

Case Studies





Case study:

Video Interaction Guidance in Teacher Education

Karel de Grote University College, Antwerp, Belgium







Context

This learning activity took place at Karel de Grote University College (KdG), Antwerp, Belgium from 2nd – 6th October, 2017. Project partner Leen Stoffels and colleagues facilitated an invaluable range of learning experiences for our cross-sectoral team of teachers and teacher educators. With a view to providing appropriately for the education of all students, including those experiencing difficulties arising from social / emotional factors, the team focused on the concept of pedagogical sensitivity as fundamental to learning in school. The teacher education strategy of **Video Interaction** Guidance (VIG) and the manner in which it is employed at KdG to provide for and enhance the development of sensitive. caring, empathetic teachers, was central to our study there. During the course of the week we engaged in a variety of workshops facilitated by a range of expert practitioners. Our learning from these activities was complemented by observation of a range of inclusive and special education practices during study visits to primary, secondary and special schools in Antwerp.

Education in Belgium

Federalisation has seen education in Belgium organised relatively independently by three regions since 1989. These three regions of Belgium are: Flanders (the Dutch language area), Wallonia (the French language area) and a small German speaking area which has no specific name. While each of these federated states has its own region-specific government, the Belgian government regulates general matters, e.g. the start and end of compulsory education (between the ages of 6 and 18), the minimal conditions for issuing degrees, etc. Article 24 of the Belgian Constitution guarantees free education, the right of parents to choose schools for their children and the (philosophical, ideological and religious) neutrality of government-provided schools.

Education in Flanders

The Flemish Government oversees education in the Flemish Region and in the bilingual Brussels-Capital Region where the Government of the French Community also has responsibility for education. Within the Flemish government there is a Minister of Education who is responsible for almost every aspect of educational policy, from early childhood to university education. The Flemish Region provides Dutch-language education and also French-language schools in twelve municipalities. There are three education networks in Flanders: Government-provided education; Subsidised public schools (by provinces and municipalities); and Subsidised free schools (mainly affiliated to the Catholic church). The project team visited schools in both the free schools network and in the government-provided education network.

Structure of the Education System

Early childhood education is provided free of charge for children from 2.5 to 6 years. Although not compulsory, almost all children avail of such provision in Flanders. This type of education is multi-faceted in nature and aims to develop children's cognitive, motor and affective skills.

Primary education targets children from age 6 to 12 years, and consists of six consecutive years of study. A child usually starts primary education at the age of 6 (the age at which education becomes compulsory by law). The minimum objectives of primary school education provision considered necessary by the government, are outlined in so called 'attainment targets'.

Young people aged 12 to 18 must enroll in **secondary education**. This is structured as a uniform system in Flanders with specific stages and types of education provision; 'general secondary education', 'technical secondary education', 'secondary arts education' and 'vocational secondary education'. Each of these offers common and optional parts. At the initial stage of secondary schooling students are introduced to a broad range of subjects, Specialisation is offered at the second stage.

Special Education

If students have **special educational needs**, they receive extra attention in the Flemish education system. While traditionally most students with special needs in Flanders have attended special schools, that situation is changing in response to recent legislation ('M' Maatwerk Decree) which advocates mainstreaming with a view to greater inclusivity. The decree outlines measures which allow pupils with specific educational needs to participate fully, effectively and on equal terms in regular schools and classrooms, while delineating more clearly the admission requirements to the different strands of special education. The right of students to reasonable adaptations by the school to their special educational needs will be guaranteed in accordance with the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Higher Education

The following types of **higher education** programmes are offered:

- Bachelor courses, both professional bachelor courses and academic bachelor courses. (Professionallyoriented bachelor courses are offered at colleges of higher education. Academic education comprises bachelor and master courses, which are provided by universities).
- Master's courses
- > Further training programmes
- > Postgraduate and in-service training courses
- > Doctoral programmes

Teacher Education

In Flanders the teacher education programmes offered are professional bachelor programmes leading to the following certificates: -'Teacher - Early Childhood Education', 'Teacher - Primary Education' or 'Teacher - Secondary Education group 1' (i.e. first 3 years of secondary school). These programmes of 180 credits are equivalent and based on a similar set of competences. They are aimed at developing both specific professional knowledge and pedagogical skills The programmes are taught

at colleges of higher education. Teacher candidates who wish to teach at the level of Secondary Education Group 2 (last 3 years of secondary school) are required to attend an additional 60 credit programme at the university or at a centre for adult education.



