth into something, or when I have been able to bring them a step further in their learning process, that’s what gives me a kick.” (teacher primary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

However, this ‘inner fire’ will not automatically keep burning forever. Research indicates that far from all teachers remain intrinsically motivated and involved during their teaching career.⁶⁸

Knowing what you go for as a teacher

If they do not act on the basis of their own values, goals, and mission, teachers will come to act reactively, even if technically speaking they act correctly. In whatever educational situations they face, they may comply with the bare necessities of what is required of them by rules and the outside world, but they will do not do what they themselves consider most desirable on the basis of their own educational values. In this way teachers can easily degenerate from makers to executives of education, and lose motivation, involvement, and the inner drive to provide the highest possible quality of education to their pupils.

63 Biesta, 2009; Jacobs, 2010.

64 Van Kan, Brouwer & Zitter, 2012.

65 Beijaard, 2009; Rohaan, Beijaard & Vink, 2012.

66 Hooge, Honingh & Langelaan, 2011; Korthagen, 2004.

67 Bokdam, Berger & Volker, 2011; Vogels, 2009; Vogels & Bronneman-Helmerts, 2006.

68 Canrinus, 2011; Canrinus, 2012.

Teachers who know what they stand for in their teaching are also able to purposefully stand up for something in their occupational practice. They do not merely react to situations occurring in their practice but, by choosing a particular course of action, they also deliberately give direction to these situations. These teachers do not take a present state of education for granted, but have ideas about the make-up and development of education, and pursue (together with others) the values and goals that they consider important. The council regards the explicit presence and motivating power of this value-laden mission, apart from the required knowledge and skills, as the basis for good professional teaching.

“When you know who you are yourself and what you stand for, the principal doesn’t need to make your choices for you.” (teacher primary education)

Source: *Conversations with teachers*

4.2 Mission, values, and identity are interconnected

The council noted previously that the actions of teachers take place in a regulated space.⁶⁹ Teachers’ autonomy to pursue their own professional goals and values is always limited by the law and by collectively established norms, values, and goals (for example, competency requirements in the law Professions in Education). An important part of the personal professionalism of individual teachers consists in their finding their own way in this restricted space. This means that, in their practice, they not only pursue their own values and goals, but they are also aware of collective frameworks and constantly look for a connection with collective values and goals.⁷⁰

Although teachers’ own mission, values, and identity are of great importance, they cannot be regarded in isolation from the collectively cherished values and identity of the team, school, and occupational group with which teachers are inextricably bound.⁷¹ The quadrant of professionalism presented in the first chapter, showed that the personal professionalism of teachers presupposes a continuous interaction between the actions of individuals and the larger collective of which they are members.

Entering into a professional dialogue with associates

In chapter 2, we concluded that the occupational context has become more complex, diverse, and unpredictable. What is the best course of action in a given situation cannot be determined beforehand, and the authority with which teachers make decisions is no longer self-evident. The only thing teachers can do is to make their practical choices explicit and defend them as best they can, but in so doing they cannot fall back on a respected institution or knowledge base lending them the necessary authority.⁷² Even when relevant results of research are available, teachers still have to make their own choice about how to deal with specific practice situations. This uncertainty and ‘disputability’ of their actions is inherent in the educational practice of teachers. It introduces a form of vulnerability into the professionalism of teachers which is not so much a problem as it is a characteristic of teaching. It belongs to the occupation and makes contacts and discussions with others both possible and necessary.

69 Onderwijsraad, 2012c.

70 Jacobs, 2010.

71 Kole & De Ruijter, 2007.

72 Kelchtermans, 2009; 2012.

Being explicit about their mission, values, and goals enables teachers to explain clearly to others what they consider important in their teaching and why. From this starting-point teachers are able to account for their actions and enter into a dialogue about their choices. Moreover, teachers who take up this dialogue are also able to make necessary connections with other professionals. With a view to acting competently in occupational situations, it becomes more and more important for teachers to build up a constructive interdisciplinary dialogue and to cooperate, for example with remedial educationalists, youth welfare workers, social workers or teacher educators.⁷³

“I accept that they look at the results, but then I want to get into conversation with them and to be able to explain why certain things are going the way they do in certain classes.” (teacher secondary education)

Source: Kingma, 2013.

Professional dialogue in policy?

The council regards sustaining such a dialogue as an important element of the personal professionalism with which today’s teachers can adequately design their teaching as well as achieve authority in the eyes of others in the educational context (for example parents). At the same time, the council notes that this modeling of education and accounting for education through dialogue takes place in the action space of teachers and schools, and lends itself less easily to direction and control from generic and uniformizing policy measures. To begin with this dialogue should be facilitated and encouraged by local schools and their governing bodies. This discussion about individual values and educational goals may also provide a basis for the development and further definition of broadly supported collective goals in schools and governing bodies.

“This is something I worry about. Seeing that the response from outside is always to impose new measures, new supervision. But that isn’t going to work at all. The occupational group will have to be stronger and do this kind of thing itself. This cannot be regulated or pushed from outside ... They [teachers] have to improve what happens in class themselves and enter into discussion with one another so you get an idea of how we are doing things. In the way of ‘I’ve seen your lesson and I have some ideas about good teaching, and what do you think of them?’ The role that is played by your views in the pedagogical choices you make. But that isn’t something they talk about ... What’s missing is a discussion about what makes good teaching.” (teacher secondary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

Facilitating and starting up the dialogue is regarded by the council as an important way to address teachers in the present occupational practice on the subject of their professionalism, and to account for and improve the quality and results of their local teaching practice through an exchange of views and experiences.

