

# Teaching History in the Netherlands: Teachers' Experiences of a Plurality of Perspectives

STEPHAN R. E. KLEIN

*Leiden University*

*Leiden, the Netherlands*

## ABSTRACT

Globalisation and the re-invention of national identities make history teaching seem more challenging than ever before. In the past decade, the teaching of history in the Netherlands has been at the center of public debate. During a period of political turmoil, the history curriculum was subjected to two somewhat competing revisions. One aimed at restoring chronology, the other at making history teaching contribute to a sense of community. This last call for a reformulation of the national historical narrative has met with resistance from those who claim a need for a plurality of perspectives in history education. Within this context an exploratory study with five history teachers was undertaken to gain insight into their goals and beliefs about teaching history. They all have an academic background and teach in multicultural classrooms. Two interview instruments were designed to stimulate the teachers to approach the subject from different angles. I conclude that the history teachers involved share a critical approach to (national) history and an understanding of their students as having multiple identities. The teachers show differences when reflecting on how they create usable pasts with their students for future purposes.

## INTRODUCTION

### **A Closed Historical Narrative or Plurality of Perspectives?**

Many producers of public historical knowledge, whether they are states, religious institutions, the market, or private individuals, deliberately mold historical facts and fiction into emotionally appealing narratives that exclude other perspectives, thereby contributing to group identities (Lowenthal, 1998; Black, 2005; Jonker, 2008). Such narratives can be considered as “closed”; they impose a structure of meaning rather than incite questions about selection and interpretation. Narratives can be specific stories that give meaning to certain key events in time and place, presenting fixed interpretations and often a moral message. Narratives can, however, also be considered on a meta-level as stories that construct various specific narratives into plotlines that allow for thinking about the development of communities (national, religious, ethnic, etc.) over time. Such meta-stories constitute “collective autobiographies” and are in a continuous process of “composing and re-composing” (Carr, 1986, p. 163). But even though specific narratives change, certain plotlines or “templates” may remain stable over several generations (Wertsch, 2004). Due to processes of globalisation and migration, academic historians in many Western societies today engage in debates about the need for history education to give students an open framework for orientation in time, while developing their historical thinking in dealing with a plurality of perspectives (Seixas, 2000, 2007; Shemilt, 2000; Grever, 2007; VanSledright, 2008).

Teaching toward plurality in history is an ambitious goal. Many publications on student learning indicate what cognitive and socio-cultural complexity teachers may face in the classroom (Seixas, 1993; Epstein, 1998; Lee & Ashby, 2000; Levstik, 2000; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Lee, 2004a; Epstein & Shiller, 2005; VanSledright & Limón, 2006). The notion of a plurality of perspectives may refer to both diversity of past historical perspectives as well as diversity of present understandings of the past. To achieve history learning that recognizes this complexity, teachers need to facilitate learning activities not only directed at “historical empathy” (Yeager, Yeager, & Foster, 2001; Harris & Foreman-Peck, 2004; Lévesque, 2008; Cunningham, 2009) or taking the perspective of historical actors (Barton & Levstik, 2004), but also to address the variety of modern understandings of historical issues inside and outside the classroom (Wineburg, 2000; Seixas, Fromowitz, & Hill, 2005). For this to be successful, students need to develop serious epistemological insight, realizing that although all historical accounts are subjective constructions in *a* present, there is a difference between an uncritical or deliberate “presentism” (Hunt, 2002) and interpretations about the past emerging from critical reflection using a disciplinary approach (Seixas, 1996; Wineburg, 2001, 2007; van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008; Lévesque, 2008).

Despite the complexity of such teaching, several scholars argue for the need to take the plurality of perspectives seriously in history education. Barton and Levstik (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Barton, 2006) find that history teaching should be directed at critical inquiry and dialogue about crucial historical events. This will serve to explore different perspectives and stimulate students to find mutual understanding as a way of becoming responsible democratic citizens. Other scholars reflect on the concept of “historical consciousness” as an aim for history education (Von Borries, 1994; Lee, 2004b; Rösen, 2004; Seixas, 2004, 2006). The purpose of history teaching would be to prepare students for the task of using the past responsibly for future purposes and historical consciousness would be the cognitive state of mind that allows students to realize their own particularity in time, as players in a continuous process of historical meaning making. This calls for careful scaffolding (Boix-Mansilla, 2000; Trofanenko, 2008) and also for the ability of teachers to mediate between different perspectives, guiding students away from either nihilistic relativism (Seixas, 2000; Lowenthal, 2000) or from teaching them new closed narratives (Laville, 2004).

In the Netherlands, the debate about the purpose of history education has resurfaced in the past decade. I will shortly review this development from a political and a curriculum perspective.

### **Dutch Politics Since 2000**

At present, Dutch society comprises large minority cultures from Suriname, the Dutch Antilles and Indonesia (former colonies), Turkey and Morocco (immigration from the 1960s) as well as many other Western and non-Western immigrants. Out of a population of 16.4 million, around 3.2 million are first- or second-generation immigrants (Statistics Netherlands, 2007). Until 2000, this growing diversity in Dutch society met with little open resistance.

The atmosphere changed dramatically during the electoral process of 2001/2002, in the aftermath of 9/11. The meteoric rise of populist politician Pim Fortuyn shocked the establishment. Fortuyn called Islam “a backward culture” and claimed that the “islamisation of our culture” was a threat. His murder in 2002 (by an environmental activist, not by a Muslim radical as some initially assumed), shortly before the parliamentary election, and even more that of filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in 2004 (who indeed was assassinated by a Muslim radical in the center of Amsterdam), sparked a polarizing debate about the Dutch national identity and the compatibility of Islam and Dutch culture (Lechner, 2008). Gradually, the connotation of

the term *multiculturalism* in political discourse changed from self-evident to a naïveté of cultural relativism (WRR, 2007). This development has had repercussions for pedagogy and the history curriculum in schools as well.

### The Curriculum Debate

In 2001 changes in the history curriculum for primary and secondary education were already under way. In the Netherlands history and civics are taught for the most part as separate subjects. The history curriculum at the time was thematically organised and based on a disciplinary approach. Since 1993, the curriculum requires history to be taught through second-order conceptual ideas, using primary sources for interpretation.

In 1999 a first government committee concluded this curriculum to be ineffective because it lacked clear chronology and was supposed to have an overemphasis on interpretive skills rather than knowledge in the practice of teaching. This led to the creation of a second committee which advised a completely new didactic approach towards historical chronology embedded in a new curriculum. Students would be required to learn history using a prescribed chronological framework of 10 eras with associative names such as Era of Monks and Knights (Early Middle Ages) or Era of Wigs and Revolutions (18<sup>th</sup> century). Historical themes and developments were placed in the eras as being distinctive characteristics of these time units (de Rooy, 2001).

Although the need for a better grasp of chronology had been broadly supported by the field, this innovation was also sharply criticised for its lack of dealing with diachronical developments, for being a prescribed Eurocentric historical narrative instead of only a framework, and for its turning away from critical interpretation of history to a more associative use of primary sources as tools for building historical knowledge (*Geschiedenis Examineren*, 2006). Despite these criticisms, the curriculum received ministerial approval and was implemented in 2007.

During this revision process, social-pedagogical concerns gained momentum for teaching in general and history teaching in particular. Based on advice of the Education Council of the Netherlands (2003), the Citizenship Act passed through Parliament in 2005. Since then, schools have been required to create pedagogical activities in which students build knowledge of Dutch society, develop democratic attitudes, become involved with Dutch culture and get acquainted with the different backgrounds and cultures of their peer group (Inspection of Education, 2006). A second advice of the Council resulted in the creation of a ministerial committee to create a historical-cultural canon, meant as an instrument for promoting social cohesion.

