

Arts education

Primary teachers and their cultural background

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Master Thesis

12th June 2017

Abstract and key words

The aim of this master's thesis is to assess the influence of the cultural background of primary teachers on their teaching arts. Earlier research has not extensively covered the influence of the background of the teacher on teaching methods, content of the lessons, or decisions when it comes to arts and culture education. The question that guided this research was: what is the impact of the cultural background of current primary teachers in and around Rotterdam on their practice of, and attitude towards arts and culture education? Six in-depth interviews with primary teachers in Rotterdam and its surroundings were conducted in May and the beginning of June 2017.

In the first part, the theoretical chapter starts with an explanation of how arts education in the Netherlands came into its current form. When looking into the cultural background, Bourdieu and his concepts of cultural capital and habitus are key. They serve an important role when it comes to explaining the influences of family and education and their result on current primary teachers.

The results of this research show how the attitudes of others in both the family or during the teacher's own education can turn out to be decisive for the attitude a primary teacher now has towards arts and culture. A role model, religion, and the situation at home determine not just the childhood of the primary teachers. All these factors have shaped the primary teacher, they influence the current decisions the primary teacher makes, and thus also the cultural background of the children they teach nowadays. The interviews indicated that parental regret of missing out on unpursued talents is one of the factors that result in the primary teacher as a child being exposed to arts and culture. However, not just the parents of the primary teacher as a child, but also the adult primary teacher who feels (s)he has missed out, wants to make sure the current generation gets all the opportunities they need. Primary teachers in the more deprived areas of Rotterdam told how there are more subsidies available for the schools to make sure they offer the children every opportunity to develop themselves fully. Not growing up with arts and culture can still result in interest at a later age, when children start making their own decisions, as this is something that happened both to the primary teachers when they were young, and the children they teach nowadays. Still, as is true for the primary teachers as a child and the children they teach, the sooner people are introduced to arts and culture, the more it opens them up for appreciation in a later stage of their lives. Primary teachers who have had a lot of cultural experience tend to use it in their classes and base their decisions on it. On the other hand, primary teachers who did not participate in culture when they were young, use more recent experience in arts and culture, and they want to make sure that the children they teach do get every opportunity to get in touch with arts and culture.

Key words: arts and culture education, attitude, cultural background, experience, primary teachers.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Having only excellent teachers in primary school to educate children is something we all hope for, but know is not realistic. It is not strange, therefore, that a lot of research has been done on teachers and what they need to know or do to be perceived as good or excellent teachers. Even if we cannot realize excellence in all teachers, we want to know what it is that makes some better than others. Efland (1990), Johnson (1990), Schulman (2004), and Epstein (2011) all explained which qualities they found to be important for teachers in general. However, when it comes to the subject of arts education in primary schools and the qualities we expect from the teachers, everything seems to become more unclear and complicated. Arts and culture education covers very diverse subjects and the teacher has a lot of influence on the content, but the skills required may not be as recognizable or explicit as for, e.g., mathematics. Because it is rather difficult to determine what must be achieved and how, it is hard to come up with a set of standard skills that can be required of teachers. Since there is no standard list of skills for every teacher, the cultural background of the primary school teacher is all the more important. It serves as a base from which ideas for arts education emerge. The cultural background of the primary teacher can thus help shape the content of education in arts and culture, thereby also shaping the cultural background of the children currently taking part in this education. Therefore, this research focuses on the impact of the cultural background of primary teachers in Rotterdam on their arts and culture education.

The concepts of arts and culture are intertwined. Culture is a very difficult term, as it encompasses arts, manners, learning of wisdom, or philosophy at an individual - but also a wider societal level (Eliot, 2010). What the cultural background entails specifically and what the relation is to arts education, will become clear later on in this thesis. Additionally, some advice concerning practical ideas or solutions might be formulated which is of interest to KCR, the organization that is cooperated with for this thesis, and the teachers in the field. When looking at current research, which forms the theoretical base of this thesis, several topics concerning arts education and primary teachers are covered. However, the influence of the background of the teacher on his or her teaching methods, content of the lessons, or decisions when it comes to arts education, to my knowledge has not been researched before. That is where this thesis aims to fill the gap.

This research will be done in cooperation with the aforementioned Kenniscentrum Cultuureducatie Rotterdam, or translated: the Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education Rotterdam (KCR). Because KCR is located in Rotterdam, the focus of this research lies on primary teachers in Rotterdam as well. KCR is an organization that “serves as a bridge builder that connects education to culture in one of the most dynamic

cities in the Netherlands”.¹ Their three core values are “development of children, creative teamwork between artists and teachers, and cultural education being sustainably anchored into the curriculum of the schools”.² Seeing that teamwork, development of children, and sustainable anchoring are values in which teachers play a huge part, it is clear that teachers truly are the pillars of arts education. By exploring the cultural background of primary teachers, a better understanding of their attitude towards arts education will be achieved. Therefore, the question guiding this research is: *what is the impact of the cultural background of current primary teachers in and around Rotterdam on their practice of, and attitude towards arts and culture education?*

In order to answer this research question, I have carried out qualitative research, aimed at describing the influences of the primary teachers’ background on their attitude towards arts education. Six in-depth interviews of about half an hour have formed the empirical base. Teachers and cultural coordinators have been asked about their previous experiences with arts education, what they thought was culture, how they experienced culture when they were a child, and how they transferred culture in their lessons nowadays. The theoretical foundation of this thesis will deal with cultural capital that is formed both at home and at school, the teachers’ personal background in arts and culture, and experiences that relate to the primary teachers. Bourdieu’s work on the different kinds of capital will form the theoretical core from which further research will be done regarding cultural background and its influences (Bourdieu, 1984). Once the different relations, such as the link between cultural background on the one hand and the content taught, attitude, and self-evaluation on the other hand have been looked into, they inform in-depth interviews that were held later on.

The chapter outline of the thesis proposal will therefore begin with the theory and previous research. Here concepts such as cultural capital and arts education in the Netherlands will form the starting point. This should give an idea of what cultural capital can be, and how the Dutch education system works. Then we will go from the childhood of current primary teachers to their approach nowadays, looking at different factors that influence their teaching. After that, the research question concerning the cultural background and the influence on primary arts education is repeated, after which several topics and their sub-questions concerning the family, memories, and previous contact with culture of the primary teachers currently offering arts education will be addressed. Then, the methods and instruments of analysis, in this case in-depth interviews with the teachers, and cultural coordinators will be explained and justified in the methods and data section. Next, the results of the in-depth interviews will be presented extensively, followed by the conclusion of this thesis.

¹ <https://kc-r.nl/dit-zijn-we/missie-visie/>, consulted October 20th 2016

² <https://kc-r.nl/dit-zijn-we/missie-visie/>, consulted October 20th 2016

Chapter 2 - Theory on arts education and teachers in primary school

Our backgrounds are what shape us. They make us who we are and influence what we decide to do, as Vuyk (2016) stated in an essay concerning the importance of the arts for our backgrounds. It approximately translates to this: “the arts tell us where we came from, what our traditions are and thus who we are. They are the bearers of national heritage and that is why currently many politicians both left and rightwing think every child should get in touch with the arts” (Vuyk, 2016, p. 33). Haanstra also recognized the importance of arts education. In his farewell lecture on December 15th 2015 after almost forty years of research in arts education, when translated, he stated that “students cannot be forced to own certain attitudes, feel certain emotions or have certain experiences. But education can provide knowledge and insight and teach the skills that are needed to get to a certain experience or attitude. It are those conditional mental programs people can transfer as objectives and that may be taught and judged.” (Haanstra, 2016, p. 14). So as both Vuyk and Haanstra illustrated, arts education is something that shapes us and potentially teaches us a lot of valuable skills and insights. To see how arts education shapes us, it is important to know how arts education evolved over time. That is why the next paragraphs will give a description of arts education in the Netherlands and how it got to its current position.

Introduction arts education history and policy in the Netherlands

Subjects such as drawing have been around in primary schools since the nineteenth century in the Netherlands. In post-war years, the focus was not on experience or freedom to engage, but instead “the visual arts, music, and physical education were brought into the core as resources for use in solving problems” (Efland, 1979, p. 26). It was not until 1985 that the concept arts education finally entered the curriculum, encompassing dance, music, literature, theatre, visual and audiovisual art, and a budget of €3.50 per student each year (Raad van Twaalf, 2010, p. 4). Primary schools managed to improve their content and their relationships with cultural organizations, resulting in more diverse lessons. Combining both education and culture together in the new Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science in 1994 so far has led to: more cooperation between schools and cultural organizations, the ability for teachers to be trained as arts teacher, arts mentor, or internal coordinator of culture, more attention for quality, a continuous learning line nationwide, and an increased budget of €10.90 per student (Raad van Twaalf, 2010, p. 4-5). So arts education over the years came to fall under the care of the government, which considerably increased its quality. Currently, primary schools are free to determine the content of arts education as long as they stick to the national goals that are set by the government, creating very diverse forms of arts education in different primary schools that support the same purpose: more quality, continuity, and efficiency.

Thus, in the Netherlands there are several guidelines when it comes to arts education that suggest what should be dealt with in primary school and how. Commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture,

and Science, the SLO is one of the organizations that formulated several core issues for content and activities. Beginning with 122 goals in 1993, the SLO narrowed it down to 58 improved goals in 2006 and these 58 goals have been implemented fully in every primary school since the schoolyear 2009/2010 in the Netherlands.³ Three of these 58 goals are directed at “artistic orientation”: 54) The students learn to use image, language, music, play, and movement to express feelings and experiences and to communicate with; 55) The students learn to reflect upon their own work and that of others; 56) The students gather some knowledge of and appreciation for cultural heritage.” (Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, 2006, p. 63). So children in primary school learn to use, reflect upon, and recognize aspects of arts in arts education, though these processes mainly happen unconsciously while singing songs in class.

In the Netherlands, teachers in primary schools have to guide their class for a year in which they teach all courses. This means that the primary teacher needs knowledge concerning all these different courses in order to provide good education and uphold the national standards. However, from a practical point of view, it is impossible to expect that a teacher truly knows everything about all subjects. As Eisner (1997) said: “we are expecting teachers to teach what they do not know and often do not love” (p. 17). We expect the primary teachers to deliver education on all courses at a certain level, but seem to forget that these expectations might be too high. As in-depth interviews with Australian primary teachers by Alter, Hays and O’Hara (2009) have shown, teachers are concerned about the education they provide as well: “overall, the participants considered that their individual skills and knowledge in each of the Creative Arts influenced their ability to adequately deliver effective practices” (p. 13). If teachers indeed have difficulty with or lack of interest in certain courses, this could have negative consequences for arts education.

Subordinate position of arts education?

The first issue when looking at arts education, before even looking into the teachers, is that it is not seen as the most important topic in primary school. A majority of Australian teachers believed that “time in the primary classroom was dominated by an attention to core subjects such as English and Mathematics” and not by arts education, even though arts education is one of the learning objectives (Alter et al., 2009, p. 10). In the United States as well “arts education has always been in a tenuous position [...]. All too often the arts have been considered a luxury in our schools – an arena for self-expression, perhaps, but not a necessary part of education” (Hetland, Winner, Veenema & Sheridan, 2013, p.1). Efland (1990) even “went back to ancient Greece to investigate the origin of the attitude that the visual arts should not be a regular part of general education. [...] There the profession of artist was held in low repute because Athenian society was based upon a slave economy, with artisans and craftsmen ranked only slightly higher in the social pyramid.

