Easing the wall:
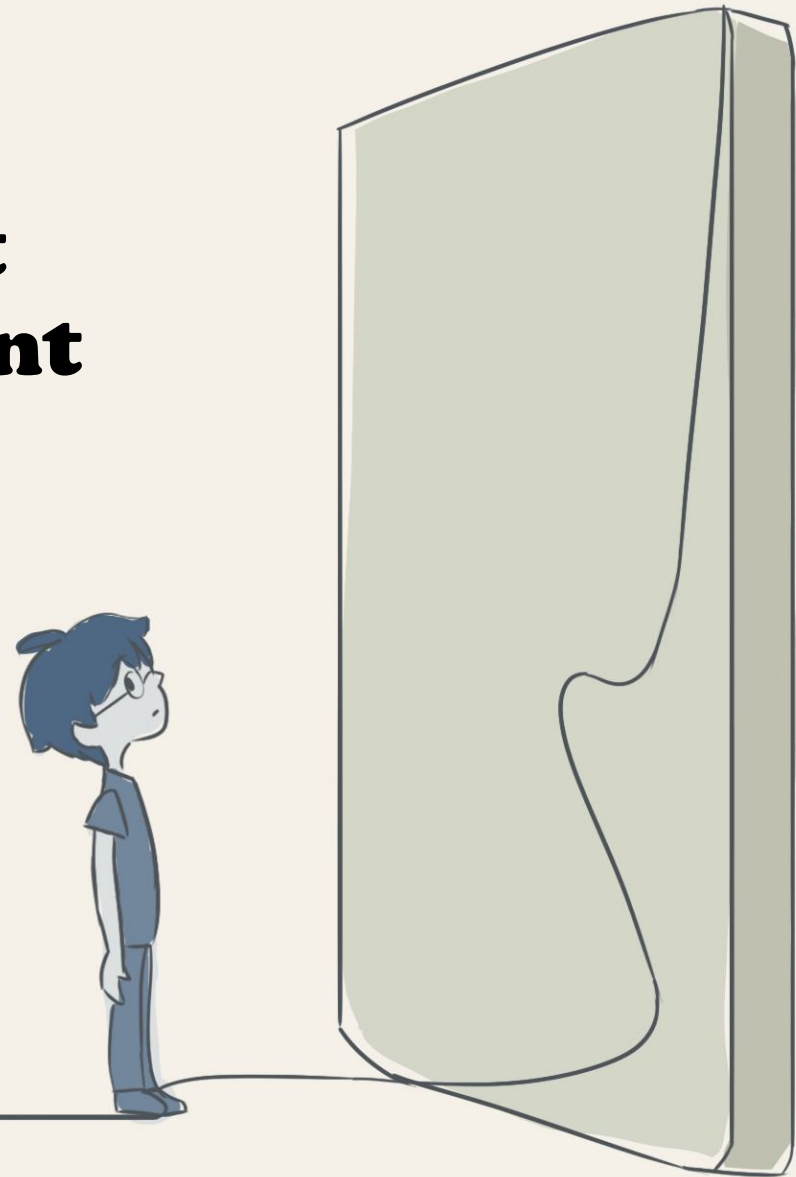# A workshop to support the identity development of bicultural children