73 Noordeggraaf, 2007; Schuman, 2010.

In their occupational practice, teachers are regularly confronted with situations involving specific pupils, groups, associates, and goals that present questions for which no ready-made answers from the occupational group, school organization, or other institution are available. Teachers themselves have to make choices as to what, in each practice situation, is the most suitable action. From teachers this calls for a well-developed capacity to make judgments: practical wisdom.

5 Complicated practical questions call for wise personal choices of teachers

5.1 Practical wisdom: doing the right thing in the right way

The council notes that the competence and knowledge of teachers are of great importance for professional performance in the occupational context, but those are not enough. For the personal professionalism of teachers, their individual judgment is of great importance as well. In the complicated situations and dilemmas that arise in their occupational practice, teachers have to constantly (and often rapidly) make the right decisions. Teachers assess what is the proper thing to do in each situation and, subsequently, how they can act in the right way. In this process they make use of what they know and are able to do. And they reckon with both collective and personal values and with the characteristics of the specific practice situation. In order to act adequately (and rapidly) teachers need well-developed practical judgment: practical wisdom.⁷⁴

“What we do is top-class sport. We have to change tack all day long. We have to make one choice after another.” (teacher primary education)

Bron: *Gesprekken met leraren.*

Practical wisdom

In the past decade, authors in the field of professionalism and professional development have gone back to the old concept of ‘practical wisdom’.⁷⁵ Briefly, practical wisdom does not refer to abstract knowledge that can be generalized or to technically correct performance, but to doing the right thing in the right way in concrete practice situations. We see this practical wis-

⁷⁴ Compare professional performance in the context of the care sector, Van Dartel, 2012.

⁷⁵ Practical wisdom dates back to a distinction made by Aristotle (384-322 v.Chr.) in the doctrine of virtues as described in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, between: Episteme (‘Scientific, theoretical knowledge’); Techne (‘Professional competence’), and Phronesis (‘Practical wisdom’); Aristotle, 2005.

dom for example when teachers deal adequately with the dilemma situations described in chapter 2: the way they assess the practice situation, make considered choices about what in this specific situation is the right course of action, and then act accordingly.

Hence, practical wisdom has an ethical, value-laden dimension. It refers to unique situations and to the assessment of what in these situation is the right course of action. Teachers do not only consider *how* they should solve the situation, but also *why*, in this situation, this is the right solution. It presupposes something that was already described in the last chapter: that teachers, in their occupational practice, not only have to be able to answer the technical ‘how-questions’, but also the ‘why-questions’ in their teaching.

When it comes to practical wisdom the whole person of teachers is important – not only their competences as teachers, but also their identity, values, and goals.⁷⁶ This practical wisdom comes with experience and consists in the ability to deal with the complex and unpredictable nature of practice situations on the basis of values. Recently Schwartz and Sharpe described a number of characteristics of professionals, working with practical wisdom in a broad range of occupations (see frame).

Characteristics of professionals with practical wisdom

- They know the goals of the activities in which they are involved. They want to do the right things in order to achieve these goals; they want to answer the needs of the people they serve.
- They know how to improvise; they are able to balance conflicting goals and to interpret rules and principles in the light of the particulars of each specific situation.
- They are attentive; they know how to ‘read’ the social context and how to look at the grey area in the situation beyond the black and white of rules.
- They know how to take the perspective of another; to perceive a situation as it is perceived by another, and so to understand how the other person feels. This shift of perspective is what enables a wise person to feel empathy for others and to make decisions that serve the needs of their clients (patients, pupils, etc).
- They know how to connect feeling with reason; they trust feelings to point to what is important to do in a situation, and give these feelings a place in their assessment, without allowing them to distort it. They are able to know intuitively, or by a ‘gut-feeling’, what is the right thing to do, so that they can act quickly when a situation requires it. Their feelings and intuitions are well-developed.
- They are experienced; practical wisdom is a craft, and craftsmen develop when they have the right experiences. For example, they learn to be good listeners by often listening.

Source: Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010.

Feeling for the specific situation

Practical wisdom of teachers develops in interaction between experience and theory. From teachers it demands that they try to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice, and verify how effective these theoretical insights are in their specific practice situations. Gradually they see through situations more and more accurately and develop a feeling for what is important and what they should do or abstain from doing in everyday educational situations.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Biesta, 2011.

⁷⁷ Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009.

Listening to the ‘something fishy feeling’

The ‘something fishy feeling’ has been known as a diagnostic phenomenon in the practice of general practitioners for more than a century. Countless stories describe how a ‘something fishy feeling’ has incited general practitioners to refer a patient in time to a hospital. Although rational arguments were practically lacking, they did not hesitate to call in a specialist. Experienced specialists take this feeling of general practitioners seriously, and medical disciplinary tribunals take it into account in their verdicts concerning both general practitioners and specialists, considering that general practitioners have to listen to their ‘something fishy feeling’ and to act accordingly.