³ <http://www.slo.nl/primair/kerndoelen/>, consulted 12th March

For this reason the children of the high born were never encouraged to become artists” (p. 46). Somehow we still have not lost this attitude of the ancient Greeks. If tests need to be taken at the end of the school year to determine the level of children, parents too seem more concerned with the scores for mathematics and other ‘serious’ subjects than with grades for the arts. Mathematics is very important for later life, and arts does not match that importance in society at first glance. But despite the fact that mathematics is seen as more important, this attitude is not the only problem of arts education in primary school.

Measurability of progress is another problem that can shape the methods and confidence of the primary teachers in arts education. They are expected to follow the progress children make over time in arts, without having them influence the artistic decisions of the children too much. This is true for all teachers and courses, but in arts education that progress seems harder to monitor, especially if little influence from the teachers’ perspective is desired. These behavioral objectives “require that learning outcomes be stated in a form by which the teacher can observe what the student will be able to do that he was not able to do prior to the onset of instruction [...] [however] a given method of writing objectives for instruction may subtly impose an unintended bias on the content of instruction.” (Efland, 1979, p. 25). Another study by Groenendijk, Damen, Haanstra and Boxtel (2015) showed that criteria were most commonly used to determine a score for an activity concerning arts education (p. 13). The problem with knowing what the criteria are, is that it can lead to only fulfilling those criteria instead of sparking creativity. The instructions can be biased by those criteria, in order for the primary teacher to make sure that the criteria are met. This indicates that there are two issues primary teachers have to deal with: first of all it is difficult to determine what the right means or criteria are to objectively measure creativity, and secondly, the lack of proper measurability means that there is insecurity whether the primary teacher is knowledgeable enough to apply the criteria correctly. Artistic freedom of children is important, but at the same time there is also a need for guidance. The question what to do is very hard to answer. It is hard to tell if what the primary teachers are doing is good for the children and their personal developments, as there are hardly any straightforward guidelines for evaluation and skills.

What shapes us all?

Bourdieu identified several forms of capital that shape people’s lives: cultural, social, and economic capital. These forms are three important pillars if we want to understand more of who people are and on what grounds they make decisions. So what are these forms of capital and why are they relevant for this thesis? Economic capital is simply financial resources in terms of money and possessions. Social capital, according to Bourdieu, consists of “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”

(Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). Cultural capital seems the most difficult to determine, as it can manifest itself in three ways: institutionalized, as cultural goods (objectified), and as dispositions of mind and body (embodied). Institutionalized cultural capital is based on educational credentials and therefore closely linked to how people perceive the social status of others; it is for example our valuation of a doctor over a bus driver, because the doctor studied for many more years. Embodied capital is the knowledge that is taught by family and the environment, but also taste and manners. These forms of capital all contribute to shaping our habitus, which will be explained here later.

According to Nash (1990) “the complex concept of 'culture' is for Bourdieu, a system of meaning organized by some generative principle and the theory of practice has as its object the explanation of social and cultural practices in terms of these objective structures.” (p. 433). The three kinds of capital are shaped through socialization and interaction, which happens through actions, maintaining or beginning relationships with other people (Bourdieu, 1968). So they are important, because these kinds of capital shape people’s entire lives, influence their actions and the outcome; cultural, social, and economic capital can be found in every aspect of people’s everyday lives. These kinds of capital form everyone differently, and they form the base upon which a teacher might rely when giving arts education. While teaching, the primary teacher might rely on cultural capital, and through teaching the teacher is also changing the cultural capital of the children in the classroom.

Closely related to Bourdieu’s different types of capital is the concept of habitus. Habitus, as Nash (1990) explained, “refers to a system of embodied dispositions which generate practice in accordance with the structural principles of the social world” (p. 433). Habitus encompasses formal and informal rules, ideas, habits, traditions, etc. which in turn are all influenced by socialization and social class. Habitus and socialization cannot be separated from each other, and give meaning to social relations. Habitus is intangible and yet determines actions and thoughts. It can change over time, evolve due to different conditions in society. Habitus is shaped from the moment people interact with their environment, and will remain a factor of influence during the rest of peoples’ lives. On the other hand, habitus can change society or classes as well, although the changes are limited to the possibilities the habitus offers as people will not make changes that go far beyond their habitus.

Habitus could perhaps be seen some sort of comfort zone, and going outside it can happen but does not seem enjoyable or wise. Especially for young children it is important to get in touch with as many different activities and experiences as possible if they wish to broaden their perspective. That is why the goal of arts education is to introduce the children to as many cultural activities as possible. For the children it may not be enjoyable, but it is wise to keep on introducing them to culture, as cultural capital is an important attributor towards their personal development. The younger children are when they are introduced to culture, the more it will influence their habitus and valuation for culture at a later age. This is

also the reason why primary schools strive to introduce the children to as many different aspects of culture: it familiarizes the children with culture and they can learn to appreciate it, whether that is now or later in their lives.

Choosing to go to the movies for the twentieth time is easier than going to the theatre for the first time, because going to the movies has proven to be enjoyable whereas the joy of the theatre is not yet proven by memories or experiences. Despite their habitus, people might be willing to step out of their social class, or in other words their comfort zone, but they will not always be happy to make those changes. For example: someone from the working class might be willing going to the opera, something that is unfamiliar to him and associated with the higher social class. However, he would rather stay at home and watch television, as he knows he likes to do so. Knowing he would only have to go to the opera once perhaps made the decision to go there acceptable for him, knowing that he can watch television every night afterwards and does not have to go back. This example shows how people can participate in activities that are not related to their social status, but that they do not necessarily have to enjoy it or be changed by this one step out of their comfort zone. But if young children are introduced to many different aspects of culture and society, they may enrich themselves for the rest of their lives. However, for these kinds of introductions, children depend on adults from their environment, such as their parents or teachers at school. So habitus is different for everyone, but can be shaped by similar conditions. The habitus of a teacher can shape arts education, just like the habitus of children can shape their reactions and attitude towards it. In turn, teachers can try to affect, or stretch, the habitus of their pupils, although the embodied and largely unconscious nature of habitus will limit the margins of that change.

Family background

Family background can play an important role in the attitude towards arts education as well. The importance of family has been illustrated briefly in the paragraphs discussing the habitus concept of Bourdieu, but will now be dealt with more in depth, as Bourdieu (1968) noted that family is shaping people's perception and appreciation through social processes and relationships. As Kraaykamp & Van Eijck (2010) stated: "an early cultural socialization provided by parents is likely to leave its marks during the rest of one's life (e.g., pronunciation that reveals class or region of origin)" (p. 210). Examples are: going to the theatre or a dance performance with family, or a specific family member, at a younger age. All these activities are shaping the cultural capital of the primary teacher as a child, because "culturally active parents increase their children's embodied cultural capital. They function as a direct example for their children. Culturally active parents are inclined to bring their children into contact with highbrow culture at an early age, when such socializing experiences are most likely to stick." (Kraaykamp & Van Eijck, 2010, p. 213). The lack of these activities, however, shapes the perception of the primary teacher as a child as well.

There can be numerous reasons as to why families do or do not engage in cultural activities, such as (lack of) money, interest, time, or energy of the parents. Recently, Delrieu and Gibson (2017) looked into geographical factors and found that location is an important factor, as well as “the availability of everyday facilities surrounding a destination” (p. 29). The cost of travelling, both in terms of time and money, and the possibility of other activities near the location are factors that can influence cultural participation. Parents with children might value the possibility of a museum being within an hour of travelling distance, whereas a couple without children might be willing to travel further. However, time, location and money are not the only factors that influence cultural participation.

Leisure time leaves people free to decide what to do, but it does not necessarily mean that more leisure time indicates more cultural consumption. Even cultural omnivores, people with a broad taste for culture, actually participate less frequently because of their careers, as shown by Vander Stichele and Laermans (2006). The hypothesis that “higher educated omnivores often have a stressful professional career which, certainly in combination with a family life, does not leave much leisure time” was proven false (Vander Stichele & Laermans, 2006, p. 58). It does not mean that a career has little or no influence on cultural participation, but this example clearly indicates there is more to cultural participation than the availability of free time. What people do with their free time also depends on their personality traits, as research by Kraaykamp and Van Eijck (2005) showed. They found that five personality traits, extraversion, openness to experiences, emotional stability, friendliness, and conscientiousness, each had their own influence on media preference and cultural participation. An example is that friendly people “seem to appreciate relatively simple, non-challenging activities, while being averse to more elitist, or complex, activities.” (Kraaykamp & Van Eijck, 2005, p. 1686). These are mere examples of the traits that people have that can influence cultural participation, but it does help to get an idea of all the possible factors that influence whether parents decide to take their children to the museum or not.

The factors mentioned before leading to cultural participation can shape the perception of the future primary teacher, forming his or her cultural capital through experiences. A negative experience, such as being bored in a museum for hours as a child or being forced to attend piano lessons, may lead to aversion to visiting a museum or classical music concert later in life. On the other hand, a positive experience, such as a treasure hunt in the same museum or having the child choose what instrument it wants to play, could have led to more enjoyment. The family and education can thus shape the cultural background of the future teacher. There are many studies supporting the idea that cultural activities during childhood with the family influence these activities later on in life, whether these were positive or negative experiences (Mohr and DiMaggio 1995; Van Eijck 1997; Kraaykamp 2003). So in the end these experiences shape the current children, as some aspects can be recognized in the way the teacher gives arts education. Both education and

family are factors in this research that should not be overlooked. Although they may be hard to determine or remember, but certainly influence the current arts education in primary schools through teachers.

Culturally and socially different families have different values and expectations of the future of their child and the school(s) they choose. An example Nash (1990) gave illustrates this difference: “what they may also take into account are that higher level positions are the cultural property of another group, that they will not 'fit in', that they will be 'put down', academically and socially excluded” (p. 439). So even though people can choose any school they want for their child, it is likely a choice that is influenced by their habitus, cultural, social, and economic capital. Parents will choose a school they think they feel familiar with, because it somehow resembles the education and cultural capital the parents received when they were children. Kraaykamp and Van Eijck (2010) also found a “strong intergenerational transmission of cultural capital. Highly educated parents (institutionalized capital) provide their children with the resources to do well in school. Parents who frequently engage in high-brow cultural activities (embodied capital) inculcate an interest in high-brow activities in their children. Parents rich in cultural goods are likely to have children who value cultural possessions as well.” (p. 225). This shows how more educated parents provide a different environment and cultural capital for their children than less educated and culturally active parents. So cultural capital all starts with family socialization, but what happens when the children go to school?

Educational background

Whatever the attitude of a teacher towards arts education may be, it is not something that emerged recently. One of the possible contributions to any current attitude is the attitude of former primary teachers that gave the current primary teachers their arts education when they were a child. As became clear in the previous paragraphs, family is important when it comes to shaping cultural capital. In primary school, the teacher is one of the important people who can influence children for a whole year before they move on to the next grade. Current teachers could either have spent a lot or not enough time on arts education when they were younger, whether it was in primary school, or the PABO later on. It all depends on the teachers they had and the decisions these teachers made when it came to education. However, being prepared properly when it comes to arts education is always a difficult task, just like there is not one set of required skills for every primary teacher. For example, Alter et al. found that in Australia “all of the teachers in the study acknowledged that the quality and quantity of Arts education that they received at primary, secondary and tertiary levels did not prepare them adequately for this responsibility” (2009, p. 17). Whether it was dealt with extensively or barely mentioned, arts education in the childhood of current primary teachers probably has its consequences today.