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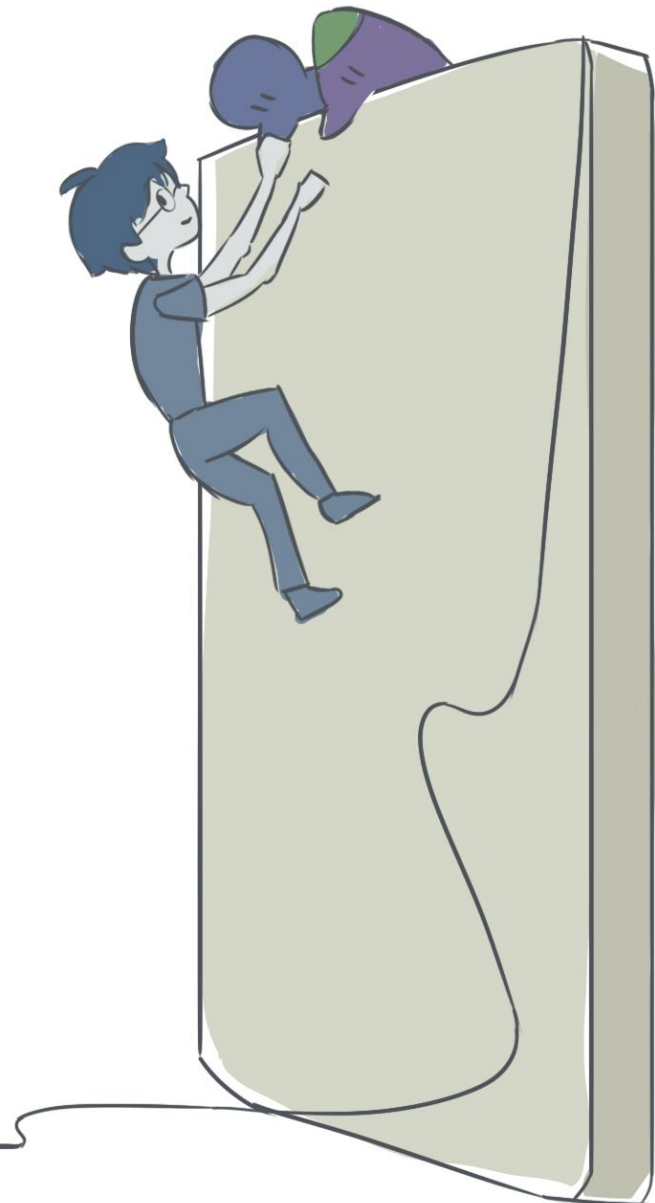Faculty of Industrial Design engineering

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Preface

Hi, my name is Ryan Tsai! Navigating multiple cultural influences has always been a key part of my identity. Born and raised in the Netherlands to immigrant parents—my mother from the Philippines and my father of Surinamese and Chinese heritage—I have often found myself balancing between these rich cultures and the dominant Dutch culture. Growing up, I didn't dwell much on this, but as I became more aware of the differences in customs, language, and appearance, I often felt disconnected. The simple question, "Where are you from?" left me unsure of how to define myself.

It wasn't until I participated in a cultural identity workshop during my studies abroad that I realized my identity isn't confined to a single culture. I am a blend of Dutch, Filipino, Surinamese, and Chinese influences, and my cultural identity shifts depending on my environment and the people around me. This understanding has brought me pride in my heritages and allowed me to embrace the fluidity of my cultural identity. Inspired by my journey, I started this project to explore how bicultural individuals can find empowerment in their diverse backgrounds. Through both personal reflection and research, my hope is to help others embrace the richness of their heritages and feel a sense of belonging in their unique cultural worlds.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to the project by introducing the topic, target group, purpose, aim and the methods that will be used during this study

1.1 Background

Due to worldwide migration and globalization, racial, ethnic and cultural diversity is increasing in nations of the world, including the Netherlands (UNICEF, 2020). In the data collected by Statistics Netherlands (2021), 2 million out of the 15.1 million residents born in the Netherlands in 2021 are children from migrants. One or both of their parents are born abroad. Out of these migrant children, 1.1 million children have one foreign-born and one Netherlands-born parent and 890 thousand have two foreign-born parents. This implies the substantial amount of migrant families within the Netherlands and highlights the importance of understanding how social identities are a part of contemporary life. Multiple researchers have conjectured that there is a risk for bicultural children in developing various problems (Adler, 1987; Poston, 1990; Root 1990). Potential problems include issues with ethnical and racial identification, low self-esteem and feeling marginal within 2 cultures.