The ‘something fishy feeling’ plays an important role in general practice and is based on knowledge – scientific knowledge, knowledge from experience and knowledge of context. This feeling integrates feeling and reason, and body and mind. All over the world there are names for this feeling, such as ‘onderbuikgevoel’ in Dutch, ‘gut-feeling’ in English or ‘jikkan’ in Japanese.

Source: Inoue, 2012.

Thus, practical wisdom refers to seeing, hearing, and feeling sharply what is going on in a given situation, and what is the essence of the situation. This ‘feeling’ for the situation enables teachers to (rapidly) take the right decisions and to act adequately in their occupational practice.⁷⁸ The example below illustrates the importance of practical wisdom for the teaching practice of teachers.

Practical wisdom: an example from teaching practice

It is her first year in front of the classroom. Her class is restive. Seated behind her desk, Miriam tries to keep an overview of the situation, regularly asking pupils to be more quiet. However, her admonitions do not always have the desired effect. Also when she is explaining something, the class is not always attentive. Recently, when she was in the middle of a complicated explanation about volcanic activity, a note even went flying through the classroom. Because she needed to keep all of her attention on her instruction, she did not react to this, and that meant that the unrest in her classroom just got worse. After the lesson, Miriam had to conclude that her explanation must have been missed by a considerable number of the pupils.

Three years later, Miriam’s teaching practice takes on a different character every day, and feeds her with experiences with which she can develop practical wisdom. In her first, difficult year she developed a feeling for signals from the class indicating that unrest might crop up and impede the learning of pupils. This sensitivity makes up part of the practical wisdom that she brings with her now when she steps into a classroom. Now the note that John wants to pass on no longer holds an immediate threat for discipline in the classroom, but Miriam feels that John’s action may lead to further consequences, for example with regard to Sophie. Sophie is dyslectic and urgently needs Miriam’s oral explanation. So she wisely corrects John. She does this practically without interrupting her explanation, but also makes clear to John that his bond with her is not in danger by smiling to him and giving him a wink. But Miriam’s actions are also inspired by theoretical knowledge about dyslexia, a knowledge that she has internalized and can apply at once in this specific situation.

In short, it takes only a few seconds for Miriam to take in the essential elements of the situation: a possible disturbance; Sophie’s dyslexia problem and Sophie’s need of Miriam’s oral explanation; safeguarding a positive relationship with John; and keeping the rest of the class attentive to the lesson. In this situation Miriam proves able to act adequately without very much difficulty. She remains in contact with her own feelings and wishes, and manages to maintain a clear structure for her

⁷⁸ With respect to the adult-child relationship, the pedagogue Van Maanen defined this quick judgement in a comparable way as pedagogical tact: ‘to exercise tact means to see a situation calling for sensitivity, to understand the meaning of what is seen, to sense the significance of this situation, to know how and what to do, and to actually do something right’; Van Maanen, 1991. In the broad field of professionalism this practical judgment is also defined as ‘Fingerspitzengefühl’; Jacobs, 2008.

explanation about volcanic activity. Thus Miriam is able to act wisely and integratively in this complex situation. Compared to three years earlier her practical wisdom has grown. This growth may be characterized as a growth of sensitivity – a better and quicker perception of essential aspects of the here and now. She sees the situation differently and better than she did three years ago.

Source: Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009a.

5.2 Practical wisdom does not develop by itself

In their talks with the council, teachers pointed out that practical wisdom is something ‘to be felt’ in the teaching practice of their colleagues. In one way or another practically wise teachers often take the right decisions in their professional actions, but it is not easy to explain to others exactly why certain teachers are endowed with this wisdom, and others are not. Practical wisdom is closely connected with the person and actions of individual teachers, and hard to make explicit.⁷⁹ Practical wisdom is important for a good, professional performance, but the question is how can it be usefully portrayed and how can its development be stimulated.

Evaluating practical wisdom requires different forms of evaluation

Practical wisdom may be felt in daily practice, but cannot be easily measured. It is difficult to assess the extent of practical wisdom of teachers with the help of standardized instruments because of its implicit and situation-specific nature. Since practical wisdom plays an important role in the quality of teachers’ actions and their teaching, it is important to look for creative new ways to gain insight into the extent to which teachers have developed practical wisdom in their actions. In the evaluation and supervision of teachers’ performance schools may reserve a place for such new approaches. In the assessment of such a less tangible element of personal professionalism, the council sees possibilities for learning from other sectors, such as the official recognition of the ‘something fishy feeling’ being important for the good performance of general practitioners.⁸⁰

Developing practical wisdom by training and imitation

Practical wisdom does not develop by itself. It originates in practice, and teachers develop a capacity for wise assessments by sustained training and reflection, in which they connect their experiences with insights of others (colleagues, theory, and educational research).⁸¹ In this way, teachers also develop the necessary speed with which to instantly make adequate assessments in their often busy teaching practice. In developing this judgment, examples might be studied of teachers who have already achieved a high level of mastery. This might be done by observing them and interviewing them about situations and the underlying reasons for their actions in these situations.⁸² For the development of practical wisdom, the council sees an important role in such a (cooperative) reflection on practice situations in the curriculum of teacher education, induction programs, and other activities in the sphere of further professionalization.⁸³

79 Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009a.