When growing up, primary school is one of the main institutions shaping the habitus of a child besides the family. As Bourdieu (1971) stated: "it may be assumed that every individual owes to the type of schooling he has received a set of basic, deeply interiorized master patterns." (p. 192-193). So the schools actively influence the habitus, but also add to the cultural and social capital the child had before going to school (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The problem Bourdieu notices, however, is that schools only work well for the children who already have the right background. "Lower working class children do not bring to their school work either the keenness of lower middle class children or the cultural capital of upper class children", thus they repeatedly "take refuge in a kind of negative withdrawal which upsets teachers" (Bourdieu, 1974, p. 41). This is supported by later work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1997) in which they describe how children who feel more comfortable at school due to matching cultural capital are more likely to get better grades. Though in our modern and multicultural society this sort of socially shaping children may not be applicable everywhere like it was around forty years ago when these studies were conducted, differences between students of diverse social classes within the same school or even classroom in social values can be recognized.

Consequences of family and educational history for current skills

Maes, Clarebout, De Fraine, Smits and Vanderhoeven (2012, p. 15) found that the teacher relies mostly on knowledge, which "can be seen as a conglomerate of convictions and knowledge, primarily shaped through education, experiences and tradition. He uses this knowledge to determine how and why to act in certain situations, such as giving explanations now, individually, or for the whole group". A study by Luehrman (2002, p. 209) named some indicators of this knowledge that teachers depend on: "the cultural climate of the home, college art classes, visits to art museums or galleries, use of art images in teaching, and the influence of colleagues who teach art." Luehrman (2002, p. 209) also found that a "significant relationship was found between attitude toward art education and two variables: the number of college level art courses and the rating of influence of peers during college." These examples show how important the personal, cultural, and educational history is for any teacher, as a lack in arts education makes them feel unprepared or lacking knowledge.

Some teachers let themselves be shaped by the negative experiences as a child that helped form their cultural capital, such as a boring and far too long visit to a museum, or obligatorily accompanying parents to the opera. It could be assumed that the quality of previous experiences of primary teachers with art could influence what and how they currently teach children. For example, if the experiences were negative, teachers could be less inclined to ask for help. Instead they would not put much effort in giving arts education. Even if they were given enough time, it seems that some primary teachers do not want to spend it learning about arts education, because they simply have little or no interest (Alter et al., 2009, p.

17). This lack of interest in arts education has an effect on the children that are currently in the arts classes. Put very strongly, it might be that “an average of about 30 children [...] may not be receiving formal tuition in art education for at least one year of their formal education. Were this same situation to apply to mathematics or literacy there would be a public outcry” (Welch, 1995, p. 71). This then seems to end up in a downward spiral of disinterestedness in arts education, until it is eventually left behind.

However, not all primary teachers leave arts education for what it is if they have had negative experiences in their childhood, as some of them do ask for help if they feel inadequately knowledgeable. There are primary teachers willing to improve themselves and their art classes to make sure their students learn as much as possible. Research by DUO Onderwijsonderzoek showed that when it comes to professionalizing activities, 73% of the teachers are willing to read (online) literature in the future (Elphick, Van Grinsven & Van der Woud, 2015, p. 12). However, seriously going back to a post-hbo study concerning culture or the arts is something only 9% might do in the future (Elphick et al., 2015, p. 12). Other people the teachers might go to, according to Alter et al., (2009, p. 13), are “consultants; artists; colleagues; specialists; the parent body; and highly qualified people”. So if teachers are willing to improve, which most of them seemed to be according to the research by DUO Onderwijsonderzoek, they can do so by either doing some reading or going to someone who knows more about arts education. As Luehrman (2002, p. 210) put it: “what is clearly illustrated in any case is the idea that art educators are not just teaching their students, but also indirectly educating colleagues and community members through the level of their own personal commitment to art and the quality and presence of their art program.”

It is important to combine and switch between different approaches in order to provide diverse arts education. For example, in the research of DUO onderwijsonderzoek, teachers in the Netherlands were asked how much they differentiate in class when giving assignments and/or explanations in arts. Working on practical skills, and with different materials to create works of art with the children during classes of workmanship, had the highest percentage of 13% ‘always’ and 34% ‘often’ differentiating, whereas only an astonishing 1% differentiates ‘always’ and 5% ‘often’ when it comes to media where children are introduced, and learn how to deal with the media in the safe environment the school provides (Elphick et al., 2015, p. 14). Apparently there is some sort of hierarchy in differentiation when it comes to different subjects of arts education, where more teachers feel secure enough to think out of the box for workmanship and not at all for media. This is also visible in the fact that 60% of the teachers feel very capable when it comes to workmanship, whereas only 8% feel very capable in teaching media and film art, and other courses have percentages between 47 and 20 (Elphick et al., 2015, p. 9). The fact that in general only a third of the teachers feel very capable of teaching art in the Netherlands could be an indicator of deficient cultural capital.

Given the pressure and expectations primary teachers sometimes have to deal with, it is not surprising if they choose to focus on other courses such as mathematics. Pateman (1991, p. 19) asked if it is “[really] surprising that some already overburdened teachers, insecure in the arts because of their own inadequate initial training, are inevitably choosing to treat the arts as peripheral”. Pateman here taps into the background of the primary teacher which is, as we have seen before, in some situations not sufficient to provide them with the confidence they need, and therefore influences arts education negatively. In addition, due to this lack of confidence, teachers tend to put an increased focus on practicing skills that need to be tested. This means that children are merely learning how to pass a test.

Guidance

It is very important for primary teachers to properly guide their students through arts education, as it can be boring for students, but also very personal or even uncomfortable. “The activity [of making art] inevitably involves the making of images of a deeply personal and expressive nature within the highly public social context that is the classroom. As a result, it is entirely unsurprising that the experience frequently carries with it the possibility of individuals feeling isolated, vulnerable and inadequate as a result of their involvement with such activity” (Holt, 1997, p. 87). This too can influence the attitude of primary teachers towards arts education. The primary teachers could have had very uncomfortable experiences with arts education themselves, from which they want to protect their students. Thankfully, Alter et al. (2009, p. 15) found in their research that overall there are positive outcomes of arts education, as the teachers participating in their study “indicated they valued the field for the outcomes and opportunities the subject areas produced”.

This guiding of children can take different forms, or rather, the teacher can apply different kinds of methods and content in arts education. The goal is of course to teach children something about art, but as to how to fulfill that task there are many possibilities. Ideally, as Efland (1979, p. 32) stated, “the art of teaching is one that consists of finding the harmony between the values of the content and the method of teaching”. Teaching is a continuously changing situation between a teacher and children, where the teacher helps them “recognize, expand, and act upon their own. The teacher carries responsibility for educational leadership. He encourages children to expand their purposes to higher levels by helping them reflect upon their meanings” (Barkan, 1955, p. 19). By adapting the teaching method to the level of the children and letting them experience, it is more likely that they will engage and that their personal development is stimulated. The “structure must always be related to the status and gifts of the learner” (Bruner, 1966, p. 41). So the teacher is very important in determining how the children will experience arts education, and the different methods and content are yet more issues in teaching arts education to the whole class.

Too idealistic?

There is still an ideal image of the primary teacher “encouraging students to be creative by drawing upon their personal experiences and fantasies as sources of expression, a person who discourages copying the work of others and who for the most part avoids directive methods of teaching.” (Efland, 1979, p. 28). It is hard, however, for the primary teacher to live up to these expectations. The only open question of the research by DUO onderwijsonderzoek asked what teachers would change if they were principal. The answer of 17%, the third largest group, was that they would like to employ an expert, more experienced teacher or arts teacher (Elphick et al., 2015, p. 15). The largest group indicated “other” of which the content remains unclear, and the second largest group indicated that there was “nothing/not much” that needed to be changed (Elphick et al., 2015, p. 15). This also shows that there are a lot of teachers not feeling capable enough to provide different methods of arts education for different children. After all, it is up to the teacher to decide what and how to give arts education, and in that decision the cultural background of the primary teacher can play an important role.

Chapter 3 - Methods

In order for the research question concerning the influence of the cultural background of current primary teachers in and around Rotterdam on arts and culture education to be answered, qualitative in-depth interviews with primary teachers in Rotterdam have been conducted. The reason why this method has been chosen is that it provided the best way to find, for example, what primary teachers remembered when it came to their background in cultural activities in school or with their parents: it gave them freedom and flexibility to talk about everything they saw as valuable or interesting (Turner, 2010; Shenton, 2004). The research focused on their point of view, which was later on interpreted and linked to theoretical concepts to see if and how they connected. Teachers were asked how they taught arts and culture nowadays, how important they considered it to be, and what they remembered from the primary education they received when they were young. The questions that were used for this interview can be found in appendix A. Despite not directly asking them to link their memories to their practices, some teachers already made some connections between their history and current approach during the interviews. So qualitative research suited the question how the cultural background influenced arts education given by primary teachers very well. It allowed for personal experiences, meanings, and perceptions to be shared freely and provided the most important information for this thesis.

The decision to do qualitative interviews with primary teachers in Rotterdam was made in cooperation with KCR for this thesis. As KCR wanted to know more about (the impact of) the cultural background of primary teachers in Rotterdam when it came to arts education, they helped set up contact with these primary teachers. The specific criteria for these teachers in and around Rotterdam were not extensive. Merely being a primary teacher or cultural coordinator at a primary school, and willingness to participate in an interview were necessary requirements. This was chosen to keep the threshold for participation in this study low, and not scare away primary teachers by having them think that they were expected to, e.g., visit the museum at least once a week. Within and around Rotterdam, there were many kinds of schools and different areas. For this research, trying to get in touch with diverse schools proved rather difficult and time-consuming because KCR wanted to get in touch with primary teachers first. However, having spoken to six teachers from different schools enabled seeing differences and similarities in projects, methods, and content for arts and cultural education. As schools had their own cultural backgrounds as well, there were both similarities and differences when it came to arts and culture.

When getting in touch with the teachers, the geographical location of the primary school was noted and used in the interview to see if the children from different areas of Rotterdam actually brought different attitudes to primary school. The interviews showed how wealthy and more safe areas had different standards and influences on the children, as they could truly be a child, than the less safe and rich areas, where children needed to be more responsible for themselves and were challenged at a very young age. Examples of so-

called problematic areas were Tarwewijk, Pendrecht, Bloemhof, de Afrikaanderwijk, Hillesluis, Carnisse and Feijenoord.⁴ On the other hand, areas such as Hillegersberg, Kralingen and Overschie had higher living standards.⁵ These were just examples, but they did add to a better understanding of the differences in arts education for the whole city and not just a part of Rotterdam, as Rotterdam was a very multicultural city with highly diverse neighborhoods.

Another division between schools could be made, not at the geographical level, but on the basis of concepts of primary education available in the Netherlands. There were five special concepts that were aimed at the developmental possibilities of the individual children: Montessori, Dalton, free school, Jenaplan, and Freinet.⁶ This research has dealt with one of them: Dalton. Three of the teachers who participated belonged to a Dalton school, two belonged to an OBS which translates to public primary school, and one belonged to a catholic school, as was illustrated by the table in appendix B. The schools were not that different as they all followed the national learning line. Some small differences could be seen when it came to exercising this national learning line, and perspectives and approaches on arts education and what it meant to the children. Especially the Dalton schools, due to their structure of children having their own responsibility and opportunities to achieve a goal that was given by the primary teacher, seemed to be a very encouraging environment for arts and culture. However, one of the teachers attended a Montessori school when she was little, and it clearly showed differences with how she taught now at the public primary school.