Teacher Education at KdG

The faculty of Education at Karel de Grote University College has a long history and extensive experience in the provision of Teacher Education programmes. More than 2,500 students are currently enrolled in various teacher education bachelor and master degree programmes. There are fifteen professional Bachelor's degree programmes offered. These comprise degrees in Early Childhood Education, in Pre-primary Education, in Primary Education and in Secondary Education. In addition, the faculty offers Advanced Bachelor's in Education degrees, with options in Special Educational Needs; in Special Education and Remedial Teaching (Primary Education); and in Special Education and

Remedial Teaching (Secondary Education). There is also an International Degree programme and two English Exchange programmes.

With Inclusive Education now a policy priority of the Flemish Ministry of Education, KdG is committed to the preparation of pre- and in-service teachers for inclusive practice in primary- and second-level schools. The Advanced Bachelor's Degree in Special Education (Special Educational Needs Teacher Training) programme has been developed for this purpose. The programme is designed to enable teachers to become more competent and confident in terms of attitudes, knowledge and skills in incorporating diversity in schools. Its ultimate aim is to empower teachers to work effectively in an ever changing world and to become change agents in education. The five competences to be developed by [student] teachers in the programme centre on:

- (1) Planning and coordinating supports for the individual child with special educational needs and his/her environment.
- (2) Differentiating approaches and providing these in accordance with the needs of each child in class.
- (3) Working as a partner with all involved in the school and classroom environment.
- (4) Serving as a coach to colleagues and as a coordinator of change in the school.
- (5) Being reflective and learning from one's own and other's experiences in the practice of education.

Overall, the programme aims to provide for the further development of professionals 'who are passionate about their profession as a special needs teacher or coordinator' and who stand out because of their skillful coaching and innovative pedagogic approach. They have a positive attitude, always act from a deep respect for the child, parents and other stakeholders, and they are committed to a social engagement as change agents. They dedicate themselves to updating their knowledge and repertoire through lifelong learning. Therefore they have a great responsibility in achieving real inclusive education opportunities for ALL children and young people'.

Focusing on Home Background: Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)

In line with the interrelationahip between Education, Social Work and Healthcare courses at KdG, the field of Education incorporates in its programmes for prospective and practising teachers, **a focus on contextual / home background factors** with respect to the children with whom they [will] work. In this regard, a **key teacher education strategy** employed is Video Interaction Guidance (VIG). This approach which was originally employed in Flanders as a means of supporting the welfare of vulnerable families via the use of video for home coaching and training, is now finding its way into the education system and schools there. In 2013-'14 staff of the faculty of Education at KdG were among the first teacher educators in Belgium to be introduced to this method. Several of these teacher educators shared their expertise and ideas with the project team.

Sensitivity, Care, Empathy, Responsiveness: Key qualities in teaching



Bert Murawski, a former teacher who is currently employed as a teacher educator at KdG, facilitated an in-depth consideration by the team, of the key qualities of effective teachers. With reference to his own career spent in school classrooms and administration, where he engaged with children exhibiting a variety of behavioural challenges, Bert described how he had developed an interest in the social / emotional factors underlying these behaviours. He shared his observations on how and why children respond differently to different teachers:

- Children come to school from very diverse home backgrounds and with quite varied experiences of parent / child relationships. This reality may be easily overlooked in our quest for more effective pedagogical strategies.
- > Just as strong emotional 'bonding' between parent and child is crucial in child development, so sensitivity, care, empathy and responsiveness on the part of the teacher can provide for similar bonding with the pupil and hence can more effectively enable the pupil to fulfil his or her educational potential.
- Good social / emotional development facilitates intellectual development.
- The quality of the teacher / pupil relationship is fundamental to effective pedagogical endeavours in school.
- 'Attachment theory' as first outlined by researchers such as Bowlby and Ainsworth in the 1960s and 1970s, may be employed to explain the centrality of the teacher / pupil relationship in education.