This project addresses these issues and see how a narrative-driven design approach can be used. Narratives can reveal important individual differences in the process of constructing a meaningful identity. It is through narratives that individuals construct personal stories that gives their life coherence and integration, enabling them to experience temporal continuity (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Therefore, the focus for this project is on bicultural children within primary school who live in Rotterdam to make them explore and embrace their unique backgrounds, recognizing the value and strength in their culture heritages and the place where they were born and grew up with a narrative approach.

1.2 Problem

Researchers argue that bicultural identities can be seen as hyphenated cultural identities (e.g. Dutch-Indonesian, Dutch-Chinese), in addition to the ethnic and dominant national identity (Verkuyten, 2016). While there are many studies that consistently emphasized the benefits of biculturalism, it is becoming more evident in research that there are a variety of ways to experience biculturalism (Goldberg, 1941; Green, 1947; Benet-Martinez, 2018). As bicultural children are not simply passive receivers of conflicting cultural morals and values instilled by adult teaching and culture, they are rather participative agents in the construction of their own and other's identities (James, 1986). They engage with cultural models from their childhood that influences their own pragmatic and hybridized decisions. Leading to a convergence of blending elements of different cultures into a new culture.

But then how do these children balance and adapt with conflicting cultural competencies? What sense of identity do the children then inherit and develop? What are the key factors influencing their cultural self-identity? To address these questions, the project focuses on the issue of these bicultural children having to navigate within a complex landscape where they have to actively engage with diverse cultural influences that affect shaping their cultural self-identification.

1.3 Process

The project began with literature research to understand the challenges of bicultural identity development. This was followed by interviews with bicultural individuals to gather personal insights, which informed a user scenario focused on the "first wall" a critical moment in cultural identity questioning.

Next, an analysis of existing products using the ViP framework helped identify gaps and opportunities for supporting cultural identity exploration. Based on these findings, the project's scope was refined, and a design goal was set, focusing on tools for home and school settings.

Workshops with primary school children provided real-world feedback and helped shape the direction of the ideation and testing phase, where potential concepts were explored for both settings.

A final concept was then developed, followed by an evaluation to assess its effectiveness. The project concluded with a discussion of findings and recommendations for future improvements.
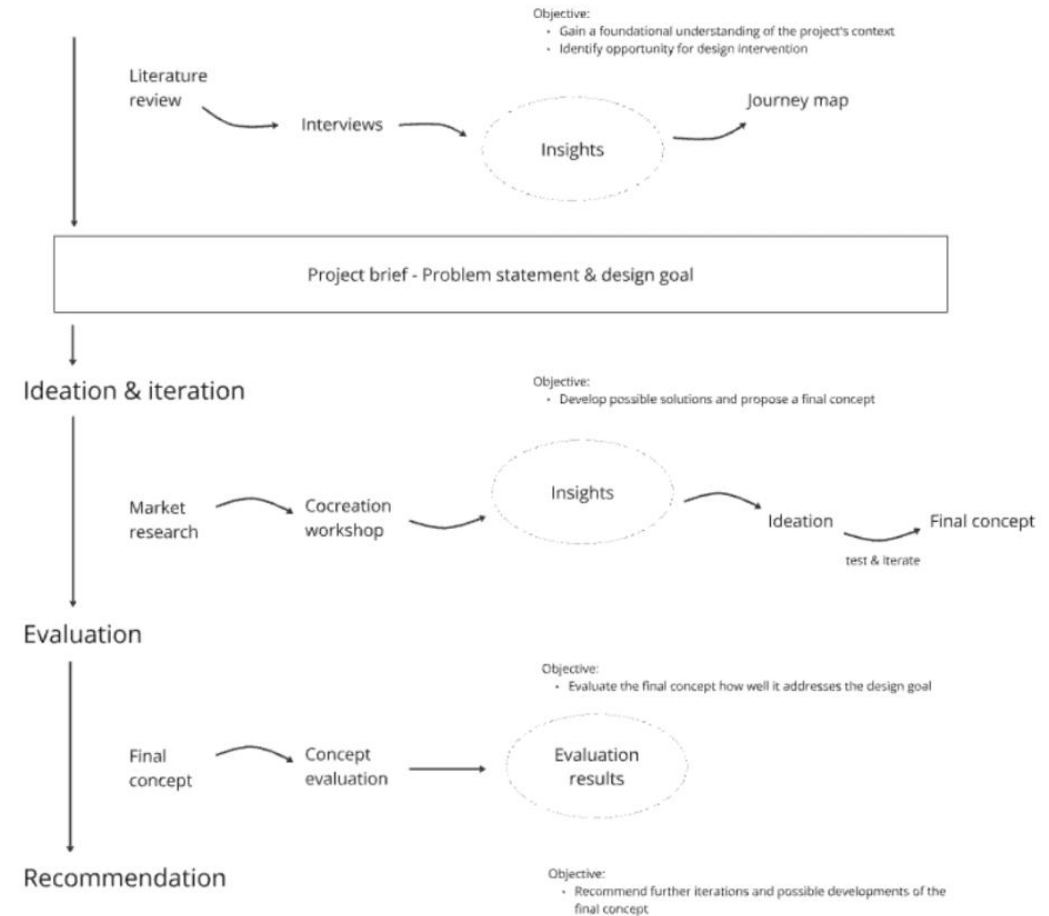
Chapter 2
Literature research