Due to the multicultural character of Rotterdam, not just geography, but religion was an important aspect as well when it came to education. For example the RVKO, Rotterdamse Vereniging voor Katholiek Onderwijs [Rotterdam Union for Catholic education], was one of the larger schoolboards that was responsible for 66 schools in Rotterdam, accounting for more than 20.000 children.⁷ The ISBO, Islamitische Schoolbesturen Organisatie [Islamic Schoolboard Organization], on the other hand, was not that large, but still accounted for 41 of 50 Islamic schools.⁸ As religion was an important part in many people's lives, this too could influence the attitude towards arts education and how to provide it. Therefore, this research has also tried to deal with schools of different religions, to diversify the sample as much as possible, and to see how a religious background could influence arts education. Religion may have influenced the content, dealing more with the stories of their Gods, just as Vuyk (2016) saw how culture is a way to identify tradition and values and pass them on. However, due to the availability of only six teachers, of which one taught at a Catholic school, a comparison between different kinds of religious schools could not be made.

⁴ www.wijkeninrotterdam.nl consulted December 15th 2016

⁵ <http://leefbaarometer.nl/kaart/?#kaart> consulted December 15th 2016

⁶ <https://www.onderwijsconsument.nl/bijzondere-schooltypen/>, consulted December 15th 2016

⁷ <http://www.rvko.nl/De-RVKO>, consulted December 15th 2016

⁸ <http://www.deisbo.nl/?cat=1>, consulted December 15th 2016

After KCR sent two rounds of emails to possible candidates, the contact information of those who responded positively was made available in May. For KCR it made sense for their focus to be on Rotterdam as they operated in Rotterdam. Rotterdam was a multicultural and large area with many primary schools, and was thus likely to provide all the respondents for the in-depth interviews. The primary teachers were given the freedom to choose when and where they wanted to give the interview. Whereas some of them only had half an hour, others were willing to talk somewhat longer and enjoyed the conversation. However, they all were very aware of the tasks that they had put aside in order to be able to give the interview. This meant that, due to the time pressure, not all topics were dealt with equally in all the interviews.

The research was conducted from late May until half June, 2017. The interviews themselves took somewhere around half an hour and were held in Dutch. It depended on the available time of the primary teacher and how much he or she was willing to share. For the thesis, a minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 hours was required when it came to in-depth interviews, which meant that the aim was to talk to at least 20 primary teachers. However, contacting the primary teachers proved to be rather difficult. KCR wanted to reach out to primary teachers first, before the contact information of the primary teachers was shared so that interviews could be planned. It was already halfway through May before the first contact with a few primary teachers could be made. Due to the increased workload for primary teachers near the end of the schoolyear, some teachers refused. Eventually this meant that there were six teachers available for an interview. The six interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure as many pathways to link the information to theory as possible. The quotes from the primary teachers in this research were translated from Dutch to English. The transcripts were added to a separate file and not added to the appendices, to ensure privacy of the respondents.

Due to the fact that the primary teachers were on a tight schedule, subjects that formed a red line but did not necessarily all come forward in every interview, were: age of the teacher, amount of years teaching, one of the five school concepts, religion, positive and negative experiences, how often family was consulted when it came to arts education, personal skills, attitude, and diploma's or grades concerning proficiency of arts education. The questions that formed the base for the interviews can be found in interview guide in appendix A, as well as some background information concerning the primary teachers. In order to ensure the privacy of the teachers, neither their personal names nor the name of the school were mentioned. Instead, the teachers have been given fake names in this research.

When it came to translating concepts into practical codes that could be identified during the interviews, cultural capital was one of the main themes, though none of the teachers explicitly used the words cultural capital. They were influenced by friends, parents, brothers and/or sisters, grandparents, etc. who took the primary teacher to a cultural or artistic event such as the movies, the theatre, or the museum. These experiences have been described as disturbing, uncomfortable, strange, very personally challenging,

but also enlightening, energizing, inspiring, or astonishing. Besides friends and family, the education the primary teachers received when they were younger also played a role in their choices for arts and culture. This education could be sufficient, lacking, or not even remembered at all because it was not interesting or even available.

Chapter 4 - Results

Family – culturally active

Three of the primary teachers had very culturally active parents, which resulted in positive experiences and more openness to culture for the primary teachers as they grew older: Christina, Xander, and Anne. Different factors influenced both the behavior of the parents and the response of the primary teacher as a child. Though these three primary teachers grew up in a different environment as a child, all had culturally active parents. The primary teachers did end up with an interest in culture as well, but it was somewhat different for Anne. In contrast to Christina and Xander, Anne did not have positive experiences with arts and culture when she was younger, a difference that will be illustrated in the following paragraphs.

Xander was one of the teachers who was being pressured into music class when he was younger. He had to endure this for a year when he was a child, despite his preference for playing soccer. The regret of his mother made both parents realize they at least wanted to give their children the opportunity to get in touch with music. Xander told about the regret his mother had: “In a similar way she regretted having talent for the piano – she had classes for two years and was indeed talented, but due to a lack of money could not continue. Later on she moved to another town for college and it completely vanished. After that she never did anything with music again.” This showed that the family of origin had a big influence on the cultural background of the child, as parental regret could have led to their children being overly exposed to any cultural activity.

This regret of not pursuing musical talent of parents is something rather universal. When growing older, many people regret not having pursued their talents when they were younger, making sure that their children did get the proper exposure. This was also found in a research by Roese and Summerville (2005) on what we regret most and why. The regret of parents and the primary teachers as they were older did play a role in artistic and cultural activities. For Xander, the regret of his mother turned into a year of compulsory music class for him, which was part of cultural exposure that opened him up for later musical appreciation.

If Xander had not been introduced to music by his parents, he might not have picked up playing the guitar recently, though he critiqued his parents for not pursuing hard enough. “It was just that – well, music was maybe not stimulated enough. Honestly, I think it was not enough. [...] At the time it did not spark interest with me, but when I grew older I did find out that I, for example, quite like playing the guitar. I have been doing it now for a year and a half and am not that good at it yet, but it does begin now.” Clearly the regret of Xander’s parents had its limits when it came to exposing him to cultural activities. Of course his happiness as a child was important too. The regret of his parents in the end influenced how hard or long they wanted Xander to try what they had not pursued. His parents had to navigate between the risk of possibly missing out, and letting their child develop his own interests. It was like learning to appreciate the

taste of olives, as Xander explained it: “Because if you do not get it [cultural exposure] as a child, you probably do not learn to appreciate it, I can imagine. You will have to develop it when you are much older and then it will kind of be like eating mustard or olives, you know? Like: you just have to try it and at some point you will love it. But if you learn to eat it when you are young, you learn to appreciate it when you are like eighteen. So then – yeah I suppose you have some sort of advance.” For his parents it was hard to determine when they had pushed enough, though in hindsight for Xander it was not enough.

Another way of introducing Xander and his siblings to culture was taking them to every church, mosque, temple, and synagogue on holidays. Though he did not like these trips at the time, again in retrospect, he did value the experiences and all the opportunities his parents gave. “Especially the cultural activities on our holidays I seem to remember better now than all things you like when you are a child. I cannot remember those things, because – well, what can you remember after all from playing at the beach? Some friends. But you cannot literally remember something about it. So it [cultural activities] does stay with you.” The visits to the churches and temples did contribute considerably to the cultural capital of Xander, as he now used his memories to choose where his next holiday was going to be and which temples and churches he would like to visit. “I think that it makes you, at my age, look more specifically for what you want to see, and what you already have seen.” This is a very clear example of being exposed to culture as a child and it resulting in cultural appreciation later on in life.

Being aware of the shaping influence the environment you grow up in as a child applied to every teacher. Christina was a strong example of growing up in a loving environment, with Dutch, Yugoslavian, and Surinam neighbors. She was freely raised with Islam, and there was an endless presence of books at home. “I remember always crawling on my father’s lap, because he had this big chair and would always read in it, you know? And then I would sit in his lap like this, and he would be reading and I would be pretending to read along. [...] And that is what I miss now. You know, at home there would just be – books everywhere.” Her culturally diverse environment and supportive parents made her enjoy culture a lot now. She also tried to convey her love of books to the children she taught now. “Every morning we read for half an hour and I am really not at all interested in what they read. I always say – oh teacher, may it be a comic? – sure you may read a comic, you know? As long as they read. And then you notice that reading, that they start enjoying it a lot too.” In this case the parental support led to a lot of appreciation for culture, not just books. Christina now tried to convey that appreciation to the children she taught as well, to show them how culture could be valuable and not boring by letting them read comics for example.

Xander was very aware of the protective, wealthy, and calm environment he grew up in. It was exactly that environment which enabled him to explore sports and culture: “And you just realize it a lot more. That you have been so lucky to be in a very free, calm environment – you know, where there is room for dialogue and where you can play out on the street as a child until ten in the evening and no one bats an

eye. And nothing ever happened, you know?” It made Xander very aware of his position now as a teacher in a less privileged part of Rotterdam, and very thankful for his untroubled childhood. Teaching in a deprived area of Rotterdam made him realize that his childhood had been very easy compared to the childhood the children in his classroom had nowadays. However, he did not wish all the children the exact same childhood he had, as the problems of the deprived area also presented challenges that prepared the children better for their future in terms of responsibility and perseverance. A balance between the two different kinds of childhood would be best according to Xander, as children should be allowed to live in a peaceful environment and be untroubled, but should also learn something from their environment.

Anne was taken to museums very often by her father. However, the fact that she had to remain calm and was not allowed touch anything meant that she did not enjoy these visits: “It was no more than just walking and not understanding what I was looking at, whereas if I had heard a background story, or fun facts, the paintings would have been far more interesting. You had to be quiet, and children do not want to be quiet. They want to touch everything, but you are not allowed to. It really was not enjoyable.” Though her father took her to a lot of museums, the fact that Anne was not introduced to the artworks at her own level meant that she could not enjoy them. The same happened to her playing the piano: “I had piano lessons when I was younger, but I stopped at a certain point because I had to play songs I did not like at all. Again: make it fit the children, because at the time I only wanted to play the popular stuff and I had to play a dull song, which I thought was really stupid. And then you quit, which really is a shame, though I do play the piano nowadays again.” Again there is some personal regret of not (properly) pursuing a talent. Similarly to Xander, Anne picked up playing the piano later on in her life. However, a very clear problem Anne ran into was that the cultural activities were not adapted to children. Her negative experiences resulted in her now trying very hard to make sure the cultural activities would fit the children in her classroom. She wanted to make sure the children got to see how enjoyable art could be, instead of thinking of it as boring.

Family – culturally inactive

On the other hand, there were three primary teachers whose parents were hardly culturally active: Manu, Rianne, and Merel. These primary teachers did not get the early chance to discover different cultural activities, and had no opportunity to build the same positive experiences and more openness to culture like Xander and Christina who did have culturally active parents. Again, the factors that influenced the environment of the primary teachers as a child and the behavior of the parents were important in shaping interest in culture for the primary teachers as they grew older. Nevertheless, although Manu, Rianne, and Merel grew up with culturally inactive parents, they did end up with an interest in culture as well.

Manu grew up in a small village in Turkey. He did not remember cultural activities, as there hardly were any. However, he vividly remembered listening to the only radio in town that belonged to his

grandfather. “Well, on the radio every day you would have some sort of play of the theatre. That was played on the radio, at set times, like series on television. And around that time some people would be sitting around the radio, well – breathlessly waiting for it to begin.” The fact that Manu had little or no cultural education made him aware of his current position as a teacher, and the influence he now had in the contribution of cultural education of the children in his classroom. Knowing he barely had cultural activities, he wanted to be sure his pupils in school did get the chance. This showed how teachers like Manu indeed could fall back on their own personal experiences, and were aware of their own input when it came to arts and culture education.