In 2006, a list of 50 topics, mostly historical, was presented as the Canon of the Netherlands (Entoen.nu, 2007). The committee emphasised this canon was open to debate. In reaction many Dutch academic historians called for a critical approach to history (Lechner, 2008). According to one observer the canon is a closed narrative because it revolves around Dutch continuous values such as tolerance, democratic-mindedness and consensus making (Jonker, 2006). Other historians criticised the canon for closing access to certain pasts that could and should be taught in a multicultural and globalised society (Grever, 2006; Kennedy, 2006; Grever & Ribbens, 2007; Ribbens, 2007).

Eventually, the committee acknowledged that the canon in some way does mirror a national identity, but on the condition that “a civilized form of Dutchness” keeps pace with “a deep sense of its relativeness, including the black pages in the historical narrative of the Netherlands” (Entoen.nu, vol. C, p. 29). According to the committee it had avoided the pitfall of a single national narrative both by including topics as black slavery and imperialism, and by presenting the 50 topics as windows to the larger context of European and world history. This points to the

dilemma at hand: If a canon is not a single narrative because it has windows that can be opened, how will it deal with the varieties of historical understanding from those who look through them from the other side? Or as one contributor to the debate put it, “we cannot go on brushing up our Golden Age [the seventeenth century with its flowering of trade and culture] in the hope that it will dazzle everyone,” but on the other hand those immigrants who bring with them the sorrow of earlier generations cannot go on being imprisoned by those memories (Scheffer, 2007, pp. 182–183).

### **Research Questions**

To understand what is necessary to arrive at learning processes about plurality of perspectives in the past and present, we need to know what history teachers know and think about goals for their specific classrooms. Teachers are curriculum makers (Wilson, 2001; Craig & Ross, 2008) and although their pedagogical decisions are not the only factor in explaining the “translation” of subject matter (Deng, 2007), much research of the last decennia points to the importance of teacher knowledge for understanding how prescribed curricula are mediated into actual classroom practices or enacted curricula (Calderhead, 1996; Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006). Important aspects of teacher knowledge, as identified by Shulman (1986, 1987), are the content knowledge of teachers combined with their disciplinary understanding, as well as the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of teachers, pertaining to teaching specific subject matter to a variety of students in a classroom context. In this study, however, I use the concept of “teacher knowledge” in a broader sense to refer to both factual knowledge as well as disciplinary concepts, beliefs, intuitions and personal values (Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001). All these are important elements of the mental framework of teachers that filters new information and guides curriculum decisions (Pajares, 1992; Borko & Putnam, 1996).

In the Netherlands hardly any research on history teaching has been done. This exploratory study was undertaken to get some preliminary understanding of the following research questions: What are the goals and pedagogical strategies of academic history teachers in the Netherlands? How are these related to their teacher knowledge?

### **METHOD**

I chose to do a small qualitative study with five history teachers using interviews as the research instrument. This has limitations, as teachers’ espoused beliefs often contradict their pedagogical strategies when in action. When discussing research about history teachers, VanSledright, Kelly, and Meuwissen (2006, p. 220) argue that in interview settings these teachers often talk about “idealized versions of practice” rather than what actually goes on in their classrooms. This insight cannot be ignored. To soften its effect, I designed two different instruments that would allow the teachers to retrieve from their past practices as much as possible (instrument 1), but also to think about an ideal practice (instrument 2). To ensure that rich data could be gathered, I decided to interview teachers in multicultural classrooms because this is a rich environment for inviting them to think about a plurality of perspectives.

### **Participants**

I interviewed five teachers with a master’s degree in history who teach children 12–18 years old. They work in Rotterdam and Amsterdam, two major immigrant cities in the Netherlands. Because this is a small study, I wanted the sample to be as varied as possible with respect to

gender, experience and school context. Hence three female and two male teachers participated. However, notably, all five teachers are White, European born and raised in the Netherlands. One teacher (Maria) had 4 years of experience, the others 9 years (Linda and Ellen) and 15 years (John and Peter). Four teachers worked in Rotterdam at four different schools: one Catholic school (Maria), one Protestant school (Linda) and two public schools (Ellen and John). These schools have students from a variety of cultural backgrounds (European and Asian) and have a relatively large group of Islamic students from Morocco and Turkey. The fifth teacher (Peter) worked at a public school in Amsterdam with a relatively large and diverse group of students from Suriname and the Dutch Antilles.

### **Data Collection**

The two interview instruments are (see Appendix for more details on the instruments):

- (1) 15 cards with statements. These were meant to provoke reactions on (a) the importance of national history and social cohesion; (b) history teaching in relation to democratic values; (c) empathy and plurality in history teaching; and (d) knowledge of teaching history to students with diverse cultural backgrounds.
- (2) Information for the construction of a specific narrative, referring to a controversial issue (Dutch imperialism) in a possible Dutch meta-narrative. The information consisted of an introduction with two quotations from a private correspondence (1894) and three quotations from reviewers in the recent past (1998) whose opinions are still relevant today. This case was chosen because the resulting data were expected to provide insight from another angle into teachers' goals and pedagogical strategies when past (1894) and present (1998) are interrelated in a complex way and give ample opportunity to think about a plurality of perspectives. The teachers would keep in mind a multicultural classroom they were teaching with children aged 15–16.

The case is about Hendrik Colijn, a young Dutch officer of the Dutch East Indies Army. He wrote in two letters in 1894 (one to his parents and one to his wife) that some weeks past he had given the order, although reluctantly, to kill combatant women and their children. They had been begging for mercy after a lost battle at Lombok, one of the islands in the Indonesian archipelago. It had been "a terrible job" but "it had to be done." Colijn later became prime minister of the Netherlands for almost 9 years over two periods. In 1998 the letters were mentioned in a newly published biography of Colijn and the issue made headlines in the Dutch newspapers. Each of the three selected quotations from 1998 represents a certain value perspective on the moral dilemma. The first presents Colijn as a historical figure who is nevertheless judged to be a nasty person; the second emphasises the historical context and does not condemn Colijn; the third applies universal values and thinks Colijn to be a criminal in every historical context.

I interviewed the teachers twice between May and October 2007. Space between the two interviews ranged from 1 week to 1 month. This was done to allow teachers to take a fresh look at the historical case, both physically and for the purpose of not being worried about the (in)consistencies with their earlier answers.

During the first interview, teachers were asked to react to the 15 statements, which were followed by questions about examples from their practice and follow-up questions related to their answers.

During the second interview the teachers were first confronted with the two excerpts from Colijn's original letters, one taken from the letter to his wife and the other from the one to his

parents. After the teachers read these silently, I questioned them about their personal opinions on the issue, whether this case would fit into lessons for their students and how they would approach such lessons. During the interview the three quotations from 1998 were introduced. I asked the teachers whether these changed, confirmed or sharpened their already expressed views. Both interviews lasted between 40 and 50 minutes. Finally, some information was gathered about the background and personal characteristics of the teachers, such as years of experience, religious conviction and political orientation.