This chapter focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges in bicultural identity development and identify design opportunities. This involves a literature research, an analysis of existing products and interviews

Introduction

Biculturalism, the coexistence and integration of two distinct cultural identities within an individual, has become increasingly significant in today's globalized world (Benet-Martinez, 2018). In the Netherlands, a nation with a rich history of immigration and cultural diversity, the phenomenon of biculturalism presents unique opportunities and challenges. This literature review aims to explore the various dimensions of bicultural identity formation among individuals in the Netherlands, including historical, psychological, and sociocultural aspects. By examining past migration waves, cultural integration processes, and identity negotiation mechanisms, this review provides a comprehensive overview of the factors shaping bicultural experiences in Dutch society.

2.1 Brief historical context

Migration has played a significant role in shaping societies worldwide, including the Netherlands, which has a long history of global trade and cultural exchange. Over the centuries, waves of immigrants arrived in the Netherlands due to political, economic, and religious reasons (Hoving, Dibbit & Schrover, 2005). In the 19th century, many people sought refuge in the Netherlands due to political unrest and religious persecution. By the end of the 20th century, a significant percentage of the Dutch population was foreign-born, a trend that has continued to increase over time. With each wave of migration, the demographic of Dutch society has evolved, reflecting the diversity of cultures and identities that shape contemporary Netherlands.

Timeline of migration in the Netherlands
17th century

The origins of biculturalism in the Netherlands date back to the Dutch Golden Age in the 17th century, when the country became a global trading hub. Immigrants from across Europe came to Dutch ports like Amsterdam and Rotterdam, enriching society with diverse cultural influences (Maarseveen, 2002). This diversity laid the foundation for biculturalism in Dutch society.

1914-1918

World War I brought a significant influx of migrants, including 140,000 Belgian refugees (Lucassen & Penninx, 1985). Despite economic challenges and social disorder following the war, the Netherlands remained a refuge for political exiles, such as Russian dissidents (Van der Heijdt, 1992). This period highlighted the country's tradition of tolerance and providing sanctuary to those in need.

1930-1940

The rise of Nazism in the 1930s led to an influx of Jewish refugees seeking safety in the Netherlands (Keilman et al., 1985). Unfortunately, the German occupation during World War II resulted in the deportation and tragic loss of much of the Jewish population. The Holocaust left a deep scar on Dutch society, serving as a reminder of the devastating effects of discrimination.

1949-1964

In the post-war era, the decolonization of Indonesia led to a wave of migration from the former colony, including Indo-Europeans and Moluccans (Cottaar & Willems, 1984). This period brought challenges related to integration and identity for both the migrants and Dutch society (Bosma, 2017). Returning Dutch citizens from Indonesia also faced the difficult task of rebuilding their lives in a vastly changed homeland (Linschoten & Kist, 2003).