80 Stolper, 2010.

81 Biesta, 2011.

82 For an example of such an approach, see Van Kan, Ponte & Verloop, 2010.

83 Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009b.

Teachers with a mission need space in order to pursue their educational goals in the professional learning community of their school. They use as well as create this space by looking for connections with others and by achieving leadership in working together. Exerting an influence in this way not only requires from teachers that they are competent in their teaching, but also that they are sensitive to power relations and (social) processes in their school network.

6

Teachers with a mission use, as well as create professional space

6.1 Looking for balance between personal professional goals and contexts of professional space

In recent years, with respect to professionalism, (policy) papers increasingly call attention to the professional space of teachers (see for example the action plan Leraar 2020 [Teacher 2020]).⁸⁴ Professionals per definition command a space in which their actions are not only determined by standardized procedures, but in which they are able to a certain extent to make their own decisions.⁸⁵ This professional space of teachers is usually defined as the extent to which teachers have authority over, or are able to exert an influence on, work processes in education. The recently founded professional association of teachers, the OnderwijSCOöperatie [Education Cooperative], defines this space more broadly as: 'the space available for teachers to use their expertise for the benefit of educational quality. This is a space enabling teachers to make decisions with respect to curriculum, set-up (pedagogy and organization), and professional development.'⁸⁶

Professional space is not only determined by characteristics of the factual action space (structures, rules, means, etc.), but to at least an equally important extent by the degree to which teachers actually experience this action space.⁸⁷ Generally, teachers experience a fair amount of authority over what takes place in their classroom, but their influence on the design and implementation of education or professionalization is less clearly experienced outside the classroom (for example at school level).⁸⁸

84 Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2011.

85 Zuurmond & De Jong, 2010.

86 OnderwijSCOöperatie (z.j.).

87 Hulsbos, Andersen, Kessels & Wassink, 2012.

88 Diepstraten & Evers, 2012; Hogeling, Wartenbergh-Cras, Pass, Jacobs, Vrielink, e.a., 2009; Kessels, 2012.

“As a teacher in senior secondary vocational education, I have a fair amount of freedom to shape my lessons. In primary education much more has been laid down, not only the books we use but also the rest of the method. Here we have to develop much more of that ourselves, and this gives us the freedom to decide ourselves how we can attune the contents of lessons to the level of students. We do have these qualification dossiers, partly generic and partly specific for the subject. And we have to reckon with them ... As a result of the scaling-up of senior secondary vocational education it sometimes appears that things are put through from above. It seems that the managers do not always know what is taking place on the shop floor. I have little influence at the policy level, but I do have some influence on how to deal with policy in our team.” (teacher senior secondary vocational education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

Extending this space is sometimes regarded as a way to enlarge the autonomy and authority of teachers, with a view to raising the quality of education.⁸⁹ The council has previously indicated that this professional autonomy is limited by established standards with respect to subject matter and (minimal) achievements, examination, and qualification requirements for teachers.⁹⁰ In the opinion of the council, these standards may well represent a zealous attempt to give direction to the actions of professionals. At the same time, too large a measure of central (governmental) direction is undesirable, as this prevents teachers from making optimal use of their professional space. Ideally the development of standards and the providing of space go hand in hand, thus creating a regulated space.

With respect to the professional performance of teachers, this means that, in their occupational practice, they continually look for a balance between what they themselves consider suitable and valuable, and what is required of them by their environment.⁹¹ In their practice situations, teachers have to look for a balance between the mission, values, and goals they pursue, and the contexts of professional space in which they are operating. The council takes the view that personal professionalism of teachers not only consists in their optimally using the given space in pursuing their professional goals, but also in creating this space proactively together with others.

6.2 Creating professional space by looking for connections

One characteristic of the professionalism of teachers is that they are not on the sidelines in the professional learning community of their school, but exert an influence on the design and implementation of education on the basis of their own values and goals.⁹² Not only inside their own classroom, but also outside the classroom. This professional space in the learning community of their school is created through interaction and cooperation with colleagues and managers.⁹³

Achieving influence outside the classroom

Teachers often feel that their interests are affected by matters they cannot directly influence. They not only feel involved with their own class and pupils, but also with developments in the school organization or curriculum, such as innovations or cutbacks. These are often matters

89 Kessels, 2012; Bruining, Loeffen, Uytendaal & De Koning, 2012.

90 Onderwijsraad, 2012c.

91 McDaniel, Immers, Neeleman & Schmidt, 2010; Ponte, 2003; Van Swet, Van Huijgevoort, Cornelissen, Kienhuis, Smeets, e.a., 2008.

92 Kelchtermans, 2012.

93 Onderwijsraad, 2013.

outside their sphere of influence, referring to decisions that bring about changes which are too big to be handled directly (on one's own). If they were to attempt to deal with these decisions themselves, they risk frustration. They are not able to get their own initiatives off the ground and have the feeling that they are running up against a wall.