### **Analysis**

I first read through the 10 interviews several times to get acquainted with the data and to gain a preliminary insight in possible codes. I then used a grounded theory approach to the data (Charmaz, 2006; Cunningham, 2006). First a phase of open coding was performed, using Atlas-ti. This resulted in 98 codes. Using a constant comparative method, I then merged and clustered most codes into three main categories: (1) disciplinary concepts and beliefs about students with 21 codes, (2) pedagogical strategies with 15 codes, and (3) general goals with 2 codes. In cooperation with a research assistant the coding was refined. To carry out this process, the research assistant independently coded the two interviews of one teacher, using the codes and their descriptions in the coding book. After comparison, I changed the description of some codes. In some cases, for example, strategies and goals were difficult to separate as the goal was inherent in the teacher talk about strategy. After a second round, in which the research assistant coded another two interviews of one teacher, we reached agreement. I then used the codes of both types of interviews in a process of constant comparison, looking for common elements of teacher knowledge and for differences. After the concept for this article was completed, I gave the three teachers who are described in detail below an overview of its general content and the literal text of their case as a limited form of respondent validation (member check). All agreed that the description of their thoughts, their practice and the context was accurate.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Common Elements of Teacher Knowledge: Plurality of Perspectives, Knowledge of Students and General Goals**

The five teachers do not believe that history should be used as a vehicle for the development of patriotism and a national closed narrative. They do show different emphases in the explanation for their view. Ellen simply states that she doesn't think teaching patriotism through history is important, although she agrees about the importance of national history itself. Such history, however, is to be set in a broader context. Linda, however, firmly rejects any notion of pride in history because in her eyes "there are many things in the Dutch past that are not so great to be proud of." For her, the Dutch past itself is, at least in part, an important obstacle. John takes another angle and makes clear that the disciplinary aspect of history should prevent patriotic approaches. History simply should not be used for political goals. The two remaining teachers react to this issue with their students in mind. Maria puts it very directly, saying that she thought pride is not important at all because "I know that for very many students, their hearts do not belong to Dutch history." She mentioned Turkish and Moroccan students in particular.

Connected to these previous ideas is that teaching history is conceptualised by all five teachers as directed at developing historical thinking. They all make clear that empathy and

contextualisation are important and they want to help students understand that history is not the study of fixed stories, but always the object of debate from many perspectives. Ellen often asks her students “to put off their 21<sup>st</sup>-century brains” as preparation for contextualisation and she gives her students inquiry tasks specifically to help them understand either a perspective that they don’t know about or a perspective they think they represent but have misconstrued. Peter does the same and makes clear that his aversion of a closed national narrative also implies that other closed narratives will be criticized in his classroom. When students from Suriname and the Dutch Antilles express their discontent with Dutch society by pointing to the rich buildings around the Amsterdam canals, he acknowledges that Black slavery was “not something to be proud of.” But he also points to the inconsistencies in their ideas about Dutch wealth in the 17th century and he exposes their generalisations about the Dutch as “having only been slaveholders.” Peter, like the other teachers, wants thinking about history to be based on facts and valid arguments. Using historical sources and other inquiry tasks are possible ways of preparation.

Of course, these teachers also admit that historical thinking is hard to learn and hard to teach. It may indeed be considered a “natural act” for people to interpret events from overtly subjective positions in the present (Wineburg, 2001, 2007). All teachers referred to the presentist frames of reference of their students, who jump to conclusions and think in either-or terms, or in group identities. As Ellen memorizes: “They often start very sharp, and use *mine* and *I* and *I* and *we* and *they* and *them* and *you*, but if you continue to address it, you notice that most of them in the end, well, as we call it so nicely, are prepared to leave their standpoint of stupidity. It remains a difficult process.” And although this “natural” thinking manifests itself through cultural or ethnic oppositions on historical issues, neither of the teachers attributed it to those backgrounds themselves. For them, thinking about history is something everyone learns through teaching.

Apart from some key disciplinary concepts, there is another element of teacher knowledge that all five teachers share. They express a genuine concern for and knowledge of their various students, based on ample experience with teaching in multicultural settings. Partly rooted in this knowledge is a belief about student’s identities as multiple or even intermingled instead of single. This means that they accept in their students a stance toward “Dutchness” that is ambiguous. Linda expresses this belief explicitly, saying simply, “a lot of these students just have a double identity and that is their good right.” But this belief is also implied in the way she talks with understanding about her students as being caught between different cultures. For example, when she talks about a “very weird” but “very funny” girl:

She has been to Turkey and has spoken to her grandfather and grandmother and stuff and she herself is totally disconnected from her Muslim background. But on the other side, she is very attached to her family history and to Turkey. So this is, well, she knows how to combine these things in one little person, but I really see this as two totally different things, that whole background of hers and how she shows off. Yes, she has boyfriends and stuff and she wears very weird clothes, she has strange hair and acts very strange. She is no regular Muslim, but she is very Turkish, she really thinks that. I have more of these types, really modern, assertive ladies and yes, the boys are scared of them. That makes it also very funny.

The other teachers also understand that their students are part of families and other social networks where they hear different stories, either from parents and grandparents or non-Dutch television networks. As Maria put it, “they watch Dutch television, but they also watch the Arabic Al-Jazeera and I think they see so many different things, that they have a very good skill—whether they like it or not—to understand that there are different perspectives.” Because they know that historical identities have been developing outside the classroom, the teachers accept

that for students, studying history may provoke confusion or even hostility, either because of their shortage of factual knowledge or because of a confrontation with different perspectives on sensitive issues.

All teachers in varying degrees held opinions about how students identify themselves. These opinions went from one extreme to the other. For example, Turkish-Dutch students were mentioned by Ellen, Linda, Maria and John as most proud of their own background, whereas, for example, students from the Cape Verdian islands were characterised by John as having a humorous sort of relativism about the importance of their cultural roots. Despite these complexities in and between students, all five teachers were convinced that this cultural diversity was a positive thing for teaching history, using words as “enrichment,” “exciting,” something that you can “play with” or leads to new “perspectives.” According to Linda, teaching in this setting was just “easier” and more “fun.” For her an all-White classroom would be “deadly boring.”

The results show what the five teachers have in common. They are historians who think about their lessons from a disciplinary approach of history. Moreover, they have the ambition to teach history as a subject that essentially is a continuous debate about the meaning of events and processes. They are also aware of their teaching as an identity issue in the present, partly because they have knowledge about their students as having multiple identities. Through their teaching they hope to achieve two general goals: to contribute to their students’ ability to think outside a group perspective and to help them develop a commitment to Dutch society. As Ellen explains, students do not have “to give up their identity,” but they do have to learn about what kind of society they live in. Or, in Peter’s somewhat sharper statement, “I think it is important for students to know about the history of this country and what has happened, how the Netherlands have become what it is, and I would not say pride, but I would say that you may have a certain satisfaction that you live here and not in Zimbabwe.”

All this does not mean that these teachers have similar practices. In fact, differences in their teacher knowledge show up when they talk about their pedagogical strategies. I found 14 pedagogical strategies, which were divided in “Interaction,” “Teacher role” and “History teaching” (Table 1). In the practice of teaching all sorts of combinations of strategies from the three categories could be found. For the purpose of this article, I will focus mostly on category III “History teaching.” In the next section I will present three cases—Maria, Linda and John—which are most exemplary for understanding the variety in the data concerning teaching

TABLE 1  
Pedagogical Strategies Related to Plurality in History Teaching

I.	II.	III.	Teachers and category III				
			Maria	Ellen	Linda	John	Peter
Interaction	Teacher role	History teaching					
		<i>General</i>					
1. Avoid	1. Neutrality	1. Seek connections with student knowledge	+	+	+	+	+
2. Postpone	2. Taking sides	2. Add factual information	+	+	+	+	+
3. Pacify		3. Initiate classroom debate	-	+	±	+	+
		<i>Specific</i>					
4. Confront		4. Historical empathy and contextualization	±	±	+	±	±
5. Provoke		5. Clarify plurality in past and present	-	±	±	±	±
6. Guard		6. Moral judgment	-	-	-	±	-

± means either a strategy is applied somewhat superficially or only in a certain context.

toward plurality. Where relevant, the matching category and number from Table 1 is mentioned. The responses of all five teachers to the case of “Colijn” during the second interview are presented in Table 2.