Rianne took matters into her own hands, without having been in touch with a lot of culture. Until she was eighteen, she had not undertaken many cultural activities as her parents mostly supported sports, and that was when she travelled to Australia with a friend to go and see the world for herself. “When I was eighteen I went to Australia for nine months with a friend. Just thought of it myself. My parents did not travel, no one did actually. I just came up with it with her. And after that I also enrolled myself for CMV [Cultural Social Worker Education]. That is what I studied. It came truly from myself and I thought: wow, the world is so much more than what I have seen so far.” Rianne was an example of having had little contact with culture through her family, but she decided to explore it when she grew older. Travelling after completing high school was a well-known phenomenon, and in the case of Rianne it completely opened her up for cultural activities. This meant that she was aware of the fact that children in her classroom may not have liked arts education at the moment, but that they might come to appreciate it later as they were older, just like she did.

Merel also did not grow up in a culturally active family, though her childhood was very happy: “Well, we were simply not that kind of people who went to the museum. On our holidays too, we were extremely lazy, and I still am. I work very hard all year round, and a holiday to me is being able to hang around, not having to do anything, not having to read anything, just relax you know? I really do not feel like visiting museums.” However, Merel did turn out to love arts and culture a lot: “I like everything. Especially sharing with each other, fantasy, working together, expressing, making music, moving, I actually like everything very much.” She chose to become a cultural coordinator for her school, was an organist in her church, had a piano in her classroom, and her husband was a conductor. She modestly called herself “quite musical”. “Now that I am getting older, I do start to value it [visiting museums with or without grandchildren] more, I must say.” She discovered arts and culture for herself as well, without much help from her family. It was only when she had an inspiring drawing teacher later on that she started opening up, a subject that will be dealt with in the following paragraphs for all primary teachers.

Educational history - primary and secondary education

None of the teachers had a lot or extensive memories of primary or secondary school. They all remembered the usual courses in drawing, painting, and crafting, but besides one or two memories nothing really stood out. Xander went to a Christian school, which meant that every other week on Friday they had an “ending of the week”. The children would perform a play and some songs based on religious stories, which contributed to musical and theatrical engagement. Although Xander now teaches at a Catholic school, influence of religion on arts education either during his childhood or in his practices now was not mentioned. It was not clear if religion had an influence on his current approach, but it clearly did shape the arts education Xander received as a child.

Xander also remembered his eighth grade teacher very well. “To me he was very good at telling stories and also very charismatic. So on the one hand you had some sort of basic respect for him, which basically made you do everything he asked you to. He had created some kind of setting in the classroom that it just – no one ever refused, you know? [...] We wanted to do things for him, but why? Because he would pay us compliments all day. He would always assume the positive things. Could be tough though.” Being like his eighth grade teacher was something Xander strived for today as well. The respect he felt for his teacher as a child was something he wanted to achieve with his class too. This indicated that not just cultural activities but also attitudes in class were shaping factors for children in primary school. In this case, a positive role model resulted in wanting to resemble that same role model if given the chance.

In Turkey, Manu hardly received cultural education at all in both primary and secondary school. In primary school, a song would be sung with teachers every once in a while, and some creative handwork completed the cultural activities at primary school. “If in every three years you had been to a museum three times, it was considered a lot. What I did sometimes afterwards was go to the theatre and museums with friends. But – well compared to now, it was very little. We simply did not know it [arts and culture]. You did not learn it at home.” Having had so little cultural education when growing up, Manu now especially wanted the children he taught to at least get in touch with different cultural activities. This behavior seemed similar to the parental regret that resulted in exposure to culture. A lack in the past could thus result in compensation for the next generation, to be sure that they grew up in a better environment.

Rianne simply described her primary school in one word: “Stupid. Forty-two children in a row all did the same, whether you were smart or stupid or – everyone did the same. What I did like: on Friday afternoons, if you had finished your work, you could join kindergarten. That I liked. And we had a very nice teacher in singing. Or actually, she was not that much fun, but the singing was. Yes, that was fun. But otherwise – no. During my time in school I never really got into arts and culture.” Her experiences made her very sure of one thing: she would do it all very differently when she would be a teacher. In the case of Rianne, her time at primary school made her very sure that she wanted to offer the children who went to

primary school now a lot more than she received. Like Manu, Rianne felt regret and responsibility. Not having a lot of arts education as a child made Rianne want to do better now that she was a primary teacher herself.

Merel mostly remembered the strict environment of the primary school she went to: “Well, I remember that in fifth grade, which now would be group seven, we had obligatory lessons in playing the harmonica. But because I liked music so much, I liked this as well. If you were good at it you would get some kind of badge, a little prize you know? And singing, I learned how to sing in harmony there. [...] I liked it a lot, but because it was obligatory it was somehow less enjoyable. It was a very strict school I attended. [...] In fifth grade I did have a very musically talented teacher, and she did stimulate me. But otherwise it was just reading, writing, mathematics, geography, history.” Besides the mandatory courses in mathematics and language, there was no focus on artistic courses. It was only later that Merel found her role model who opened her up for arts and culture: “I always used to think that I could not draw. I only discovered it later, when I had a wonderful drawing teacher who also gave arts history, and he truly inspired me. [...] Especially not saying that something was not beautiful, but seeing the possibilities in people. It is that positive approach, and I have that in my classroom now as well.” The openness and enthusiasm of her drawing teacher allowed Merel to open up to arts and culture, showing that it could be more than the mandatory harmonica they played in fifth grade. It was a clear example of a role model who inspired the primary teacher as a child to go into arts and culture.

The only teachers who had good memories of their primary schools were Christina and Anne. Christina remembered doing quite a lot of cultural activities, such as going to De Doelen and the orchestra. In retrospect, she did more with culture in primary than secondary school. Perhaps, she thinks, because she went to a Montessori primary school. “But, I think that – yes it used to be a lot of fun. In primary school we did a lot of things as well. For example to De Doelen, you know? That already happened back then. And we still do that today. [Christina laughs] It is really bizarre, yeah – the Philharmonic Orchestra.” Also while attending the PABO she did a lot more cultural activities and chose a minor in arts and culture. They visited museums almost weekly, thinking of ways to engage children. The extensive support of her parents combined with the primary school she attended resulted in a very open attitude towards arts and culture. Eventually it resulted in Christina’s choice to follow a cultural minor during her study. So all these positive experiences at a young age did result in a positive attitude towards arts and culture and a willingness to develop this further.

Anne did not necessarily remember a lot of specific activities, but rather the atmosphere: “We did have our creative Friday afternoons as well, and I always liked it a lot. That I do remember: a very relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, listening to some music, which I recreate in my class nowadays as well. I don’t know, everyone seemed equal in some sense. With other courses there always was some kind of

competition.” Anne also had fond memories of a teacher who would always have his guitar standing in a corner of his classroom: “I also had a teacher with a guitar with whom we would sing songs. I truly enjoyed it and thought it was relaxing.” The association of being relaxed while working on arts and culture as a child was very valuable to Anne, and now served as a base for her own creative Friday afternoons. She was a strong example of wanting to recreate a feeling of her childhood like Christina, showing how important her time at primary school was for her today.

The ones who shared their memories of the PABO, where students are taught how to become teachers, were Christina, Rianne, Merel, and Anne. Rianne only mentioned that, while studying CMV, they told her at an internship that she should get her teaching certificate. And so she did. However, while attending the PABO for several evenings a week, her interest in arts, culture and education still had not found their place. “I thought everything was stupid.” Her turn came when a friend of her father, who at the time was principal at the school she still worked nowadays, invited her to come to his school instead. “And then I thought: oh, it is actually fun here. And now I am still here. Now I finally am, with becoming a cultural coordinator and all, back to what I genuinely wanted.” For Rianne, it were not necessarily the classes, but rather a school that turned her around and made her realize that this was what she truly wanted. Her interest in culture at the time was not enough to make her decide to become a primary teacher. It was standing in front of a class that sparked both her interest in culture, and her determination to do better than the primary teachers from her childhood.

Merel also did not remember a lot in particular about the HBS, a predecessor of the PABO, but one mandatory visit to Boijmans: “We had to sit on folding chairs in front of a painting for three quarters of an hour. And I have to tell you: I dreaded it terribly.” Also Anne mentioned that she did not really receive any valuable lessons in arts and culture: “Well, I can barely remember anything about it. Of course that is not a good sign, but drawing I do remember. Somehow that did make an impression, maybe because it was rather practical. With music as well: all the time you hear what you should not do. Show some examples and you will become enthusiastic, or integrate it into courses. I think that would be even better, if they would teach people that. Then people do not have to say: I do not have time for creative stuff. With history we often say that the children have to make an object that represents that time period.” Anne’s critique on valuable and useful information was an indicator for her that the PABO needed to change: “I was not like: I could actually use that. I do think that there has to be a separate education trajectory for that, like a master or something like that. [...] You could only choose between geography, history, and physics to specialize in one of them.” For both Merel and Anne, the PABO was not strong enough to serve as a base for arts education.

On the other hand, Christina had very vivid memories of the PABO and the cultural activities they participated in. She chose to do a minor in arts and culture and enjoyed it a lot, as she and her fellow students were one of the first who could choose arts and culture for a minor. “At the PABO of course we did a lot.

There we went to different cities and museums, thinking of what routes you could take with the children. It was quite wonderful.” Having had all these experiences in different cities and museums, Christina wanted the children she taught to have the same experiences. She made them see that there was more to their world than just their street or neighborhood. “What I actually want, at first is to show them that Rotterdam is bigger. That there is more to see and do. Especially cultural heritage is very important to me, as I think it can help make people feel connected.” Christina is very aware of the possible effects arts education and cultural heritage can have, like Anne was very aware of the relaxing possibilities of their creative Friday afternoons. She used her cultural background and experiences of different cities and museums to make sure she gave the children similar experiences and opportunities, as they were and still are very important to her.

Current teaching practices – open attitude and preparation

Not letting personal experience stand in the way of choosing cultural activities and having the children shape their own opinion was something all teachers mentioned. The same was true for having the children try as many different cultural activities as possible, so they could decide later for themselves what they did and did not like. Christina: “No! I completely – yeah, no – I keep my distance. I pretend I like everything a lot. [Christina laughs] Yes, also if we go to the Maritime Museum.” This was similar to Christina’s attitude towards the children reading comics in class; as long as they read and enjoyed it. It was a good indication of how Christina wanted to teach the children how to deal with culture: culture did not have to be boring, but she wanted the children to discover for themselves how they could enjoy it. This seemed to link back to her childhood playing on the street with all of their multicultural neighbors, and her parents supporting her reading. Having a carefree and supportive environment was something Christina enjoyed when she grew up; it allowed her to experience and accept things on her own. This freedom was the same she offered the children in her class, especially as some of the children came from quite difficult or challenging backgrounds, which will be dealt with later on.

Though travelling was a very important part of her life, Rianne did not tell the children that they must go and travel as well. Xander also did not believe in telling the children what they should think or do when it came to arts and culture, whether they would like it or not. “Discovering it for themselves. Yes, I think it is very important to have them taste and smell as much as possible, without judging it beforehand. And maybe not judge it at all. Because, well, in my opinion culture is not just judgement, but rather experience and a developing process. That is most important I think. And it is so incredibly different for every person, that experience, that you should not try and fill it in for someone else.” Xander’s attitude may have been the result of his parents taking him and his siblings to every church, temple, and mosque on their holidays. His parents may or may not necessarily have liked all these visits as much, but took their children along to let them discover for themselves. Like the parents of Xander, Manu also wanted to introduce the

children to as much disciplines as possible to let them discover for themselves if they liked it. Manu: “I would like the children to get in touch with at least one visit to the museum, theatre, concert, and cinema every year”, whether they would like it or not. In the case of Manu it were the missed opportunities in his childhood that would explain his wish to introduce the children to these different activities at least once. These examples showed how the teachers tried to give the children an equal chance when it came to shaping their opinion on arts and culture, whether they did or did not like the activity.