Attachment theory

'Attachment Theory' is a psychological model that attempts to describe the dynamics of long-term and short-term interpersonal relationships between humans. It focuses on the relationships and bonds between people, such as between a parent and a child

In the 1960s and '70s John Bowlby demonstrated that nurturance and responsiveness were the primary determinants of attachment. The central theme of this theory is that the primary caregivers who are available and responsive to an infant's needs allow the child to develop a sense of security. The infant knows that the caregiver is dependable, which creates a secure base

for the child to then explore the world. The provision of a 'safe' environment in which children can develop, calls for sensitivity, care, empathy, and responsiveness in the home and school.

Mary Ainsworth expanded greatly on Bowlby's original work, conducting research that revealed the profound effects of attachment on behaviour. A number of studies since then have supported Ainsworth's theory, and have indicated that attachment styles also have an impact on behaviours later in life.

For the project team, the focus of this presentation and our ensuing discussion on the 'person' of the teacher, raised questions about the processes of selection and initial preparation of candidates for teaching and about how teachers are professionally supported on an ongoing basis.

VIG in Teacher Education

In two subsequent workshops facilitated by teacher educators An Leroy (KdG) and Luc Degrand (University College, Leuven-Limburg) we considered the matter of how teacher educators might practically support the development of appropriate personal dispositions in prospective and practising teachers. The use of technology and specifically Video, was considered to offer a valuable means of enabling [student] teachers to reflect on their classroom practices and on their engagements with their students. The challenges [student] teachers often experience with the requirement to 'reflect' on their professional engagements with a view to learning from such reflections are well documented. The team considered how technological advances that have provided ease of access to, and facility with the use of video might facilitate these reflective and learning processes.

Following this discussion, team members undertook an insightful practical exercise that simulated [student] teachers' likely response to the experience when introduced to this technique. Using iPads, we set about video recording one another's responses to a series of questions, and documenting our feelings about this exercise. In the word cloud that subsequently emerged, 'Uncomfortable' was the most common sentiment expressed! We could readily recognise the importance of carefully supporting [student] teachers' introduction to such a teacher education strategy, in terms of both their technological competence with the requirements of the strategy and their personal and professional self-confidence.





Theory and VIG

In a further workshop we studied a mix of valid theories underpinning the strategy of VIG:

- > **Communication Theory:** The value of basic, non-verbal communication.
- > Attachment Theory: The need for sensitivity in engagements between educator and child.
- > **Learning Theory:** Much human behaviour is learned / can be learned.
- > **System Theory:** Context is complex. The importance of multi-dimensionality. Professional distance (rather than immediate judgement) is important.
- > **Empowerment Theory:** The need for self-awareness of own competencies; focusing on actions that work, repeating these; positive learning experiences.

From such theoretical perspectives, video recording presented as a valuable alternative to [student] teachers' written accounts of their professional reflections. We learnt that provided these students feel enabled and secure about the process involved and the manner in which such recordings might subsequently be employed, the removal of the requirement to structure their reflections in written format, has been found to significantly enhance student teachers' professional reflections and learning.

VIG in Practice in KdG

The team explored the variety of VIG strategies that have been employed with some KdG student teachers during their placements in schools over the past four years. In that time, almost all of the schools involved in hosting KdG student teachers for school practice have granted permission for video recording by student teachers in classrooms. The processes employed are as follows:

- > Student teachers work in groups (maximum 5 students per group).
- > They film three moments of their practice in the classroom (beginning, middle and end periods of the day) either a self-recording or one taken by e.g. a host teacher or fellow student teacher.

- > They may use any preferred video recorder (phone, camera, iPad, tablet).
- One video fragment should represent an activity or activities of which they are proud, while the other should serve to raise questions they have about their practice / engagements with school students.
- In groups, the student teachers then share and discuss some of these – (looking repeatedly at the video fragments and sharing multiple interpretations of them).
- > They are then required to summarise what they have learnt

At KdG, the VIG strategy is considered to be "really working", with student teachers much more aware of their competences and dispositions and hence the nature of their engagements with their students. We concluded that the strategy obviously offers student and practising teachers much potential to explore the quality of these engagements in terms of the Pedagogical Sensitivity required to support the learning needs of all their school students and not least those experiencing difficulties arising from social / emotional factors.