### Differences in Teacher Knowledge: Pedagogical Strategies

*Maria: Young and “Not Completely Dutch.”* Maria is in her mid-20s and the youngest teacher I interviewed. She is open minded and talks honestly about her practice. She has almost 4 years of teaching experience. During the first 2 years she faced some difficulties with classroom management. Although she has largely overcome this problem, she is very much aware that her development as a teacher is still in an early stage. She teaches history and civics at an open Catholic school and she fully respects its identity. Her school presents itself as particularly concerned with respect for personal and cultural differences as a core value for living in a multicultural society.

Maria describes her academic knowledge about history as having to do with “structures” and “a certain way of thinking.” What she thinks she lacks is specific knowledge that can motivate students and set their minds at work. She may think this to be non-academic knowledge, as she admits: “Actually, I look for something disgusting, dirty or thrilling, yes I am quite honest about this, that is what I look for.” But Maria knows that setting the wheels of learning in motion with “anecdotes” and “juicy stories” is not even half the story and she frequently mentions the need for “nuances” and uses the term *real history* when talking about classroom activities that deal with the reliability of historical sources. Such sources should be treated as presenting certain historical perspectives and it is clear that Maria believes this is “really important.” However, she also feels she has trouble achieving this goal.

Maria is very aware of the diversity of her classrooms, yet she feels unable to initiate and guide classroom debate: “Most of the time I talk or have a discussion with one student and then the rest have to listen, because, for example, to take that step that students talk among each other, that to me is still very hard” (III.3). She doesn’t think that she is unable to maintain order (she has passed that stage), but she feels her thoughts are “too slow” to give adequate feedback on the content of students’ diverse reactions on historical issues. This sense of inability prevents her from planning certain activities that may explore more deeply the plurality of perspectives as they exist in her classroom (III.5). However, through a series of teacher–student discussions she does give individual students the opportunity to express their aversion to the Eurocentric curriculum (“again the Second World War, again the First World war, again Europe, again the French Revolution”) and make clear what they find interesting and why. In her teaching, Maria tries to connect to their knowledge and perspectives (III.1).

In her talking Maria also gives some insight into the way she invites her students to think historically. When she mentions activities that aim at historical empathy or recognizing past perspectives, these are not related to key questions about the views of certain historical actors. Historical empathy, as described by Maria, remains at a general level where students are to think about differences between the present and a past era. And when a certain perspective in the past is discussed, students are invited to think about this using their present emotions, for example, with such directions as “Imagine you are a farmer before the French Revolution.” It seems difficult to contextualize more deeply, and Maria also does not come up with key questions that may drive such an activity (III.4). She often refers to the time factor as inhibiting her ambitions. Despite all this, Maria does mention some students who realize that history is essentially a discipline where competing perspectives exist. She is happy with those exceptions and accepts that this is the most she can accomplish at this moment.

TABLE 2  
Case Colijn

	Maria (4 years experience)	Ellen (9 years experience)	Linda (9 years experience)	John (15 years experience)	Peter (15 years experience)
Usable for history lesson	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contextualization: * difference in thinking between past and present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
* identifying incident as example of imperialism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
* questioning Colijn as being representative of Dutch society in 19 <sup>th</sup> century	No	No	Yes	No	No
* taking into account Colijn's own doubts	No	No	Yes	No	No
Moral judgment as goal	No	No	No	Yes	No
Expected student reactions	* Will be shocked	* Moral judgment from present perspective * Islamic students stronger reaction on mother figure	* Moral judgment from present perspective	* Moral judgment from present perspective + Colijn and soldiers may be viewed as abnormal (monsters) * Turkish and Moroccan students may use this against Dutch identity	* Will be intrigued about Colijn's military role combined with his later political career
Proposed activities	Unsure	* Classroom discussion * Role-play between 19 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> position, with student arbitration	* Classroom discussion * Use of historical sources	* classroom introduction * student search for comparable incidents * role play in court between advocates of victims and advocate of Colijn	* collecting of written student reactions * classroom discussion * student search for historical information
Expected outcome	Understanding difference between 19 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> century as part of historical thinking	Understanding difference between 19 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> century as part of historical thinking	Understanding difference between 19 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> century as part of historical thinking	Understanding difference between 19 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> century as part of historical thinking + Moral development	Understanding difference between 19 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> century as part of historical thinking

Maria's struggle with plurality in history is also substantiated by the way she handles the historical case about Colijn. When considering some possible approaches, her first idea is to use Colijn's letters to ask questions about reliability of sources. She emphasizes that Colijn gives a subjective account of what happened and that his view represents the mentality of most members of the Dutch colonial army. She refers to "a checklist" of questions with which to address historical sources, such as who was the author of this source? Was the maker of the source an eyewitness? Although Maria tries hard, she does not succeed in relating these smaller questions to a key question that would provoke thinking about Colijn's position within the context of other perspectives existing around 1894 (III.5).

Another of Maria's considerations was to link the Colijn case to the present because she expects her students to see continuity in time and ask questions about war crimes in Iraq. Maria knows what she then wants from her students. They should see the differences between the reasons why America was involved in Iraq and why the Dutch went into Lombok. But she does not see how a plurality of perspectives can be woven into the process because she feels she needs to have more subject knowledge in this area. Adding the three citations from the public debate in 1998 did not help her, in fact exactly because of the reason that the issue *was* controversial even today: "I am honest about this, I find this a major switchover and phew, and then this violent, I have to think about this really well." If students would insist on discussing the Colijn case, she would eventually consult her colleagues and ask for assistance.

Maria may be struggling, but she is also learning about plurality in a special way. During the interview, she spontaneously dropped the fact that she is "not completely Dutch." When students had asked her about her national identity, she had answered, "I really feel Dutch, if you place me in Russia I am Russian, but I stay just Dutch." Follow-up questions during the interview invited her to talk about her background and what this means for her idea of plurality in history. Maria's mother and grandparents are Russian. During Maria's last visit to Russia, some years ago, she had taken the opportunity to talk to, or perhaps to cross examine, her communist grandfather. He had been born in the early years of the Soviet Union, had studied law and then became an army officer, assigned to the Ministry of the Interior. She had asked him, in the context of Lenin's and Stalin's victims, what his vision was about communism. His nuanced answer had surprised her to such an extent that it may influence her teaching in general:

I have discussed this with students more extensively, not literally that my grandfather said this, no, but . . . well, it [communism] has not been black and white. And all this has made me realize that I should do this more often. It has not happened yet, so I must be very careful, . . . I still have my old teaching program, . . . but I realize I should do this more often during other history lessons, I need to treat things in a more nuanced way, I need to teach students and myself to look more critically at certain things.

Maria has been taught a valuable lesson from an unexpected source. Even the black-and-white treatment of Stalinism could be nuanced and infused with other perspectives. She is not afraid of using her own background and experience when discussing this theme with her students. She is, however, not yet able to transfer her experience to other historical topics. According to her own assessment, this has to do with a lack of subject knowledge.