1950s-1970s

In the late 1950s, labor shortages in the Netherlands prompted the recruitment of foreign workers from Mediterranean countries like Turkey, Morocco, and others (CBS, 1968). Family reunification policies in the 1970s allowed migrant workers to bring their families, further increasing immigration (Van Groenendael, 1986). Around the same time, Surinamese migration also grew due to economic difficulties in Suriname and favorable conditions in the Netherlands (Van Amersfoort, 1971).

1990s

By the mid-1990s, the increasing numbers of immigrants led to stricter Dutch immigration policies, particularly regarding asylum seekers, family reunification, and illegal immigration (Jennissen et al., 2022). These policy adjustments helped manage the flow of immigrants during this period.

2024 (present)

Currently in 2024, around 25% of the population in the Netherlands has an immigrant background, reflecting the country's long history of migration and cultural diversity. This includes both first-generation immigrants and those with at least one foreign-born parent (CBS, 2024). Migration continues to and leads to increased pressure on asylum centers, prompting the government to enact stricter regulations, including limiting family reunification for refugees and revising the asylum distribution law (EMN Netherlands, 2023).
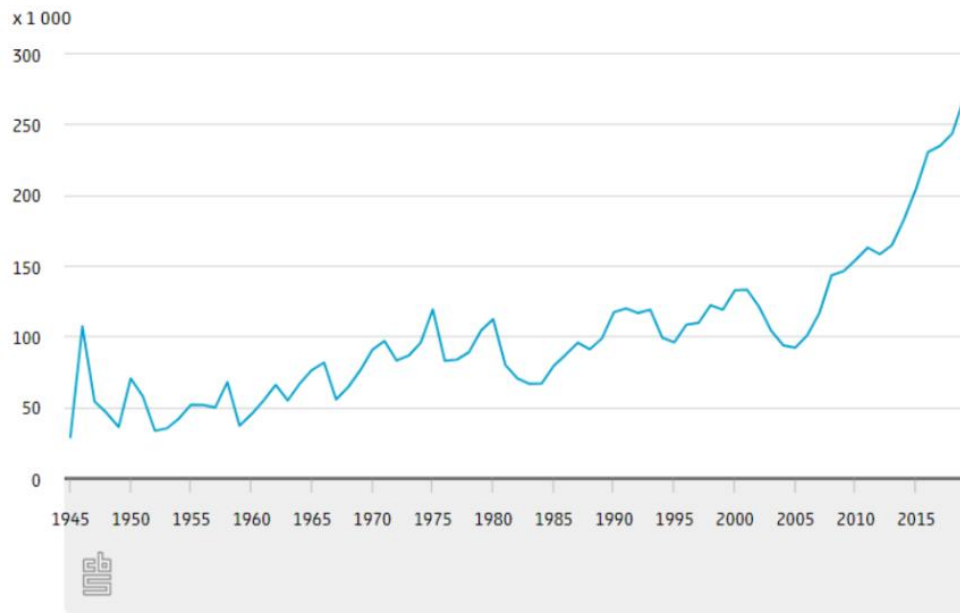
Figure showing the increasing amount of immigrants in the Netherlands over time (CBS, 2021)
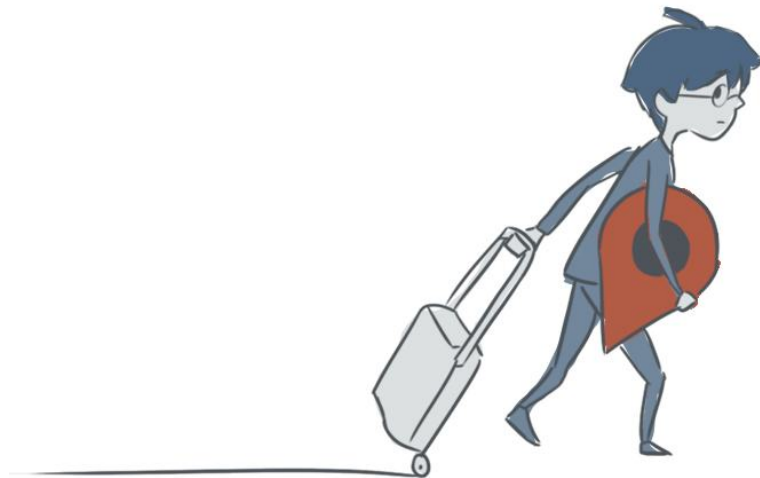
2.2 What is culture?