"You can make your voice heard during team meetings. But sometimes, because of my sector going comprehensive and scaling up, I get the feeling that I have increasingly less influence on certain matters ... For example, visiting work placements. Last year we teachers still did this ourselves, but now it has been decided at the institute level that these visits will be taken over by a number of specialists in this field. This makes things easier for the teacher, but the lines become longer – as teachers we know the students and so we can more easily give them customized teaching. I have to accept this situation, also because I have no influence on the broad policy of the institute." (teacher senior secondary vocational education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

Teachers who want to increase their influence and realize their goals can purposefully undertake activities that lie just beyond their own sphere of influence.⁹⁴ When a teacher finds that her influence goes no further than the door of her own classroom, she might deliberately begin to cooperate with colleagues from other classes. For example, if she thinks that sporting activities are very important to help pupils with special needs to become stronger socially, she might invite a sports association to develop with her a plan to this purpose. Subsequently, she may present this plan, together with the sports association, to her colleagues in a team meeting, and invite them to take part in it. By undertaking such activities this teacher step-by-step increases her influence on the design and practice of education in her school, and thereby enlarges her professional space to pursue her goals.

"I can completely realize my ideas about teaching in my classroom, and also in the school. And I make sure that I can do this. Just by coming up with ideas. Not by presenting them as the final truth. And I do not only put my own ideas into practice. It's really a matter of cooperation. Also things happen which weren't my own idea, but I do learn from them, realizing that I can do it that way as well." (teacher secondary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

Professional space grows by connecting, trusting and being accountable

The professional space of teachers grows by teachers connecting and cooperating with others outside the classroom. In this cooperation, the quality of the relationships with colleagues, managers, and other associates plays an important role. The quality of these relationships is largely reflected in the extent to which colleagues trust one another's capacities and integrity, and respect one another's ideas.⁹⁵ A school climate characterized by mutual trust is a fruitful breeding ground for teachers to pursue goals together with others.

94 Cornelissen, 2009; Covey, 1989; Verdonschot, Spruyt & Dresen, 2011.

95 Moolenaar, 2010.

“The more noise there is between teacher and manager, the more tension may arise. The larger the distance, the thinner the trust, and trust is necessary for good communication. On this point, things could be further improved.” (teacher secondary education)

Source: Kingma, 2013.

When teachers succeed in gaining this trust it is easier for them to involve others in the cooperation they seek and the goals they pursue. One way for teachers to further increase this trust among colleagues, management, parents, and other associates, is by regularly accounting for the activities they undertake. This can be done in a variety of ways so that teachers show to others how something is done, how effective this is, and which of these activities turn out to be not viable.

Taking the lead in shared activities

Pursuing values and thereby influencing the environment presupposes a form of leadership in which teachers take initiatives and take on certain leadership tasks.⁹⁶ This form of leadership, which is not delegated nor tied to a formal position, is sometimes called distributed leadership.⁹⁷ Distributed leadership is primarily another way of looking at leadership – not only regarding leadership as a behavioral quality of the formal (school) leader, but chiefly as a role and a process coming about in cooperation between people. By whom this leadership is ‘assumed’ or ‘achieved’ is not predetermined, but may differ from situation to situation and from activity to activity.⁹⁸

In this form of leadership, the emphasis is on actions and activities in everyday situations that are intended to influence others and to change the primary process – providing education. In this process the most important point is that action is taken, and a less important point is by whom precisely this action is taken. So this leadership does not exclusively refer to the activities of the formal (school) leader, but to the activities of all members of the organization, in the present case, all teachers of a school.⁹⁹

Through shared activities teachers can take the lead and assume a leadership role with a view to pursuing values and goals together with others. They achieve leadership, or this role is assigned to them, on the basis of their expertise in a certain field, their intrinsic motivation, and the space allowed to them to undertake activities.¹⁰⁰

“People think *about* them [teachers], people think *for* them, but not many people think *with* them. For many teachers this leads to something like: you see it doesn’t make sense, we’re only fit to be decided on by others. But then I think, you’re present there yourself. So when you come up with plans a lot is always possible. You’ve only got to come up with good plans. And this is something different than giving me my own classroom and a nice timetable and everything will be all right.” (teacher secondary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

96 Harris, 2008; Kessels, 2012.

97 Spillane, 2006.

98 Hulsbos, Andersen, Kessels & Wassink, 2012.

99 Spillane, 2006.

100 Hulsbos, Andersen, Kessels & Wassink, 2012.

Insight into the micro-politics of the school organization is necessary

When teachers purposefully extend their influence and take the lead in certain activities, they are inevitably confronted with the (sometimes contrasting) interests and goals of other parties. Teachers have to contend with power issues. In order to properly exert an influence in this micro-political sphere of their own school organization it is important to know the ropes. Apart from being able to 'read' the situation and to see what interests are involved, it is important to apply strategies and tactics that influence the situation in such a way that the desired changes are brought about.¹⁰¹

Teachers who successfully make their influence felt seek the cooperation with colleagues on the basis of shared goals, look for supporters of their views inside and/or outside the school, negotiate with their manager about matters they consider important, or purposefully offer fundamental resistance on the basis of educational values.¹⁰²

"When you know clearly what you want and why you want it, and are able to put this into words, your principal may well be persuaded." (teacher primary education)

Source: *Conversations with teachers*.

This kind of micro-political process is often attended by strong emotions such as feelings of frustration, powerlessness, anger, and vulnerability when something miscarries, and feelings of pride, satisfaction, and joy when goals are attained.¹⁰³ It is important to deal constructively with these emotions.¹⁰⁴

Reinforcing educational quality by restricting or by extending professional space?