***Linda: Dealing With the School Identity.*** Linda describes herself as very blunt, and sometimes tactless, in her remarks towards students. She knows this and tries to avoid it because she cares about the well-being of her students and doesn't want anyone to be offended. She was raised in a Protestant family (Dutch Reformed Church) that was open minded and tolerant in its worldview, something she feels strongly about. Linda teaches at a Protestant school that is

moving toward a more orthodox (Calvinist) identity. A special committee has been appointed to implement this move and Linda is convinced this has to do with the growing number of Islamic students. She feels it is unjust to strengthen the Calvinist identity of the school, thereby ignoring that half of the student population is not Protestant Christian. However, she knows that schools with a specific religious denomination in the Netherlands are constitutionally protected and funded by the government. Linda, frank and blunt in her ways of talking and looking at the world from an open-minded and progressive-liberal perspective, finds herself working in between more orthodox colleagues and students on the one hand, and students from a variety of cultural backgrounds on the other. She is dealing with this in her own way.

With 9 years of teaching experience, Linda draws from a broader repertoire of historical thinking practices than Maria. She makes clear that the transmission of a single Dutch narrative imbued with self-praise will not be found in her classroom. Instead she has a firm belief that school history is about learning to treat historical knowledge critically: “I think it is important that they can see that it is possible to treat historical themes in different ways, that you can omit things or add or overemphasize, and that they can clearly recognize that. I spend a lot of time on this” (III.5). She gives a “beautiful example” of how she confronts her students with a change in historiography on the first governor of the Dutch East Indies, J. P. Coen: “A guy like Coen is first seen as a hero and a lot of things are rubbed off, and now you see eventually that a lot of things can be said, that it is possible to talk about the violence, the massacres and that he was not really a nice person.” It was no surprise, then, that during the second interview Linda said she would definitely use the Colijn case because she is fond of such contradictions.

Linda approaches this case with a focus on contextualisation and trying to understand. She thinks about what this case says about the Dutch mentality at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, then wonders how representative Colijn’s attitude was at the time and even notices that Colijn, in his letters, testifies to his own struggle of conscience. She wonders whether women in the Dutch colonies were seen as different people than European women in this age of imperialism. She expects her students to reason from a 21<sup>st</sup>-century perspective and to condemn Colijn as a war criminal. She intends to use historical sources and have a classroom debate, but does not indicate that she expects reactions from her students related to their different cultural backgrounds (III.3 and 4).

If Linda had expected more varied reactions, this might have affected her decision to use the case. What sets Linda apart from the other teachers is that although she likes to have a debate, she is extremely careful in how she deals with plurality of perspectives in the present. She often avoids identity issues and as a teacher she takes a detached position in her teaching. On those occasions, she characterizes the knowledge she teaches as “objective” or “scientific.” When, for example, Linda teaches about evolution and Darwinism to her all White-Protestant classroom, she deliberately underlines that this is the scientific view and whatever she herself thinks is not relevant (although she is a Darwinist). Everyone, she feels, must decide what is true: “I am not going to evangelise or tell children what they have to believe or think or how they should see the past” (II.1).

Linda explains her concern, given the school context, with how easily students can get offended. When talking about her remarks on Mel Gibson, for instance, she portrayed him as a director fond of blood and action (because of the film *Braveheart*), not realizing that for the orthodox families of her White-protestant students, Gibson had become something of—in her words—a “semi-saint” for his movie *The Passion of the Christ*. Linda explains that she doesn’t want any students to be offended and that for her, the story of Christ’s suffering has meaning, only not in the version of Mel Gibson. On the other hand, too much detachment is also suspect and Linda admits that she would not like to hear stories about her in school, questioning her respect for the school identity. Although for her history and religious beliefs are separate, she

does reach out in those particular classrooms by making references to the Bible when teaching about the Roman period and the first Christians. She seeks, as she explains, “a sort of balance,” mediating between her own beliefs and those of her Calvinist students and the school.

Linda also avoids fully exploring plurality in history when teaching classrooms that have a more varied student population. When she teaches the Roman period and the origins of Christianity to a classroom with Islamic students from various backgrounds, she hides her own views even to the extent that “I am telling it to these kids as if it is something that is completely apart from me, which actually is not the case” (II.1). Also when confronted with the issue of the separation of church and state in the context of politics in Turkey, she deliberately abstains from the debate with her Turkish students, knowing that the atmosphere will heat up immediately and for the reason that as a Dutch citizen she is not involved. Linda not so much deletes plurality from her teaching, but on sensitive issues she avoids mediation about the value of different present perspectives on the past (III.5).

There are exceptions, however, to Linda’s avoidance of addressing present perspectives and their underlying values. This is when the issue is more directly related to democratic citizenship and not controversial within the school context. Linda is very resolute about correcting anything she thinks is unthoughtful or even discriminating. She knows that young students sometimes say or yell things they may have picked up in the media as a way of expressing an (imagined) identity. This was the case, for example, when Islamic students made comments that suggested anti-Semitism. Linda says that she will not treat such students as if they are adults by entering into a serious discussion, and instead just explains explicitly why she thinks they talk “complete nonsense.” Here Linda acts as a guardian of a core democratic value and therefore she takes sides as a teacher, while adding factual information about her reasons for doing so (I.6, II.2, III.2). She believes that on these occasions she really can be “a *bitch*.”

**John: *The Challenge of Moral Judgment.*** In several ways, John is very different from Maria and Linda. He is in his 40s and, with 15 years of teaching, he is the most experienced of the teachers I interviewed. John is calm and well balanced. He is an open-minded Protestant (Dutch Reformed Church) and still practices his religion. He shares with Maria and Linda a progressive-liberal worldview, but displays more idealism when talking about learning from mistakes in history, especially warfare. He teaches at a public school with a strong international orientation. The school consists of several locations, has a bilingual programme, a global studies module and participates in international exchanges. Students come from a large variety of cultural backgrounds in Europe, Africa and Asia. The school emphasises general democratic values like respect, social responsibility and critical thinking. John feels at home in this school profile.

What sets John apart from the other four teachers is that he is more inclined to make moral judgments. Two examples illustrate this goal, one that was prompted by the Colijn case, the other by the first statement in the first interview. John qualifies the Colijn story as “sad” and “heartbreaking” but soon starts thinking as a historian. He contextualises the issue by saying that he understands that the young Colijn was part of a military army in the modern imperialist age. He knows that imperialism should be placed in a broader European context. He also knows that there were strong nationalist sentiments in the Netherlands at the time, even hysteria to take revenge on the population of Lombok for attacking the Dutch Army by surprise. It was unclear to what extent John considered the difficulty for a very young officer to take a moral stand when several of his men had just died in battle and the others were pushing for revenge on the last remaining combatants. And there are other factors that may have come into play that could have added to a deeper historical understanding of why such an act was committed, such as Colijn’s own struggle of conscience. That this did not happen is probably because, from a present perspective (which John soon adopts) the act itself is so atrocious. John

explicitly holds Colijn accountable because he knows Colijn was a member of the Dutch Reformed Party and as a religious man (just like John himself), he should have abided by the moral rule of “Thou shalt not kill.” After examining the different views on the issue from national newspapers in 1998 and after some hesitation, he reaches a firm verdict about Colijn: “This is a war criminal.” In contrast to Maria and Linda, John also expects some of his Turkish and Moroccan students to react from their cultural background and use this episode against Dutch society today. He understands such a reaction, but said he would not allow the debate to go only in that direction.

In the second example, John mentions a photo in the history book he uses. This photo shows a German soldier in his 20s who, during World War II, executes a Jewish man sitting in front of him. John knows for himself how to distinguish between understanding and justifying. He talks about how he explains to students the political climate in which this soldier was raised and the brainwashing to which he may have been exposed up to the point the photo was taken (III.4). But in the end he wants students to reason from certain values in the present, in this case that killing another person is never allowed (III.6). He acknowledges, however, that some students may display some resistance, saying, “There may be students who say, yes, well, from certain ideas, from my upbringing I have to do this or I have to do that.”