The project team was privileged to visit Melgesdreef primary school and the adjoining secondary school (Atheneum MXM) located in the Antwerp suburb of Merksem. These mainstream schools have a combined enrolment of more than 1,000 students. In the course of presentations and discussions with the school principal and staff and during visits to classrooms, we explored the policy and practice of inclusive education at the heart of this impressive campus. We learnt that:

- > The kindergarten / primary school, caters for 600 children aged from 2.5 to 12 years, drawn from 33 different national backgrounds.
- 75% of this school population comes from home contexts deemed to be socio-economically disadvantaged.
- The pupil / teacher ratio in each class is determined in the school on a class by class basis in accordance with the SES (socio-economic status) and learning profiles of the pupils in the class.
- In Antwerp, a school enrolment system is in place to prevent the concentration in any particular school of pupils from backgrounds designated 'disadvantaged', and thus to provide for socio-economic diversity and inclusion in the pupil population of all schools. When deciding where to enrol their child, parents may select up to five possible schools. Having registered this decision with the School Government in Antwerp, their child is subsequently allocated a place in one of the selected schools.

Personalising the Curriculum

In accordance with the four levels of the care system in all Belgian mainstream schools (Basic; More Intensive; Extension of Care / External Support; Highest Level), Melgesdreef school provides a structure of support for children to facilitate their inclusion in mainstream education. Nonetheless, it was emphasised that while the learning objectives designed for the children respect this structure, they are also personalised to take account of individual needs.

School Structure

- Kindergarten 2.5 5 years = 11 classes with teacher + 4 flies
- Primary school 6 -12 years = 19 classes + 5 flies
- Policy: flying team + care coordinator + school leader



Role of the fly team Support at teacher and student levels Work in the classroom, not out of the room (inclusive) Educated in... Helicopter view 4 members of the team, also team coach

School visit Atheneum MXM

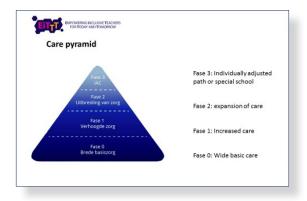
Atheneum MXM, the adjoining second-level school has a current enrolment of more than 400 students. In this school as in all second-level schools in Antwerp, the student population is expected to increase by 30% - 40% in the coming years. As in Melgesdreef primary school, the backgrounds of students in Atheneum MXM are very diverse.

The school's learning programmes are based on the principles of **Universal Design for Learning (UDL).**

Alongside the UDL strategy, tailor-made programmes are drawn up for individual students. These programmes are designed on an ongoing basis by a **school team of 6 – 7 teachers**. In classroom contexts of very considerable diversity, (i.e. in a situation where many different teaching strategies may be required), this team draws up programmes for groups as well as individuals in the class.



Students at Tongelsbos are assigned to classes and particular programmes that accord in the first instance, with their Care Needs.



Visit to Tongelsbos Special School

For the final school visit of this learning week, the project team spent a day at Tongelsbos Special School, courtesy of EiTTT project partners Ilse Van de Vreugde, School Principal, and Kevin Paesmans, School Coordinator. Tongelsbos is a primary and second-level special school located 30km from Antwerp. 160 students are currently enrolled in the primary section of the school, with 220 students in the secondary section. The staff comprises 35 primary teachers, 65 second-level teachers and 25 other staff (paramedical and support personnel).

The school's care team comprises a psychologist, a psychologist / pedagogue, a social worker, a speech therapist, a physiotherapist and a 'time out' worker (to support students' needs for time out of class / school arising from behavioural difficulties). The variety of 'time out' options offered and the colour-coded card system involved (in accordance with the level of support required) was of much interest to the project team. These supports also included provision for time away from the school in another school facility or with external school partners. Several teachers also serve on a 'Student Guidance' Support Team' and an 'Autism Spectrum Disorder Support Team'. **Universal Design for Learning** underpins all activities in the school.



The focus of educational provision at Tongelsbos is on Vocational Training, with students offered choices from a wide range of course options within their individual capacities. The project team was privileged with opportunities to observe teaching and learning in classrooms, and to explore the school's extensive gardening and animal care facilities, which are features of the school's programme for all students.