The council finds that professional space in a school comes about primarily by a continuous interaction among those working in the school.¹⁰⁵ Professional space originates in the interaction between teachers and school management striving together for an excellent quality of education. Personal professionalism of teachers enables them, in this interaction, to achieve the space in their school that they need to continue working together with others for a higher quality of education. At same time the council notes that in the Netherlands, in many schools, this kind of interaction is not yet customary and that teachers (and managers) are not purposefully trained for this in training programs and further professionalization.¹⁰⁶

School policy aimed at reinforcing educational quality by extending professional space should differentiate with respect to the measure of teachers' personal professionalism.¹⁰⁷ On the one hand, teachers with a strongly developed personal professionalism have to be encouraged to extend their space. In that case school policy should aim at creating space for teachers and supporting their initiatives to reinforce the quality of education in their school.

¹⁰¹ This is also called 'micro-political literacy' (Kelchtermans, 2005; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002).

¹⁰² Kelchtermans, 2012.

¹⁰³ For example Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Cornelissen, Van Swet, Beijaard & Bergen, 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Kelchtermans, 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Onderwijsraad, 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Kingma, 2013; Onderwijsraad, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Vermeulen, 2012.

"I would like to see that teachers are involved in certain decisions, and preferably a core group of teachers that you know are professional, and to know that their views carry more weight." (teacher secondary education)

Source: Kingma, 2013.

On the other hand, there are also teachers who, with a view to safeguarding a minimum level of educational quality, should receive rather less room in their teaching practice. In these cases school policy should aim at more closely supervising and (ultimately) assessing these teachers.

"Every teacher knows a number of people of whom you think they should not be in front of a classroom. Any teacher would say that this isn't good for the profession, and why doesn't anybody do something about it. But these instruments are made to be so generic, they have to be the same for everyone, and then you see that teachers who are functioning properly are bothered by this. It is the same as with chemotherapy: it doesn't differentiate. It destroys both good and bad cells. This is the same thing. So you get these generic measures and they bother everyone. And then we say, come on, the point is to get rid of this badly functioning teacher, you need to tell him to stop." (teacher secondary education)

Source: Van der Rijst & Van Veen, 2013.

Society, education, and occupational practice are constantly on the move. Teachers are required to keep up with changes and find answers to new questions. To do so they must look critically and inquisitively at their own practice and actions, together with others. This critically inquisitive attitude enables teachers to continue developing their professionalism and teaching practice.

7

Critically inquisitive teachers are continually developing themselves

7.1

Critically inquisitive attitude: continuing to look (together) for answers to important questions

In recent years, the complexity and dynamics of the occupational context has increased. It is important to keep up with developments in society, curriculum, and pedagogy. Furthermore, it is inherent in teaching that questions and dilemmas crop up regularly for which no 'best' answers are available.¹⁰⁸ These questions call for competence, awareness of values and goals as a basis for action, and practical wisdom in the evaluation of specific occupational situations. In the changeable occupational context, many of these values and goals are not self-evident, since what is regarded as valuable and important by professionals and other parties changes along with the occupational context.¹⁰⁹

Personal professionalism involves teachers in regularly reviewing choices they have made and assessing critically whether these choices were correct and responsible.¹¹⁰ Why was this choice the proper one to be made in this situation? Were there any other good alternatives? How does my course of action relate to my ideal image of the teacher I want to be? What do others (colleagues) think of this choice? Is there (new) theory which provides (additional) insight? Are there research outcomes that I can use? The personal professionalism of teachers implies such a critically inquisitive attitude, and necessitates that they do not regard their teaching practice and their actions as given, but constantly reflect and explore (together with others) how things may be done differently and better.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Kelchtermans, 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Van Dartel, 2012.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Van Dartel, 2012.

¹¹¹ This attitude has previously been defined as the attitude of a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983), or as 'inquiry as stance' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

“You have to try things out and learn by doing. Reflection is an important aspect of this, and it keeps you focused. You should always want to experiment, to improve things and to keep up an exchange with colleagues” (teacher primary education)

Source: *Conversations with teachers*.

Practice-oriented research: systematically looking for answers

During the last decade, following the lead of countries such as Great Britain, the United States, Australia, and Finland, more attention has come to be paid in Dutch education to encouraging a critically reflective and inquisitive attitude among teachers.¹¹² Meanwhile, in teacher education programs, learning to carry out practice-oriented research (such as self-study research, action research, design-oriented research) by teachers in their own school practice is gaining ground.¹¹³ This kind of research pursues an interaction between theory and practice and aims at achieving an insight into teachers' own teaching practice and their actions in this practice. Apart from the validity and reliability of the developed knowledge, the usefulness of the developed insights for the practice of teaching is of essential importance.¹¹⁴ Cooperative practice-oriented research offers teachers a good opportunity to look for answers to (new) questions in their changeable occupational practice, to constantly extend their own competence and knowledge, and at the same time to keep developing the quality of their own teaching.¹¹⁵ Along these lines, the council previously recommended formation of a link between the practice-oriented research of teachers and the scientific research of university researchers and lecturers in which theory takes a more central place. This may give rise to networks between schools, universities, and other institutions working collectively for the improvement of education, as well as developing new (theoretical) knowledge.¹¹⁶