John is the only teacher I interviewed who talks explicitly about preventing “cultural relativism” and the need for all his students to give these difficult moral issues a place in their present cultural frameworks. For him, teaching history has little to do with detachment, rather on critical occasions raising questions about “general” human values gains the upper hand: “That one judges is just normal. It would be strange if we would look at history totally blank, pure factually” (III.6). During classroom discussions, however, John hesitates about how strongly he should express his own views and he says he is uncertain what effect that might have (II.1 and 2). When teaching the Colijn case, there would be room for arguing different perspectives, for condemnation of Colijn’s act as well as understanding because of the political, military and ideological context (III.5). John opposes this second perspective, but he does not think he will be able to convince students who would adhere to it. When pushed, he admits change in students’ beliefs is a difficult goal (cf Wertsch, 2000): “Look, it is not a goal that, when the bell rings, all students think, *No, sir, thank you for this divine insight and we were all wrong. You are right. Indeed, Colijn has been a terribly nasty person.* That won’t be.” John hopes by addressing such issues that his students take something out of it that will help them in their moral development, but without being sure what it is.

## CONCLUSIONS

During the past decade, the Netherlands witnessed heated debates about the nature of Dutch national identity. Part of the controversy related to the content of a historical-cultural canon. This was the result of a government initiative to provide for a new Dutch narrative in times of social erosion. Whereas history curricula in many other countries often are criticised for providing closed, national narratives, in the Netherlands the curriculum was perceived by the government as both eclectic and lacking narrative power for defining the national community.

The five Dutch history teachers of this study, who all have master’s degrees in history, do not present themselves as transmitters of a closed narrative, be it national or other. They all work in multicultural classrooms and share a belief about their students as having multiple identities. These teachers display a predilection for teaching history critically, using strategies that invite students to learn about other perspectives in the past and the present. It is too early to conclude, but speaking hypothetically, they may resemble teachers in the United Kingdom (Husbands, Kitson, & Pendry, 2003; Cunningham, 2009), where the history curriculum is also

taught through second-order concepts, more than those in, for example, France (Tutiaux-Guillon, 2007) or the United States (VanSledright, 2008).

Three remarks should be made at this point. First, although the five teachers share an inclination to a disciplinary approach, this does not mean that they are equally successful or that their practices would be similar. Maria represents a teacher who is in an early stage of professional development. Her case confirms that thinking from disciplinary concepts does not translate immediately into teaching history accordingly (VanSledright, 1996; Hartzler-Miller, 2001). Like one of the teachers in Grant's (2003) study she uses "everyday empathy" strategies and she still has problems of investigating and discussing the interpretive varieties in her classroom. Maria thinks she mostly lacks subject knowledge about possible perspectives, which slows her mind down when confronted with it in the classroom. She may improve her teaching through reflection on, for example, the stories of her Russian family connections. But it is no easy trajectory. Although a basic understanding of the epistemological foundations of the discipline may be a *sine qua non* for teaching history critically (Carmo Barbosa de Melo, 2005; Bain & Mirel, 2006; VanSledright & Limón, 2006), this needs to be related in a coherent way to knowledge about methods, forms and purposes of the discipline (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005).

The case of Linda shows the situated nature of teaching. Linda has more teaching experience than Maria and she shows analytical skills in contextualizing the difficult historical issue of Hendrik Colijn. Also, she mentions teaching practices directed at understanding changes in the historiographical appraisal of a key figure in Dutch history. Although she appears to have a knowledge base for teaching toward plurality, she deliberately avoids exchanges with her students' present understandings of certain historical issues. This has to do with the tension she feels between her liberal worldview and the more orthodox Protestant identity of her school.

The case of John shows that teaching toward plurality in the past and present remains a difficult task, even for an experienced teacher who is in harmony with the school identity. John intends to teach history that does justice to the strangeness of past contexts, while also making connections to the present. He is the only teacher who tries to engage his students in making moral judgments about the past from their present perspectives. This may be related to John's stronger religious conviction. John knows how to initiate moral judgment about history, but is rather unsure about its intended outcomes.

The second remark concerns the participants. The five teachers all work in multicultural classrooms and as such cannot be seen as representative of the variety of schools and teachers in the Netherlands. For example, many schools still have all-White classrooms, not all teachers share the liberal views of these five, and there are schools that are more orthodox than the one where Linda teaches.

The third remark returns to the research method. It remains unclear whether the actual practices of these teachers may be different from what they say. The data retrieved from the interviews may reveal the highs and lows of teacher practice rather than the daily routine. Also they may be confronted with moral issues more often than they remembered or were aware of. Finally, it remains difficult to assess the depth of pedagogical strategies when talking about them long afterwards and from only a teacher perspective. The five teachers all thought the Colijn case to be interesting teaching material and, although a painful specific narrative in Dutch history, they did not show hesitation in using it in the classroom. How such a narrative would be linked to a larger narrative framework could, however, not be clearly established.

Future research in the Netherlands will benefit from a focus on the complexity of history teachers' pedagogical decision making (VanSledright & James, 2002; Pendry, Husbands, & Kitson, 2005; Cunningham, 2007). As Lévesque (2008) points out, it is important to understand

why history teachers differ in their mediation of values embedded in conflicting narratives, if, indeed, they do this at all.

## REFERENCES

- Bain, R., & Mirel, J. (2006). Setting up camp at the great instructional divide: Educating beginning history teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57, 212–219.
- Barton, K. C. (2006). History, humanistic education, and participatory democracy. In R. W. Sandwell (Ed.), *To the past. History education, public memory, and citizenship in Canada* (pp. 50–69). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Barton, K. C., & Levstik, L. S. (2004). *Teaching history for the common good*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Black, J. (2005). *Using history*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Boix-Mansilla, V. (2000). Historical understanding: Beyond the past and into the present. In P. N. Stearns, P. Seixas, & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, teaching, and learning history. National and international perspectives* (pp. 390–418). New York: New York University Press.
- Borko, H., & Putnam, R. T. (1996). Learning to teach. In D. C. Berliner & R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 673–708). New York: Macmillan.
- Calderhead, J. (1996). Teachers: Beliefs and knowledge. In D. C. Berliner & R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 709–725). New York: Macmillan.
- Carmo Barbosa de Melo, M. do. (2005). The epistemological reach of the history teacher. In R. Ashby, P. Gordon, & P. Lee (Eds.), *Understanding history. Recent research in history education* (pp. 135–147). International Review of History Education, vol. 4. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Carr, D. (1986). *Time, narrative and history*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory. A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.
- Craig, C. J., & Ross, V. (2008). Cultivating the image of teachers as curriculum makers. In F. M. Connelly, M. F. He, & J. I. Phillion (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of curriculum and instruction* (pp. 282–305). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cunningham, D. L. (2006). Capturing candor: Accessing teachers' thinking about the cultivation of historical empathy. In K. C. Barton (Ed.), *Research methods in social studies education. Contemporary issues and perspectives* (pp. 183–206). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- Cunningham, D. L. (2007). Understanding pedagogical reasoning in history through cultivating historical empathy. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 35(4), 592–630.
- Cunningham, D. L. (2009). An empirical framework for understanding how teachers conceptualize and cultivate historical empathy in students. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41(5), 679–709.
- Deng, Z. (2007). Transforming the subject matter: Examining the intellectual roots of pedagogical content knowledge. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 37(3), 279–295.
- Education Council of the Netherlands. (2003). *Onderwijs en burgerschap*. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from <http://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2003>
- Entoen.nu *De canon van Nederland* (2006–2007), vols. A, B, and C. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from <http://www.entoen.nu>
- Epstein, T. L. (1998). Deconstructing differences in African-American and European-American adolescents' perspectives on U.S. history. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 28(4), 397–423.
- Epstein, T., & Shiller, J. (2005). Perspective matters: Social identity and the teaching and learning of national history. *Social Education*, 69(4), 201–204.
- Geschiedenis examineren. Rapport pilotproject CHMV-examen geschiedenis havo* (2006). Amsterdam.
- Grant, S. G. (2003). *History lessons: Teaching, learning, and testing in U.S. high school classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Grever, M. (2006). Nationale identiteit en historisch besef. De risico's van een canon in de postmoderne samenleving. In M. Grever, E. Jonker, K. Ribbens, & S. Stuurman (Eds.), *Controverses rond de canon* (pp. 29–58). Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum.
- Grever, M. (2007). Plurality, narrative and the historical canon. In M. Grever & S. Stuurman (Eds.), *Beyond the canon. History for the twenty-first century* (pp. 31–47). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Grever, M., & Ribbens, K. (2007). *Nationale identiteit en meervoudig verleden*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. WRR-verkenning nr. 17. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from <http://www.wrr.nl/content.jsp?objectid=4095>
- Hammerness, K., Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J., with Berliner, D., Cochran-Smith, M., McDonald, M., & Zeichner, K. (2005). How teachers learn and develop. In L. Darling-Hammond &