Other School Supports at Tongelsbos Include:

- Variety of Playgrounds (some very 'quiet', some 'busier' in accordance with students' needs)
- Adapted Internships (teacher accompanies child for some of the internship)
- Newsletter for Parents (sharing experiences, challenges)
- Regional support to mainstream schools: The institution of the 'M Decree' in Flanders and hence the policy of including students in mainstream schooling if at all possible, has presented various challenges to the provision of appropriate mainstream education. The most pressing of these challenges is the importance of ensuring that mainstream teachers are satisfactorily prepared to support the learning needs of all students including those with special educational needs. To that end, in September 2017, regional support networks were introduced. This sees teachers from special schools providing support in the form of information, advice and guidance on teaching strategies, to teachers in local mainstream schools. We learnt that teachers from Tongelsbos together with teachers from other nearby special schools form such a team of 18 that provides support to 200+ teachers in mainstream schools in the region.
- Co-teaching: This strategy was introduced at Tongelsbos School following the EiTTT team's indepth study of the approach during our visit to Lukkari School, Finland in February 2017. Further co-teaching is planned at Tongelsbos, particularly in classes where students have emotional / behavioural difficulties. Co-teaching is also practised by the team of teachers from Tongelsbos during collaboration with, and provision of support to mainstream teachers in nearby schools.
- Discussions are under way with local schools to develop 'Inclusive' Tongelsbos Departments in these schools. Where appropriate, students from Tongelsbos would attend these schools for one or more days at a time, with a view to their eventual full inclusion in mainstream schooling.



In Summary

- > The team focused on the concept of Pedagogical Sensitivity as fundamental to learning in school. We acknowledged that just as strong emotional 'bonding' between parent and child is crucial in child development, so high levels of sensitivity, care, empathy and responsiveness on the part of the teacher can provide for similar bonding with the pupil, and hence can more effectively enable the pupil to fulfil his or her educational potential.
- We recognised that the need for such appropriate personal dispositions in teachers is now more critical than ever, given the diverse population of students in contemporary mainstream classrooms. In this regard we learnt that in accordance with the trajectory of contemporary societal developments, and hence a strategic interrelationship between Education, Social Work and Healthcare courses at KdG, the Faculty of Education incorporates in its programmes for prospective and practising teachers, an emphasis on the impact of contextual / home background factors on school students' educational development.
- We concluded that the ability and willingness to review and reflect deeply on the quality of their engagements with their students and the possible factors, including home background factors, impacting on these, is key to the development of appropriate sensitivity and responsiveness in teachers.

- The challenges [student] teachers often experience with the requirement to 'reflect' on their professional engagements with a view to learning from such reflections are well documented. The team considered how technological advances that have provided ease of access to, and facility with the use of video might facilitate these reflective and learning processes.
- The teacher education strategy of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) and the manner in which it is employed at KdG to provide for, and enhance the development of sensitive, caring, empathetic teachers, was central to our study.
- We concluded that the VIG strategy offers student and practising teachers much potential to explore the quality of these engagements in terms of the Pedagogical Sensitivity required to support the learning needs of all their school students and not least those experiencing difficulties arising from social / emotional factors.
- We realised the need to carefully support [student] teachers' introduction to a teacher education strategy such as VIG, in terms of both their technological competence with the requirements of the strategy and their personal and professional self-confidence.
- Our in-depth theoretical and practical learning during the week was complemented by observation of a range of exemplary inclusive and special education practices in primary, secondary and special schools in Antwerp.

Key Learning during this Activity Week:

Video Interaction Guidance in Teacher Education

One of the two main highlights of this week was VIG as a maens of enabeling (student) teachers to observe, reflect on and learn from key aspects of their engagement with students in the classroom.

Preparing the teacher mentally and materially

It is of great essence that the (student) teacher knows in advance what the purpose of filming themselves is. Is has to be clear that this is not used for of evaluation but is used for selves reflection and to observation the key aspects of their engagement with students in the classroom.

The material set-up is easy and you don't have to use high end video material. A simple tabled or smartphone is enough. The only thing you have to beware of is the sound. Put your devise somewhere where there are almost no disturbing sound of the neighbourhood.

During the lesson

There is no use for long videos of the lesson. The learning is done in the small difficult parts of the lesson. A teacher knows when the students are in a change and simply put on the camera for a few minutes when that happens.