According to Williams (1986), culture is the combination of learned habits and shared norms that influence how people behave and move within a society. He also mentions that through socialization, especially during childhood, individuals are provided with skills, values, and knowledge that help them with their integration into society. Culture sets humans apart from other species, as humans have evolved through a process of gradual change that builds up over time (Tomasello, 1990). These changes have impacted different parts of human life, like the tools people use, the way societies are organized, the traditions they follow, and the languages they speak. Tomasello refers to this accumulation as the "ratchet-effect," where humans learn and adjust cultural practices to adapt to new circumstances.

Unlike animals, human societies show this ratchet-effect because of the special ways in which people learn from each other. Humans have strong social understanding, which helps them see things from another person's perspective and learn deeply from their peers (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, language and systems like governments or laws have changed over time to reflect society's evolving values and norms (North, 1990). In this way, culture is always changing and adapting as societies grow and develop.

GENERATION 1 — Artifact

child cultural learning

GENERATION 2 — Artifact — individual or collaborative creation — modification #1

child cultural learning

GENERATION 3 — Modified artifact — individual or collaborative creation — modification #2

child cultural learning

GENERATION 4 — Modfied artifact
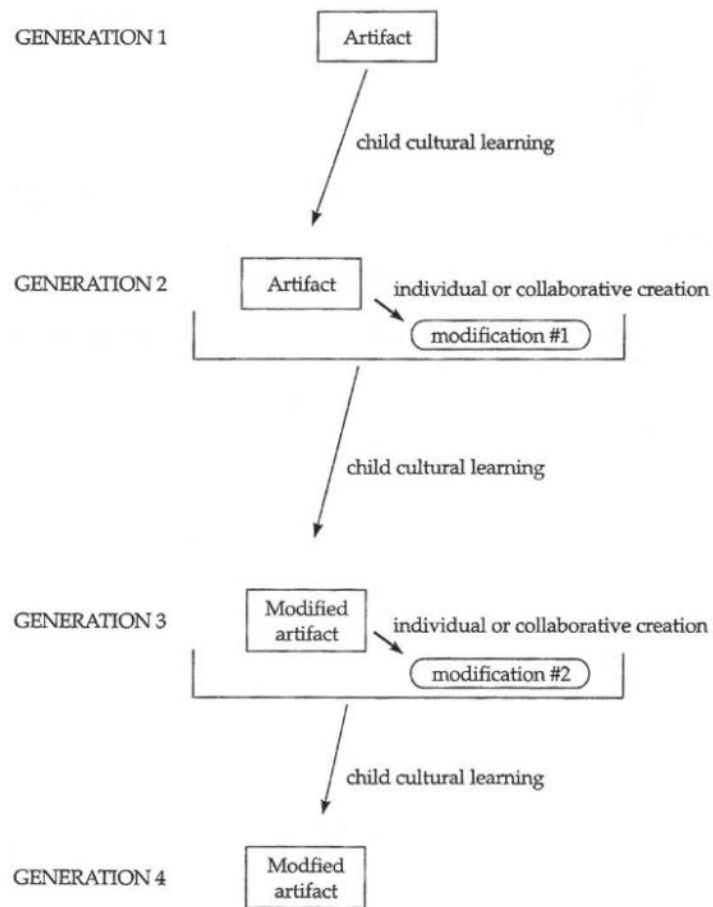
The figure illustrates the "ratchet effect" (Tomasello, 1990)*, where cultural learning enables the continuous refinement of an artifact over generations. Each step represents a modification or improvement, made possible because humans can learn from one another in ways that build on previous knowledge. Through both individual and collaborative creation, the artifact evolves over time, showing how cumulative cultural evolution works. Cultural learning allows each generation to enhance what was passed down, ensuring that progress is preserved and new adaptations are made, without losing the advancements of the past.*