- J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world. What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 358–389). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Harris, R., & Foreman-Peck, L. (2004). “Stepping into other peoples’ shoes”: Teaching and assessing empathy in the secondary history curriculum. *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, 4(2), 1–14.
- Hartzler-Miller, C. (2001). Making sense of “best practice” in teaching history. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 29, 672–695.
- Hoy, A. W., Davis, H., & Pape, S. J. (2006). Teacher knowledge and beliefs. In P. A. Alexander & P. H. Winne (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 715–737). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hunt, L. (2002). Against presentism. *Perspectives on History*, 40(5). Retrieved September 15, 2008, from <http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/issues/2002/0205/0205pre1.cfm>
- Husbands, C., Kitson, A., & Pendry, A. (Eds.). (2003). *Understanding history teaching. Teaching and learning about the past in secondary schools*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Inspection of Education. (2006). *Toezicht op burgerschap en integratie*. Utrecht, 2 October. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from [http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/nl/home/naslag/Alle\\_publicaties/Toezicht\\_burgerschap\\_integratie](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/nl/home/naslag/Alle_publicaties/Toezicht_burgerschap_integratie)
- Jonker, E. (2006). Sotto voce. Identiteit, burgerschap en de nationale canon. In M. Grever, E. Jonker, K. Ribbens, & Siep Stuurman (Eds.), *Controverses rond de canon* (pp. 4–28). Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum.
- Jonker, E. (2008, May 26). *Ordentelijke geschiedenis. Herinnering, ethiek en geschiedwetenschap*. Inaugural lecture given at Utrecht University, Utrecht, the Netherlands.
- Kennedy, J. C. (2006). The Dutch canon debate. Reflections of an American. *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 121(1), 99–105.
- Laville, C. (2004). Historical consciousness and historical education: What to expect from the first for the second. In P. Seixas (Ed.), *Theorizing historical consciousness* (pp. 165–182). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Lechner, F. J. (2008). *The Netherlands. Globalization and national identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Lee, P. (2004a). Understanding history. In P. Seixas (Ed.), *Theorizing historical consciousness* (pp. 129–164). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Lee, P. (2004b). “Walking backwards into tomorrow.” Historical consciousness and understanding history. *International Journal of Historical Teaching, Learning, and Research*, 4(1), 1–46.
- Lee, P., & Ashby, R. (2000). Progression in historical understanding among students ages 7–14. In P. Stearns, P. Seixas, & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, teaching & learning history* (pp. 199–222). New York: New York University Press.
- Lévesque, S. (2008). *Thinking historically. Educating students for the twenty-first century*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Levstik, L. S. (2000). Articulating the silences: Teachers’ and adolescents’ conceptions of historical significance. In P. Stearns, P. Seixas, & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, teaching & learning history* (pp. 284–305). New York: New York University Press.
- Lowenthal, D. (1998). *The heritage crusade and the spoils of history*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lowenthal, D. (2000). Dilemmas and delights of learning history. In P. Stearns, P. Seixas, & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, teaching & learning history* (pp. 63–82). New York: New York University Press.
- Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers’ beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(3), 307–332.
- Pendry, A., Husbands, C., & Kitson, A. (2005). Understanding the knowledge bases of history teaching: Subject, students and professional practices. In R. Ashby, P. Gordon, & P. Lee (Eds.), *Understanding history. Recent research in history education* (pp. 161–171). International Review of History Education, vol. 4. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Ribbens, K. (2007). A narrative that encompasses our history: Historical culture and history teaching. In M. Grever & S. Stuurman (Eds.), *Beyond the canon. History for the twenty-first century* (pp. 63–76). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rooy, P. de (Ed.). (2001). *Verleden, heden en toekomst. Advies van de commissie historische en maatschappelijke vorming*. Enschede, the Netherlands: SLO.
- Rüsen, J. (2004). Historical consciousness: Narrative structure, moral function, and ontogenetic development. In P. Seixas (Ed.), *Theorizing historical consciousness* (pp. 63–85). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Scheffer, P. (2007). *Land van aankomst*. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij.

- Seixas, P. (1993). Historical understanding among adolescents in a multicultural setting. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 23(3), 301–327.
- Seixas, P. (1996). Conceptualizing the growth of historical understanding. In D. Olson & N. Torrance (Eds.), *Handbook of education and human development: New models of learning, teaching, and schooling* (pp. 765–783). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Seixas, P. (2000). Schweigen! Die Kinder! Or, does postmodern history have a place in the schools? In P. Stearns, P. Seixas, & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, teaching & learning history* (pp. 19–37). New York: New York University Press.
- Seixas, P. (Ed.). (2004). *Theorizing historical consciousness*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Seixas, P. (2006). What is historical consciousness? In R. W. Sandwell (Ed.), *To the past. History education, public memory, and citizenship in Canada* (pp. 11–22). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Seixas, P. (2007). Who needs a canon? In M. Grever & S. Stuurman (Eds.), *Beyond the canon. History for the twenty-first century* (pp. 19–30). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Seixas, P., Fromowitz, D., & Hill, P. (2005). History, memory and learning to teach. In R. Ashby, P. Gordon, & P. Lee (Eds.), *Understanding history. Recent research in history education* (pp. 116–134). International Review of History Education, vol. 4. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Shemilt, D. (2000). The Caliph's coin: The currency of narrative frameworks in history learning. In P. Stearns, P. Seixas, & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, teaching & learning history* (pp. 83–101). New York: New York University Press.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4–14.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1–22.
- Statistics Netherlands. (2007). Retrieved November 27, 2008, from <http://www.cbs.nl>
- Trofanenko, B. M. (2008). More than a single best narrative: Collective history and the transformation of historical consciousness. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 38(5), 579–602.
- Tutiaux-Guillon, N. (2007). French school history confronts the multicultural. In M. Grever & S. Stuurman (Eds.), *Beyond the canon. History for the twenty-first century* (pp. 173–187). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Drie, J., & van Boxtel, C. (2008). Historical reasoning: Towards a framework for analyzing students' reasoning about the past. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20, 87–110.
- VanSledright, B. (1996). Closing the gap between school and disciplinary history: Historian as high school history teacher. In J. Brophy (Ed.), *Advances in research on teaching* (pp. 257–289). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- VanSledright, B., Kelly, T., & Meuwissen, K. (2006). Oh, the trouble we've seen: Researching historical thinking and understanding. In K. C. Barton (Ed.), *Research methods in social studies education. Contemporary issues and perspectives* (pp. 207–233). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- VanSledright, B. (2008). Narratives of nation-state, historical knowledge, and school history education. *Review of Research in Education*, 32, 109–146.
- VanSledright, B. A., & James, J. H. (2002). Constructing ideas about history in the classroom: The influence of competing forces on pedagogical decision making. *Social Constructivist Teaching*, 1(9), 263–298.
- VanSledright, B., & Limón, M. (2006). Learning and teaching social studies: A review of cognitive research in history and geography. In P. A. Alexander & P. H. Winne (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 545–570). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Verloop, N., Van Driel, J., & Meijer, P. (2001). Teacher knowledge and the knowledge base of teaching. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 35, 441–461.
- von Borries, B. (1994). (Re-)Constructing history and moral judgment: On the relationships between interpretations of the past and perceptions of the present. In M. Carretero & J. F. Voss (Eds.), *Cognitive and instructional processes in history and the social sciences* (pp. 339–355). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Wertsch, J. (2000). Is it possible to teach beliefs, as well as knowledge about history? In P. Stearns, P. Seixas, & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, teaching & learning history* (pp. 38–50). New York: New York University Press.
- Wertsch, J. (2004). Specific narratives and schematic narrative templates. In P. Seixas (Ed.), *Theorizing historical consciousness* (pp. 49–62). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Wilson, S. M. (2001). Research on history teaching. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 527–544). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