Merel also tried her best in maintaining an open attitude and introducing the children to as many different cultural or artistic aspects as possible. Because of her position as cultural coordinator at her school, Merel was the one creating for example the learning line in music introductions: “Every group has two disciplines in art, and then I make sure that after eight years they have seen them all. So two times a year they either go out, or an artist visits the classroom and then there is a play, or a visit to a museum. Those kind of things.” She also mentioned how she thought that helping the children get started really sparked their creativity: “Sometimes a child needs a little help, and then you need something, a shape, even if it is just a large piece of paper with a small circle on it, so the child has the courage to start. But it has to be the work of the child and not the teacher. I am allergic to cliché works, so to speak.” Her personal preference for music or drawing did not seem to influence the enthusiasm for day trips to a museum, and thus did not seem to influence the attitude of the children strongly. However, helping a child to get started, as Merel mentioned, might have been very important to keep in mind for all teachers. Merely an open attitude may not always be enough to get started, so a small push might do the trick, as was seen during her childhood when her teacher in arts history nudged her into drawing by making use of his positive attitude.

Openness and equal opportunities for all the children also were important to Anne. She mentioned that not only she, but her colleagues as well perceived the importance of arts education: “I think that the teachers who work here find it very important that the children can develop themselves broadly. We fight the pressure from the people higher up who say mathematics and language are most important. We say that everything is important, everything can give you skills that you might need in the future. [...] With the painting project I work on now, you hear some children being truly fascinated and it would be great if they would eventually end up in that direction. [...] If you are not introduced to something, you simply do not know it exists. By talking about it now, with artists and all, they might think about it. At least they are open to it.” Anne, like Christina, was very aware of the future value of arts education for the children, and wanted to introduce the children to as many activities as possible to make sure the children at least had the chance to decide for themselves whether they liked it or not. What remained very important to Anne was that the activities and opportunities had to fit the level of the children. This was a result of her childhood where she did have many opportunities to discover a museum, but because of the atmosphere did not feel engaged.

The suitable activities she now created for the children resulted in them being fascinated, which Anne was very happy to see.

Preparation for the classes in arts and culture came up during the interview with Xander, Rianne, Merel and Anne, and they all handled it differently. Xander gave an example of showing the children that there was more to Rotterdam than just their street. “For example, as part of that theme week we made a walk through the city: following the Maas all the way up to the Erasmusbridge. And then you notice that – I had not prepared at all. I just had the idea: I will walk across the city and I know it quite well. And I knew quite some things to tell about a lot of places we went to.” In this case Xander relied heavily on his cultural capital when trying to address the children and making them aware that there was more to Rotterdam. He contributed to their cultural capital with this walk, feeling confident that his own cultural capital would be sufficient, which partially may have been a result of his culturally active childhood. It resulted in the children being very enthusiastic and asking questions almost continuously, a result with which Xander was very pleased.

Just like Xander, Merel also did not have to prepare for artistic courses, though in her case she mostly relied on almost forty years of teaching experience: “You know, due to my experience I hardly ever have to prepare something. It may sound a bit arrogant, but sometimes it just comes to me easily. Sometimes I surprise myself. I can think quickly and combine, which is very nice. And I also see, which may be most important I think, how they feel, the children. That is where I have some sort of small talent.” With this approach, Merel could really focus on the children, and help them where they might need it. It resulted in a situation that fitted the children every time, unlike Anne who mentioned how she would have liked to see the museums she visited in her childhood to have a special approach for children. Where it went wrong for Anne and culture in her childhood, Merel tried to adapt culture to the children more, while maintaining a positive and encouraging environment for the children like her arts teacher used to.

Though Manu did not specifically mention how he prepared, he certainly was aware of his own cultural background and the fact that he could not rely on his childhood: “Arts and culture in my childhood can easily be seen as very small, so I cannot always rely on my childhood – until I was sixteen, seventeen even. What I experienced later in the Netherlands, at the PABO, and during my thirty years here at this school, that is more relevant.” Because Manu knew he could not use the little cultural experience he had as a child, he combined his experience with his later accumulated cultural capital to be prepared for his artistic and cultural lessons. This indicated that he now felt confident enough, like Xander, to rely on his own cultural capital when teaching, despite their very different childhood.

On the other hand, Rianne mentioned how she did prepare her class for a visit to the museum in which they would see a certain painting of Dalí. After having had a meeting with the other teachers, where a writer of a book was present who had written about one of the paintings of Dalí, Rianne was very

enthusiastic and wanted to use the book to prepare her class for a visit to that painting. Rianne: “So I read that book in class, resulting in the children knowing very well what the painting was about. And they also knew that Dalí was quite ambiguous, and that he was slightly crazy. [...] But they also knew about the drawers – that they actually represented the inside of someone.” Rianne may have relied on her education concerning CMV and the PABO, which made her decide to prepare her class properly.

Anne made a change during her period as a primary teacher from preparing extensively to relying more on her experience nowadays: “I used to prepare my courses in detail, and then it still goes differently, which of course is not bad at all, you know that happens with children. That is also the fun part. But now I more or less have information in my head, and want that to come out of the children. Sometimes you go a different way, but I do try to hold on to a red line, because they do need a certain amount of knowledge. I prepare that red line, and the facts, and the materials. But sometimes I do not get the materials because one will work with paint, the next with crayons. They know what to get if they want to work with paint, so I do not always put out all the materials. [...] Yes it is experience. Nowadays I only look at the goal and then I think: how will I get there? I get my inspiration from the children and only try to steer them once in a while.” Her childhood and the museums where she was not allowed to touch anything may well have resulted in Anne wanting to adapt arts education to the level of the children as much as possible. At first she prepared it extensively, but her experience helped her make arts education fit the children even better. Her personal history with arts and culture seemed a big stimulant to do the best she could.

Current teaching practices – background of children at home

Besides low income of the parents, sometimes the cultural background of the children caused issues when it came to getting the children to participate actively in artistic or cultural activities. Christina: “And you notice here in the area that Islam is – well, is quite important. And it can be quite difficult to get through. For example I have a child who says: due to my religion I am not allowed to participate in music classes. And they use this as an excuse quite often, because if you turn your back on them then they can find all the popular songs on YouTube, so ...” Another example Christina gave was also quite striking, about a girl not being allowed by her parents to take part in a dancing and singing competition: “Two years ago I had a girl and she would participate every year so very enthusiastically. And in group eight she would not, and I said: hey, what’s up? Well, she said – apparently she was not allowed to participate. She had had her period and – well, apparently that is when you start wearing a headscarf. And then she was – well, she was not allowed to dance any longer. And then I am like: what?” Somehow the children, due to the beliefs of their parents, seemed less open to their dancing classes because of their religion, and for a teacher such as Christina it was hard to decide how to act. Forcing the children to go along might have led to bad-tempered parents, but allowing the behavior could result in more children trying. So it was not just the cultural background of

the teachers that influenced arts and culture education, but also the cultural background in terms of religion of the children that influenced their attitude and openness negatively in this case.

When children were or were not raised with arts and culture, it was clearly visible to the teachers due to the attitude of the children. Christina saw the difference in her class between children with higher educated parents and those with lower educated parents. “But, and unfortunately it are once again the children of higher educated parents and then you think: but I already got them covered, you know? You already have them, you do not have to work too hard for that. And then I think: especially the other children need it more, you know? And that is where it [Christina’s attempts to draw the children of less educated parents into arts and culture] does not succeed. And that I think is very regrettable.” So children with lower educated parents were indeed lagging behind in arts and culture when they get to school, which resulted in more protest and lack of enthusiasm of these children. For Christina, who had very open parents and was more familiar with arts and culture as a child, it may have been even harder to see the children of lower educated parents in her class not participate. She knew the personal value arts and culture could have, and wanted the children of less educated parents to experience that same value. The distance between them and the rest of the children with higher educated parents was very visible, as the other primary teachers noted as well.

Manu saw this difference in parents with higher and lower education when it came to the parents’ willingness to pay their school the voluntary parental contribution. Their reasons not to, according to Manu, were either their education, priorities, or personal situation. “Heh, don’t make me laugh. I have nineteen children and last week I heard from the board that eleven of my children did not pay. That means only eight children paid.” In the more deprived area of Rotterdam, Xander only saw children of less educated parents and what it did to the children. “It is a bit – well, a deprived area you could say. And the children do not leave the area often because there is no support, or money, or whatever reason to develop it somehow. Sometimes they do go to the movies, so they do see the city center. Sometimes they go shopping. But they will not be pushed to go and walk around in Rotterdam, and to talk about what you see all around you.” And although Rianne did not mention any of these problems related to the background of the children, she did see that they in general had less educated parents as well. She described the children in her class as similar to people from the “south of Rotterdam. [...] A bit simple. Just a bit unrefined.”

Xander and Christina could relate the position of the children with the more highly educated parents to their own childhood, due to the extensive amount of cultural experiences they had when they were a child. Xander wanted to draw the children out of their deprived environment as was mentioned in the previous paragraph, but Christina had to deal with a slightly different problem: overcoming religious boundaries. Where Xander only struggled to make the children more acquainted with Rotterdam, Christina felt that she really had to try hard to make the children feel Dutch instead of just connected to Rotterdam:

“What I notice is that a lot of children do not feel Dutch any longer. And I think that is so disappointing. That is when I think: you were born and raised here. At least one of their parents was born and raised here. And still they [the children] do not feel it. [...] They need to see that Rotterdam is larger than that, and a part of the Netherlands.” Both Christina and Xander knew how valuable these cultural experiences were, but these two different problems they ran into showed how difficult it can be to get children even introduced to arts and culture in the first place. All of the teachers were aware of the environment the children have, as became clear in the previous paragraphs. No matter what their personal background was, whether it was full of cultural activities or lacking in that respect, all the teachers wanted to make sure that the children got a lot of chances when it came to getting in touch with arts and culture. The examples of Christina and Xander struggling to get the children to be more open and connected, were only two examples of thresholds that could be in the way.

At the same time, while remaining neutral, Xander and Christina hoped that they could give the children the education they needed if they missed it at home, as was mentioned before. The children needed to see there was more to Rotterdam than just their street, like Xander who tried to talk with the children about “current affairs, history, and politics” as much as possible. Depending on the area, religion, and education of the parents, Xander and Christina felt more or less responsible for raising the children properly during their hours at school. Xander: “Yes. I think most of the personal development happens here, at school. And maybe that is almost arrogant to truly think it is, as they are only here for seven, eight hours a day. The rest of the day they are home. But this is a place where they are corrected at everything, get compliments for everything, get stimulated to work together, but at the same time learn to work independently, solve problems, develop talents.” Both Xander and Christina knew or sensed that at home sometimes these topics were not dealt with at all. They wanted to help making the children more aware of different aspects that eventually contributed to their citizenship, but they were also very aware that they are walking a tight rope and need to remain neutral all the time.