7.2

A critically inquisitive attitude sustains the development of personal professionalism

It is important to critically connect answers to 'how' and 'why' questions with outcomes

In occupational practice, technical, instrumental 'how questions' can easily become dominant.¹¹⁷ Questions like 'how can I solve this situation in my class?' call for immediate answers, and the next 'how question' often presents itself soon afterwards. In teaching practice there is often little time and space to dwell at length on the why of these choices. As was already indicated in chapter 4, the answers to these deeper 'why questions' are often left out of consideration, whereas they are at least as important and are closely connected with answers to the frequently encountered 'how questions'. Good, professional performance demands of teachers that they continue to consider critically whether they are doing the right things in the right way, and whether they achieve the desired professional goals. In this way their personal professionalism continues to develop. This requires that teachers continually ask themselves why they are doing what they do – what they are aiming at in a given situation ('why question'); how they (want to) do this ('how question'); and what is the effect of their professional actions (broad outcomes with respect to qualification, socialization, and personal development as comprehen-

112 Vrijnsen-de Corte, 2011.

113 Cornelissen, 2011; Van der Linden, 2012.

114 Anderson & Herr, 1999; Cornelissen, 2011.

115 Geijssel, 2011.

116 Onderwijsraad, 2011c.

117 Van Kan, Brouwer & Zitter, 2012.

sive goals). The council emphasizes that these questions cannot be answered in isolation from one another. Personal professionalism of teachers means that they, in critically and inquisitively pursuing an optimal quality of education, always make a connection between these questions.¹¹⁸ How did you act as a teacher in a given situation? Why did you act the way you did? What did you want to achieve? What was the effect of your actions? Did you really achieve the goals you aimed at? Why did you or didn't you achieve them? Should you readjust your actions, or possibly your goals? Preferably, these questions are not explored individually, but in interaction with colleagues and others.

Development of personal professionalism never stops

Such a critically inquisitive attitude reinforces the various aspects of personal professionalism discussed in previous chapters, and makes sure that these aspects keep developing. For example, a critical enquiry into their actions in relation to their personal values and practical wisdom, helps teachers to develop the often implicit values and practical wisdom on which their actions are based, helps to make these values and insights explicit, and makes it possible to communicate them cooperatively to partners and other concerned parties.¹¹⁹ In this way, they are better able to enter into dialogue with others and to account for their actions through dialogue.¹²⁰

Practice-oriented research of teachers is also regarded as a way for teachers to pursue their values and goals, and to develop necessary expertise. On the basis of this intrinsic motivation and this expertise, teachers can look for connections with others in their research activities, take on leadership roles, and thus obtain space.¹²¹ Moreover, practice-oriented research helps teachers to productively connect theoretical insights with insights derived from their practice. Knowledge developed in such research can be subsequently shared and used inside and outside their schools.¹²² In this way, teachers also contribute to collective innovation and development of knowledge in their occupational field.

The council concludes that the development of personal professionalism, needed to keep up with the complex, volatile occupational practice, never stops, and that the critically inquisitive attitude of individual teachers is inextricably bound up with such personal professionalism. Also, after a teacher's initial education program, the development of personal professionalism, sustained by this critically inquisitive attitude, should be an established element of continuing education and professionalization.

118 Ponte, 2002.

119 Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009a.

120 Jacobs, 2010.

121 Cornelissen, 2011; Smeets & Ponte, 2008.

122 Cornelissen, 2011.

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Appendix 1:

Dilemmas in the classroom

Below is added a description, with examples, of the twelve dilemmas teachers may be confronted with in their everyday practice, derived from a study by the Expertisecentrum Beroeps-
onderwijs [Expertise Center Vocational Education].¹²³

What-dilemmas

1. Focus on curriculum, versus focus on capacities of individual pupils

In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between the extent to which they emphasize subject matter and learning strategies in accordance with the formal curriculum, and the extent to which they attune to the capacities of pupils.

For example:

- Should I content myself with a pupil using a personal calculating strategy, or should I emphasize the calculating strategy that is prescribed in the method? (teacher senior secondary vocational education)
- Should I make the same demands on every pupil as to the quantity of work to be done in a given space of time, or should I adjust my demands to the capacities of specific pupils?

2. Striving for maximum results versus being satisfied with less

In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between the extent to which they want to make pupils achieve maximum results, and the extent to which they content themselves with what pupils themselves are able to demonstrate.

For example:

- Should I content myself with a pupil coming up with an alternative answer, or should I elaborate on the pupil's answer by suggesting an improvement or optimization of it? (teacher secondary education)
- How far should I be satisfied with a drawing presented by a pupil, and how far should I make higher demands on a particular piece of work? (teacher primary education)

How-dilemmas

1. Directing the learning situation, versus leaving room for autonomous learning

In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between the extent to which they determine what happens in an educational situation (direction), and the extent to which pupils are allowed to determine what happens in this situation (autonomy).

For example:

- Should I give pupils a say in deciding about the level of difficulty of physical education lessons, or should I decide about this level myself? (teacher special education)
- Should I check pupils' answers to questions in the history workbook myself, or should I allow pupils to check their answers themselves? (teacher secondary education)

¹²³ Van Kan, Brouwer & Zitter, 2012.