The observation

There are several options to do the observation afterword's but always keep in mind that this is a positive way of observing a (student) Teacher.

It is possible that the (student) teacher does this learning themselves with the help of some key questions.

- > The second option is that they do this in a pear group. The (student) teacher has to know this in advance in order to ensure themselves.
- > The third option is to do this with a teacher teacher or a coach. But in this case there is a thin line between observation and coaching.

In each of the cases it is important to look toe the video a couple of times to see all the different aspects that happens whit the interaction of the students.

Books and articles

The sensitive teacher



1) A New Perspective on the Effects of First-Grade Teachers on Children's Subsequent Adult Status by Harvord education.

EIGIL PEDERSEN, THÉRÈSE ANNETTE FAUCHER, WILLIAM W. EATON In this article Eigil Pedersen, Thérèse Annette Faucher, and William W. Eaton

have taken on one of the most difficult questions in educational research: the impact of the classroom teacher on children's adult status. The authors detail the results of a research project of unconventional methodology and Unusually long duration. They sought originally to examine atypical IQ changes but came to focus on the enduring effects of one remarkable first-grade teacher. Drawing upon the idea of the "self-fulfilling prophecy," the authors relate the effects of teachers' attitudes and resultant behavior to the subsequent adult status of sixty children. Their conclusion, in contrast to that of many recent studies, is that the classroom teacher may have a significant effect on children's chances for success in later life.

2) 'Teaching is a relationship, a way of being with and relating to others, and not merely an expression of having mastered a set of delivery skills.'

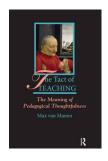
(Bullough & Gitlin, 1994).

3) 'The purpose of any pedagogical act is not a product nor a result but simply the act itself.'

(Prof. Dr. Max van Manen, Alberta University Alberta (Canada)1992.

4) In the pedagogical relation-in the experience of being a father, a mother, a teacher – a part of our life finds its fulfilment. 'The pedagogical relation is not merely a means toward an end, it finds its meaning in its own existence, it is a passion with its own pains and pleasures. Similarly, for the child the pedagogical relation is a part of life itself, and not merely a means for growing up-for that the pedagogical relation lasts too long, and how many do not experience that aim! Among the few relationships granted to us during our lives, such as friendship, love, and fellowship in the

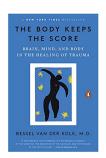
workplace, perhaps the relationship to a real teacher is the most basic one, one which fulfils and shapes our being most strongly. (Nohl, 1982).



5) The Tact of Teaching The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness

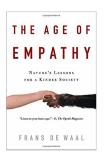
This thought-provoking book offers an original perspective on the meaning and practice of teaching as a reflective activity. Max van Manen defines pedagogical thoughtfulness as the way that educators grow, change, and

deepen themselves as a result of reflecting on living with children. He shows how the processes of teaching require tact an interpretive intelligence, a practical moral intuitiveness, a sensitivity and openness toward the child's subjectivity, and an improvisational resoluteness in dealing with children. All teachers — current and future — who are concerned about the "caring" aspects of their work will be inspired by this text.



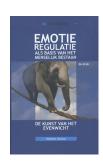
6) Renowned trauma expert Bessel van der Kolk has spent over three decades working with survivors. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, he transforms our understanding of traumatic stress, revealing how it literally rearranges the brain's wiring—specifically areas dedicated to pleasure, engagement, control, and trust. He shows how these

areas can be reactivated through innovative treatments including neurofeedback, mindfulness techniques, play, yoga, and other therapies. Based on Dr. van der Kolk's own research and that of other leading specialists, *The Body Keeps the Score* offers proven alternatives to drugs and talk therapy - and a way to reclaim lives **and to organize schools.**



7) By studying social behaviours in animals, such as bonding, the herd instinct, the forming of trusting alliances, expressions of consolation, and conflict resolution, Frans de Waal demonstrates that animals-and humans-are "preprogrammed to reach out." He has found that chimpanzees care for mates that are

wounded by leopards, elephants offer "reassuring rumbles" to youngsters in distress, and dolphins support sick companions near the water's surface to prevent them from drowning. From day one humans have innate sensitivities to faces, bodies, and voices; we've been designed to feel for one another.



8) Regulation of emotion

As a basis for human existence 'the art of balance'