But where Xander apparently did not run into considerable boundaries when discussing current affairs, history, and politics, Christina was very aware of the religious background of the children in her class, and the influence of the parents in that matter. When it came to talking about current affairs, she felt she had to walk a tightrope. “As a teacher of course you are neutral, so you cannot go and shape someone’s opinion. But you can give them [the children] options from which they can choose. That is possible, you can present them different scenarios and hope that they will find their own way eventually.” The last thing she wanted was to insult the parents by telling their children something different, but as she said, remaining completely neutral was very difficult. This was very different from how her parents raised her, as they were always very open about things, such as their belief in the Islam: “Later it turned out that there were all kinds of different distinctions within the Islam. [...] They [Christina’s parents] never made a distinction, and

never really told us. Usually they said: when someone acts good, he is a good man. And that was all.” It may have been exactly this difference in parenting that made it difficult for Christina to find a balance. Though both Xander and Christina were concerned with raising the children in a certain way by connecting them to Rotterdam or talking about current affairs with them, Christina ran into more complex situations with regard to the background of the children.

On the other hand, Merel and Anne who taught at a Dalton school, were aware of the background of the children in a different way: the parents of their children were culturally active. Anne noticed how having culturally active parents positively influenced diversity in creative works of the children: “If I look at what they make it is all very diverse, which is very beautiful, but it also has quite some quality to it. I hardly ever hear them say: I do not know how, or what to do. And that may be a result of their situation at home. It does indeed stand out, that there are a lot of parents who are active in culture. [...] There are a lot of children who go to music lessons, or play some kind of instrument.” It seemed that the parents in that area indeed succeeded in introducing their children to arts and culture in such a way that the children were already influenced by their parents positively, unlike Anne and her father taking her to museums where she was not allowed to do anything that was fun. But instead of leaving arts education for what it was, this already more open attitude of the children encouraged Anne to work on their attitude even more and make sure that they would see the enjoyable things in arts and culture, perhaps to make sure that they would not have similar experiences like Anne had in her childhood, which would take away their enthusiasm.

Merel attributed the rather large amount of musically talented children to their parents who were culturally active as well: “Well, I think about twenty-five percent of the children is [musically] talented, but we also have a lot of parents who have a musical or cultural background. Artistic background so to say. Some work at SKVR, and even the director of the theatre has a child here at school. And then you try to use those talents as well to explore opportunities.” It made it easier for Merel to give arts education, because the children seemed more used to it. However, she did not notice a clear difference between the children with culturally active or non-active parents: “No, because we have openly accessible classes as well in both dance and music, and if you see how many people [parents] are watching, it is a lot.” So though not all children were raised with a lot of arts and culture at home, their parents were very open and supportive, allowing their children to develop themselves and their own interests. As long as parents were open to their child exploring arts and culture, the background of the child had no noticeable influence on the attitude.

Current teaching practices – culture as part of all courses

Rianne, Christina, Manu, Anne, and Merel thought that culture was not a specific course, but should be or already was interwoven in other topics that were taught at school. Of course there were music and drawing classes, but eventually the teachers would like to see culture implemented in all the courses they taught.

Manu: “In the classroom I mostly try during lessons of geography, history, language, spelling, and comprehension of the news. It mostly is about the artistic elements that can shape lessons. [...] It would be nice if you have a lesson in language and there immediately is a lesson in art matched to it.” Though it was not realized yet by Manu or any one of the other teachers to implement arts and culture into every lesson, it certainly was a goal to get it implemented in the future, as for some courses it may have been easier to connect them to culture than others.

Whether they had had extensive or very little cultural education when they were a child, Rianne, Christina, Manu, Anne, and Merel thought that culture should be part of every course. As mentioned before, culture had proven its value to all of them, whether it was earlier or later on in their lives. Now they all wanted to give the children they taught a chance to discover what culture could mean to them. The primary teachers wanted to show how culture was more than just a visit to the museum, but that it was part of the everyday lives people live. Anne had her own way of inserting culture into other courses: “I also do not just teach all courses separately, but I do not know how my colleagues do it. For example, within spelling we do Pictionary. We try to depict things, you know, to integrate it [arts and culture] into other courses.” Though not all schools have implemented arts and culture yet in all their classes, it certainly was an ongoing process. Just like Rianne said: “It [culture] is not a class. It is – just a way to be part of the world.”

Contributing to that ongoing process was one of the tasks of Merel, because she was cultural coordinator of her school. “Visual arts I think could use an impulse. So now I am working on a plan, based on our Dalton structure and the spirit of collaboration: a buddy system where my colleagues are buddies. Now I am the buddy of a colleague of group 5. It is some sort of pilot, so to say. During the children’s book week we worked together, where they [children of group 5] read to the toddlers. During Sinterklaas we exchanged groups and made hats and other creative things. Around Christmas they [children of group 5] performed a play for us. That is what I would like to implement: that all groups have a buddy for three months or a year.” Seeing that visual arts was getting rather old-fashioned in its current shape, Merel came up with the plan to make it more exciting and up-to-date. Having memories of her very strict primary school may have helped her wanting to update the program. It now depended upon her pilot to see if it would be expanded throughout the entire school, but the plan was exciting and new when it came to reshaping arts and culture in primary school. It would open visual arts and it would be harder for primary teachers to fall back on doing the same activities every year because it could combine two different groups.

Xander was different on this matter and did not mention a personal drive to insert arts and culture into every course he taught. He was quite satisfied with the program the school already had. However, this program may have been an indicator of a different aspect when it came to giving arts education: insecurity. In his case, the school had three programs each year of thirteen weeks in which the children would be introduced to a specific activity, such as dance, theatre, or yoga. These courses were given by different

people, as Xander explained: “The supply is quite large with a lot of people from this school, who had developed themselves in certain disciplines. But we also hire people, like from SKVR.” This indicated that only those teachers who felt capable enough, were willing to teach certain activities. It implied that the people from SKVR were needed to complete or expand the supply, because the teachers felt not confident enough to give certain subjects. Though it was not specifically mentioned by Xander, insecurity about personal skills may have been the reason why some of his colleagues decided not to give artistic or cultural classes that were part of the program. In this case, the help of professionals was asked to make sure the program was extensive enough.

Current teaching practices – developing talent

Every school had its own program to support the children at an individual level. At one school it was called “six plus”, at the other “talent support”. Children received lessons from specialists, or got individual help from tutors respectively. Schools worked together with a lot of cultural organizations in Rotterdam to organize these lessons, of which Villa Zebra, Maas Theater en Dans, and SKVR are a few examples. Sometimes the children got to choose what they wanted to do, but at other moments they were challenged to do something out of their comfort zone, and introduced to something new. At the school of Manu, they had a program like that as well: “Some children get enrichment, some children get extra help. But there are also moments where the tutors first talk to the child and that is when hidden talents come up and are immediately understood. So it is very broad. One is happy with an experiment, whereas the other is happy with arithmetic help.” There was more individualized attention for the children in order to ensure they got better education than the teachers sometimes had when they were young. For Manu the reason he was so supportive of the program was partially because of personal regret, like the parents of Xander had which resulted in them pushing Xander to follow music class for a year. Manu did not get the cultural education he would have wanted, and now wanted to give the children in his class the best he could manage.

Anne mentioned how she thought the structure of Dalton helped the children develop themselves: “Creativity is more sparked and used I think, because the children can determine for themselves how they achieve a goal. Eventually that creativity is needed for music, dancing, art, and what not. If you always sit passively and receive what you have to do, then you do not learn how to make your own choices and discover things.” Learning the children to think for themselves and determine how they want to achieve the goal resulted in a lot more creative freedom. She then gave an example of how she wanted the children to make a creative work based on Van Gogh: “They do not just have to make things, but they should know what his inspiration was. They still get to make their own work, but use his technique. With Van Gogh that results in using dots and stripes, but how you make it, how big your piece of paper is, and what materials you pick is all up to you. I think that that is important. Letting the children express themselves instead of

forcing them to go one direction.” The structure of the school allowed for the children to develop their talents in every course they got, which was more extensive than the specific talent programs of the other schools. This, in combination with the drive Anne had to make sure arts education would fit the children this resulted in the enjoyable Friday afternoons where the children could work on their own ideas with the materials they chose themselves.

Merel gave the example how she thought having a specialized teacher for music really allowed the children to explore their musical talents, like her arts history teacher helped her develop her talent for drawing: “We have a teacher for music, Tuesday all day and Thursday from eleven in the morning she is here, so all groups get music. [...] For groups one until four it is mostly singing, instruments that deal with rhythm and their bodies. Groups five and six get stringed instruments on Mondays. Violins, basses, but the thing is: they do not get to take them home for practice. There are some downsides, not all children like it as much. [...] In De Doelen they have a concert where they will play their instruments. And that is how we are working on it all year long. And in groups seven and eight we have singing classes again. [...] She really is very good, especially in kindergarten she is working really well on developing voices.” The specialized teacher adapted her working methods for each group specifically, making sure that the youngest children would learn to use their voices and get a sense for rhythm. Though it may only have been a few hours a week for the children, the incentive of getting to play in De Doelen was exciting.

These examples showed that it still were the teachers who played the most important role when it came to implementing the learning line. No matter what the goal of arts education may have been, it depended on the enthusiasm and energy of the teacher for its specific content, and how the children were introduced to arts and culture. So in this case, attitude was indeed decisive in what education the children received and how much arts and culture was applied to make the children feel part of the world instead of just their street.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion and discussion

Conclusion

The question that guided this research was: what is the impact of the cultural background of current primary teachers in and around Rotterdam on their practice of, and attitude towards arts and culture education? Despite interviewing only six primary teachers, it was clear that they all were shaped by their personal background. Parental regret from not pursuing a certain talent was one of the first factors that influenced the cultural and artistic background of the primary teacher as a child, as was indicated by Xander's childhood. Some parents might push their children more than others to pursue a lost talent, depending on their level of regret as illustrated by Roese and Summerville (2005), but the respondents in the current study showed some gratitude towards the parents when they were older. Although Xander may not have enjoyed it as a child, in hindsight there was gratitude for his parents, who went through the trouble of spending time, money, and energy to give him the opportunities they themselves missed. Parental regret could thus help open up the habitus of a primary teacher as a child for arts and culture.

However, Xander also noted how he thought his parents did not try hard enough, as he saw culture as learning to eat olives: "at some point you will love it.". This was contradictory to his current approach in the classroom: he would not push culture, but was at some level grateful for his parents pushing him as a child. Manu also wanted to introduce the children in his class to as many different aspects of arts and culture, whether they would like it or not, as they too, like eating olives, might learn to appreciate it when they grew older. Christina also learned how to appreciate culture through continuous exposure, as she could not read the books of her father yet, but eventually came to love them as well. So in her case, she also learned to appreciate culture like learning how to eat olives. And although Anne did get to experience a lot of museums, she did not learn to like them because they were not adjusted properly, which explains why she now was very focused on making sure her arts education would fit the children she taught. Yet she too picked up playing the piano again when she was older, so eventually her compulsory piano lessons did possess some value whether she liked it or not.

Growing up with many experiences in arts and culture now resulted in awareness for Xander and Christina that their childhood had been very valuable. Their memories indicated that their family played a large role in shaping their habitus (Bourdieu, 1968), and that it indeed left "its mark during the rest of one's life" (Kraaykamp & Van Eijck, 2010, p. 210). It had contributed to personal enrichment, but according to Xander a wealthy and easy childhood also could have led to missed opportunities: challenges for a child were valuable as well. However, as was noted by Merel and Anne: these activities needed to be fit for children in order to engage them properly. Merel had to watch a painting on a folding chair for almost an

hour, and Anne was not allowed to touch anything in the museums. These were obviously experiences that could have contributed more to their cultural capital if they had been adapted (Efland, 1979; Bruner, 1966).