2. *Focus on learning, versus focus on working*

This dilemma is specific to the context of senior secondary vocational education, in which both the learning process and the working process in which pupils participate are important. In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between emphasis on the learning process, and emphasis on the working process.

For example:

- Should I put an emphasis on efficient and effective execution of activities, or on learning moments arising during the working process? (teacher senior secondary vocational education)
- Should I give priority to explaining a learning assignment to a group of pupils, or to a planned interview about work placement with a pupil and his employer?

3. *Correcting the group, versus correcting the individual*

In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between addressing the entire group on undesirable conduct, and addressing specific pupils on undesirable conduct.

For example:

- Should I address individual pupils who are not paying attention during an instruction, or should I address my reprimand to the whole group? (teacher primary education)
- Should I ignore the disturbing behavior of an individual pupil so that I can focus my attention on the group, or should I address this pupil on his undesirable behavior? (teacher secondary education)

4. *Teacher control, versus pupil control of the learning process*

In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between the extent to which they intervene in the learning process of pupils, and the extent to which they leave room for pupils' own initiatives and discovery learning.

For example:

- How far should I go to guide pupils through a complicated physics problem, and how far should I go to allow pupils to solve this problem themselves individually or in groups? (teacher special education)
- How far should I go to meet a pupil asking for an answer directly by giving this answer, and how far should I go to encourage this pupil to take an initiative himself to find the answer? (teacher senior secondary vocational education)

5. *Fixed order, versus organic development of a learning situation*

In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between the extent to which they stick to a predetermined plan in a learning situation, and the extent to which they allow a learning situation to develop organically.

For example:

- How far should I go to make sure that a pupil carries out an assignment as planned, and how far should I go to allow this pupil to go his own way, if this means that I have to deviate from my plan? (teacher special education)
- Should I keep a pupil's question on hold during instruction, so that I can first round off my instruction, or should I give priority to answering this question as soon as it is asked? (teacher senior secondary vocational education)

6. *Collective attention, versus differentiated distribution of attention*

In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between the extent to which they pay attention to the whole group of pupils during instruction, and the extent to which they give attention to individual pupils.

For example:

- Should I distribute my attention over the whole group during the supervision of a geography assignment, or should I give more attention to particular pupils?
- Should I give my attention to the group as a whole, or only to those pupils who have prepared themselves for this lesson? (teacher secondary education)

7. *Strict adherence to rules, versus relaxation of rules*

In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between the extent to which they consistently enforce the rules, and the extent to which they leave room for pupils to (learn to) operate outside the rules.

For example:

- Should I strictly apply the rules when a lesson is disturbed by the ringing of a pupil's mobile phone, or should I take into consideration the excuse of the pupil for the unintended ringing of the phone? (teacher secondary education)
- Should I react at length to a pupil who goes to the toilet without asking during the lesson, or should I dispose of this matter with a single remark? (teacher primary education)

Who-dilemmas

1. *Providing special care, versus starting from pupils' own responsibility*

In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between the extent to which pupils are dependent on the teacher in order to function in the education system, and the extent to which pupils are permitted to solve problems independently. This dilemma seems to be characteristic of the context of special education, since in this study it was mentioned only by teachers working in special education. However, it is not unthinkable that this dilemma will also come to play a more prominent role in regular education because of the growing number of pupils with special needs in that sector.

For example:

- Should I allow a pupil to sit next to me for moral support while taking a test, or should this pupil be made to take the test independently in his own place? (teacher special education)
- Should I intervene because a pupil threatens to have an outburst of rage, or should I allow this to take its course in order to see if this pupil is able to keep himself under control?

2. *Impersonal, versus personal attitude towards pupils*

This dilemma refers to teachers' attitude towards pupils: to what extent should they keep their distance and assume a businesslike attitude towards their pupils, and to what extent should they allow personal matters to show and expose themselves as persons?

For example:

- Should I tell pupils about my husband's addiction to smoking, or should I give a more general example of different types of addictions? (teacher special education)
- Should I ask a pupil about her health situation, or should I focus strictly on school matters? (teacher senior secondary vocational education)

3. *Taking on the traditional role of an instructor, versus that of the practitioner of an occupation*

This dilemma is specific to the context of senior secondary vocational education in which teachers often also have experience in the occupation which they are teaching, and in which they may still be working part-time. In this dilemma, teachers have to strike a balance between the extent to which they regard themselves primarily as teachers, and the extent to which they present themselves as practitioners of the occupation for which they are educating their pupils, and, in line with this, as role models.

For example:

- Should I tell pupils about everything they do wrong in carrying out an assignment, from the perspective of my occupational role, or should I put an emphasis on what pupils can learn from the assignment, from the perspective of my role as a teacher? (teacher senior secondary vocational education)
- Should I explain an assignment according to the manual, or should I explain it in the way I would do in the everyday practice of my own company? (teacher senior secondary vocational education)

In *Being a Teacher* The Education Council of the Netherlands calls for closer attention to the personal professionalism of teachers. The Council has consulted teachers and other experts in order to explore what is required of individual present day teachers to function successfully as professionals in their everyday practice.