- Wineburg, S. (2000). Making historical sense. In P. Stearns, P. Seixas, & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, teaching & learning history* (pp. 306–326). New York: New York University Press.
- Wineburg, S. (2001). *Historical thinking and other unnatural acts. Charting the future of teaching the past*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Wineburg, S. (2007). The nature of historical thinking. *Teaching History*, 129, 6–19.
- WRR, Scientific Council for Government Policy. (2007). *Identificatie met Nederland*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from <http://www.wrr.nl/content.jsp?objectid=4094>
- Yeager, O. L. Jr, Yeager, E. A., & Foster, S. J. (Eds.). (2001). *Historical empathy and perspective taking in the social studies*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

## APPENDIX

### Research Instruments

**Interview 1: 15 Statements.** I would like you to give your comment on the following statements. I specifically would like to underline that I am asking you to react as a teacher of history, i.e., related to your discipline.

[Therefore every statement on the first 10 cards begins with the sentence: “As a teacher of history, I think it is important that pupils in my lessons learn . . .]

1. to empathise with people around us
2. to respect the freedom of opinion
3. to be proud of certain events or people from Dutch history
4. how to recognise a historical interpretation in modern sources
5. to respect equal rights of men and women
6. to understand history from the perspective of the identity of the school
7. to understand how the past is experienced differently by different people
8. to accept that church and state are separated
9. to feel a connectedness in being Dutch
10. to accept a democratic decision

I have five other statements to which I invite you to react:

1. I have difficulty finding out what pupils already know or think about a historical issue.
2. There are certain historical topics that I would rather not teach because they are sensitive with pupils.
3. Pupils ask me questions related to their cultural background that I did not expect.
4. When teaching historical topics I am sensitive to the cultural background of pupils.
5. Teaching history is more difficult in a multicultural than in a monocultural classroom.

**Interview 2: A Historical Case.** Read document 1 on the young Hendrik Colijn.

Q: Is this case familiar to you?

Q: How appropriate/relevant is this issue according to you for teaching about “modern imperialism”?

If appropriate/relevant:

Q: Why do you think it is appropriate/relevant?

Q: How would you approach this issue pedagogically if you had one or two lessons?

Q: What would be your lesson goals?

Q: How do you think pupils will react to this issue?

If not appropriate/relevant:

Q: Why is it not appropriate or relevant?

Q: What would be a more appropriate or relevant issue to use when teaching “modern imperialism”?

Read document 2. These are three citations from a debate in 1998.

Q: Do these excerpts influence your thoughts about the issue or about your pedagogical approach in any way?

**Interview 2: Document 1.** In 1998, a newly published biography of Hendrik Colijn caused a stir in the national newspapers. The biographer cited some letters written by Colijn to his wife and his parents in 1894. At the time, Colijn was a second lieutenant in the Royal Dutch East Indies Army. He was 25 years old and had just experienced his baptism of fire. The letters had been used by earlier biographers, but not the quotations below.

The quotations refer to Colijn’s behaviour during the expedition in Lombok against the prince of the Hindus. In the letters Colijn elaborates on the bloody battle against the princely settlement of Tjakra Negara (half November). He writes the following about the end of the battle:

To his wife on November 24, 1894:

I have seen one, who came rushing up, with a child of approximately a half year on the left arm, and a long spear in the right hand. One of our bullets killed mother and child. . . . We then could have no mercy anymore. I had to group together nine women and three children, who begged for mercy, and let them just shoot. It was an unpleasant job, but it had to be done. With pleasure the soldiers run them through with their bayonets. It was a terrible job. I will say no more.

To his parents in the middle of December 1894:

Even young, beautiful women with infants on their arm waged battle and threw pieces of lead on us from the roofs, while others even used a spear. Luckily, my brave Ambonese stood steady as a rock. . . . After the eighth attack only a few were left who begged for mercy, I believe 13. The soldiers looked at me inquiringly. About 30 of my men were dead or wounded. I retreated and went smoking a cigar. Some agonizing cries were heard and when I turned round those 13 were dead as well.

The debate in the media revolved around the question whether Colijn (who was prime minister of the Netherlands during 1925–1926 and 1933–1939) had committed “war crimes” as a young officer.

**Interview 2: Document 2.**

- (1) “Was Colijn a war criminal? According to present criteria, we have to answer this question affirmatively. In those days this kind of behaviour was seen as relatively normal, as long as it concerned non-European people. . . . Moralism or not, whoever has read this first part of the Colijn biography can hardly come to a different conclusion than that Colijn simply has been a nasty guy. (R. Hartmans, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, April 15, 1998)
- (2) “In the publicity following the publication of the biography . . . , the passages of the execution have been fully emphasised and the event has been presented as a news fact rather than as a historical fact. Therefore, the historical context of the drama has been undervalued. According to current criteria one may find the ways of battling in the

former Dutch East Indies unacceptable, it is from a historical perspective evident that public opinion in our country judged differently a hundred years ago. The fact that Colijn did not keep silent the execution from his wife and parents testifies to that. And a clear sign is also that in a p.s. Colijn ended his letter with the words: 'Please let others also read this letter.'" (Prof. J. de Bruijn, 1998, in the preface to the edition of the Colijn letters)

- (3) "Marx already called the Dutch Christian-colonial domination in *Das Kapital* 'an unsurpassed scene of betrayal, bribery, assassination, and cowardice.' And Multatuli [a Dutch 19<sup>th</sup>-century writer] wrote in *Idea 304*: 'On Dutch bravery follows fire. Dutch victory causes destruction. Dutch warfare bears despair.' . . . Multatuli—long before Colijn—did not think 'differently than now' about the morals of warfare of the Dutch East Indies Army. There is no such thing as an 'easy application of contemporary values,' in the biography or in the media. Colijn was a criminal skunk in the context of every time." (E. Etty, *NRC Handelsblad*, April 18, 1998)