On the other hand, for Manu, Rianne, and Merel who did not grow up with arts and culture, it nowadays could result in something similar to parental regret, as was seen with Manu. He now wanted the best for the children he taught because he did not have it as a child. Manu wanted to make sure that the next generation did get all the opportunities they deserved. Preferably every aspect of arts and culture at least should have been introduced to the children once, so they could form their own opinion about it. For both Xander and Manu, there was some form of regret related to their upbringings, of which one childhood was rich with arts and culture and the other missed out on it almost completely.

Having culturally supportive parents, such as those of Xander, Christina, and Anne, and non-culturally supportive parents, such as those of Manu, Rianne, and Merel, eventually resulted in equally culturally active teachers with their own approaches. All primary teachers eventually chose to implement more arts and culture in their lessons, indicating that the influence of experiences for young children might not leave an overwhelming mark for the rest of their lives like Kraaykamp and Van Eijck stated (2010). His cultural childhood made it easier now for Xander to make decisions concerning his personal development. However, not having culturally active parents did also result in a culturally active teacher. Rianne chose to make decisions for herself when she was eighteen, changing her environment through travels, and her habitus through those travels. A clear difference between Rianne and Christina when it came to their love for culture was that Christina was already open to arts and culture while attending the PABO, which resulted in her choosing an extra minor in arts and culture. For Rianne, this love for culture emerged later: only when Rianne taught at a school during her internship at the PABO, she found her place and could combine it with her love for culture.

Otherwise, there have not been clear differences between the primary teachers having culturally supportive parents and those who did not have culturally active parents. Those who were more privileged in terms of cultural experiences turned out not to be stricter or more precise in what they wanted to offer compared to those who hardly had experienced arts and culture in their childhood. But in the case of Xander, it meant he felt confident enough to improvise his lesson, and for Christina it developed into more extensive ideas about the impact of arts education. It seemed that, as soon as the love for culture had found a place, it would evolve on its own and shape their habitus. The one factor that did show up was regret for the primary teachers who did not get to experience arts and culture when they were young. That regret now resulted in Manu and Rianne wanting to be sure that their pupils would seize every opportunity they would get.

Up to a certain age, parents were indeed the ultimate role models for children (Bourdieu, 1968). However, the older the children grew, the more decisions they made for themselves. In a certain way, teachers could also fulfill that part of being a role model. As a child, Xander agreed completely with his

teacher of group eight, and was striving to be as respectable and supportive as him when he became teacher himself. On the other hand, the primary teacher could also make a child decide that things should be completely different if he or she was a teacher, as was seen with Rianne. She was very sure that she wanted to do things very differently from what she experienced at primary school as a child, as her extensive preparation for the Dalí painting showed. Rianne was determined to make arts education an enjoyable experience. It can be activities or an attitude that are or are not copied from the role model.

Not just the background of the teachers, but also the background of the children determined how open they were to arts and culture education, although the indicators Luehrman (2002) noted remain the same: “the cultural climate of the home, college art classes, visits to art museums or galleries, use of art images in teaching, and the influence of colleagues who teach art.” (p. 209). In Christina’s classroom, religion was used as an excuse by the children, or a prohibition by the parents. Either way it resulted in the child not having to participate in a cultural activity. Parents played a large role herein, as they told their children what rules they should follow when it came to religion and these could be consequential for school as well. Again, family is a large influence on the habitus of any child (Bourdieu, 1968). For teachers, it was hard to intervene, as it sometimes clearly was an excuse made up by the children, because they have to remain neutral teachers and should not upset the parents. It would be very damaging for the reputation of both the primary teacher and the school if some children had told their parents that their primary teacher thought they use their religion is an excuse. After all, the parents would see it as a personal insult.

It was up to the teacher to raise the children with the parents, which was in itself quite a responsibility. It was clear that the schools indeed provided knowledge, insight, and taught skills (Haanstra, 2016, p. 4). Xander saw how some children, due to their relatively deprived background, sometimes were raised very differently at home. The parents, for example, would not be able to help with homework, or had little time for their children, leaving the children free to do whatever they want. Again, the neutral position of the teacher remained of importance, but responsibility for the child usually took the upper hand. All in all, parents could thus really limit the openness of their child when it came to arts and culture, and it was up to the teacher to find a balance between introducing the child to as many activities as possible and not offending the parents or their religion. This meant that teachers such as Christina and Xander were satisfied with transferring every little bit of arts and culture that was possible, whether it was getting the children to read comic books or walk around in Rotterdam.

On the other hand, those children with culturally active parents, as was mentioned by Anne and Merel, seemed more creative, open, and enthusiastic when it came to arts education. It was the reverse effect Bourdieu mentioned: lower class children being unable to keep up and taking “refuge in a kind of negative withdrawal which upsets teachers” (Bourdieu, 1974, p. 41), but at the same time confirmed that schools indeed worked well for those children who already had the right background, and that all the

children seemed to fit in because they belonged to the same cultural group (Nash, 1990). The openness of the children in combination with the structure the Dalton school, resulted in very creative and open processes. It allowed the teachers to set the children free to work for themselves, given a few criteria the works had to fulfill, and did not result in the fear of Efland (1979, p. 25) that “a given method of writing objectives for instruction may subtly impose an unintended bias on the content of instruction.”.

The primary teachers preferred to have culture interwoven into every course. Having classes in drawing was of course still part of the curriculum, but discussing language, spelling, and mathematics through a cultural phenomenon can help the children understand some topics better, and it helped the children in their personal development and awareness of the world like Rianne said: “It [culture] is not a class. It is – just a way to be part of the world”. Cultural activities such as going to the museum could follow after a few weeks of preparation, working on one of the paintings as a topic that returned in every course, like Rianne read the book about a painting of Dalí to her class as part of that preparation. For Rianne, it resulted in very enthusiastic children when they saw the painting in real life. It opened the children up more gently and for a longer period of time, eventually enriching every course they would follow in the future. Arts education in no case resulted in the children feeling “isolated, vulnerable and inadequate as a result of their involvement with such activity” (Holt, 1997, p. 87).

All in all the personal family background of the primary teachers and the environment the children they teach grew up in were important factors, and affected the decisions primary teachers made in class when it came to arts and culture. Not only were the concepts cultural capital and habitus impacted by family and education, but they also were clearly visible with the culturally more active parents (family impact) in combination with the structure of the Dalton school (education), and resulted in more open and creative children (habitus). For Merel and Anne, this meant they merely had to guide the children and let them discover arts and culture for themselves. Other factors that influenced the teachers were personal or parental regret, following in the footsteps of a role model, or wanting to do things completely differently.

Taking part in no cultural activities as a child like Merel, or taking part in a lot of cultural activities as a child like Xander, in the end all resulted in culturally active teachers. These six teachers showed how they all went their own direction, and eventually all ended up at the same destination. The early socialization by the family and later on primary school had different influenced on the pathways, though, as expected, the family seemed more influential and important than the memories of primary school. These memories all played a role in shaping the cultural background of the primary teacher. Insecurity, however, did not seem relevant when it came to giving arts education, and may only have been indicated by Xander when talking about his colleagues. Whatever the factors were, in the end it seemed that when a spark of interest for culture emerged, whether the primary teacher was a child or already becoming an adult, it was enough to make them want to develop their cultural background and that of the children they taught.

Discussion

Because not all primary teachers saw their time at primary school as a distinctive factor that shaped them, this opens up opportunities for further research. At least two new opportunities, like the reasons why family and current education were such important factors, can be further investigated, but also the lack of memories concerning primary and high school is worth looking into. This would require longer in-depth interviews, or perhaps two or three in-depth interviews with teachers so that memories can be sparked. It happens often that people after the interview get reminded of more related subjects and experiences, which would provide more detailed information for the research if given. The presence of only one religious school in this research meant that a comparison between different kinds of religious schools could not be made, which also opens up possibilities for further research. Schools of different religions could have different content for arts education, which could be both explored through interviews with the teachers, or observation of the lessons in school.

Another important note for Rotterdam specifically, is the social status of each area. In the more deprived areas, schools get more subsidy to help raise the children properly and give them all the possible opportunities to get in touch with arts and culture. It is up to the school to decide where the extra money goes specifically, but there seems a tendency to at least reserve some of it for arts and culture, as it helps raise awareness among the children that the world is much bigger than just the street they live in. Further research could focus on different cities in the Netherlands, and look for differences and similarities in how these different schools implement the learning lines and what they offer when it comes to arts education.

Depending on the willingness of teachers to do the interview meant that the teachers who responded were in general quite open to arts and culture themselves. There has not been a teacher among my informants who mainly had negative experiences and did not work on arts and culture in his or her class. Also, the limited amount of time due to KCR wanting to make contact first, meant that only six primary teachers were able to their information. Three of the teachers who were interviewed were also the cultural coordinator of the school. This meant that this research mostly dealt with teachers who had quite a positive, and not a neutral or negative attitude towards arts and culture. Due to the similar attitudes of all teachers, linking their early socialization and the impact of it on their attitude was very difficult. This research showed how the teachers all took their own pathway and ended up as culturally active teachers. The observed differences between the teachers were very limited, which means that clear connections were difficult to make. This is thus an opportunity for further research to step in and try to get a larger and more diverse group of respondents, that will give more insight in early socialization and the connections to the current attitude.

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Appendix A

These were the questions that were used for guiding the interview.

Family history (6)

- What do you see as arts and culture?
- What did you experience culturally yourself when you were younger (ballet – telling stories in family)?
- Have any traditions been passed on?
- Did you used to participate in cultural or artistic activities (with the family or alone)? If yes, which activities and how did you like them?
- Could you tell about some activities that have made a good/bad impression on you?
- What do you see as cultural background that you have from your environment as a child?

History in education (7)

- How did you experience primary school/high school/PABO? What (cultural) courses did you follow?
- How important were these courses in the classroom/education in general/compared to other courses?
- Have there been cultural activities while you were in school?
- Did you used to have a good example/role model of a teacher who left a good impression?
- Are there things you did/did not take from your arts education? Why?
- What do you think of arts education nowadays?

Current education (11)

- What is your motivation to use [...] method and what is the influence of this method on the children?
- What do you hold on to when giving arts education? Do you have examples or principles guiding you?
- Do you think arts education should convey norms and values or is this task for other courses?
- What role do you as a teacher/the school have in arts education concerning the children?
- Do you see differences with the arts education you received and the arts education that is given nowadays? If yes, which differences?
- What do you want/do not want to convey with arts education?

- Are you aware of the values you can convey? If yes, how so?
- What do you see as valuable/invaluable when it comes to arts education?
- How do you contribute to arts education? Not just teaching, but perhaps organizing activities for the school?
- How do you value arts education?
- What is the position of arts education in general education?

Appendix B

Some background information of the primary teachers. In order to maintain their privacy and that of the school, the name of the teacher is a fake and the name of the school is not mentioned.

Name	Experience in teaching	Gender	Grew up in	School	Position
Xander	Less than 10 years	Male	The Netherlands	Catholic	Primary teacher of group 8
Christina	More than 10 years	Female	The Netherlands	Public	Primary teacher of group 7 / 8, and cultural coordinator
Manu	More than 30 years	Male	Turkey	Public	Primary teacher of group 5 / 6
Rianne	More than 10 years	Female	The Netherlands	Dalton	Primary teacher of group 5, and cultural coordinator
Anne	More than 10 years	Female	The Netherlands	Dalton	Primary teacher of group 6 / 7
Merel	Almost 40 years	Female	The Netherlands	Dalton	Primary teacher of group 1 / 2, and cultural coordinator