2.3 What is identity?

Identity refers to both an individual's self-perception and their sense of belonging to a society or culture (Valentine, 2000). It is shaped not only by how individuals see themselves, but also how others and the groups to which they associate with perceive them. Furthermore, identity is not static. It evolves through social interactions, personal experiences, and cultural and historical contexts (Nakamura, 2013). For example, moving to a new country often leads to adopting new cultural norms while maintaining aspects of one's original identity (Phinney, 1990). They may inherit cultural norms and values of their host country as they adapt to their new environment.

To better understand identity formation, it's essential to explore the cognitive processes involved. These processes can be divided into two main categories:

Self-Knowledge (Cold Cognition)
This involves the question, "Who am I?" It refers to the understanding and exploration of one's characteristics, values, beliefs, and roles within different social contexts (Campbell et al., 2003). Identity, in this sense, is about understanding the personal attributes that make an individual unique. For example, someone might define themselves by their skills, career, or cultural background.

Self-Evaluation (Hot Cognition)
This focuses on the question, "Am I worthy?" and involves judgments about one's self-worth, value, and competence. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to view themselves positively, feeling confident, competent, and deserving of respect (Baumeister et al., 1993). In contrast, those with low self-esteem may struggle with feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, and self-doubt, especially when they receive negative or conflicting feedback from others. This cognitive process highlights the emotional dimension of identity, as individuals assess their own value in relation to the feedback they receive from their social environment (Campbell, 1990).

Personal vs collective identity

Self-esteem and identity are closely connected, as one's perception of their worth and abilities can greatly influence how they define themselves. Positive feedback from others strengthens an individual's sense of worth, while a lack of clarity in identity may lead to emotional and motivational difficulties (Meeus et al., 2010). For example, people who face conflicting expectations from family, peers, or society may experience confusion and self-doubt, complicating their identity formation.

However, identity is not shaped in isolation. It is influenced by both personal attributes and the social groups we associate with. This dual influence of personal traits and group affiliations is central to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which distinguishes between two key aspects of identity: personal identity and collective identity.

Personal Identity
This aspect of identity focuses on the unique attributes that define an individual, such as personality traits, talents, or personal beliefs. For example, when individuals describe themselves as charismatic or joyful, they emphasize the characteristics that set them apart as individuals.

Collective Identity
In contrast, collective identity emphasizes group affiliations that shape how individuals see themselves. People define themselves not only by their personal qualities but also by their association with social groups, such as cultural, ethnic, or professional communities (Ashmore et al., 2004). For instance, a person who identifies as an "old, Asian male" is combining personal traits with a collective identity linked to their cultural background and social group.

A strong sense of collective identity can have profound benefits for an individual's psychological well-being. Belonging to a group provides a sense of purpose, validation, and support, which contributes to higher levels of life satisfaction and emotional stability (Hogg et al., 2007). For example, individuals who strongly identify with their cultural or social group can feel more secure in their sense of self and report greater overall well-being.

Conversely, individuals who lack a clear collective identity may experience feelings of isolation and uncertainty. This can lead to psychological distress, as they struggle to find a sense of belonging or purpose (Postmes et al., 2013). For instance, teenagers who do not strongly identify with any particular social group or cultural community may feel marginalized and disconnected from their peers, leading to emotional distress as they attempt to define their identity in the absence of a supportive group (Ueno, 2005).

By integrating personal and collective aspects, identity can be understood through these four components:

Personal Identity
This refers to the individual traits and characteristics that make a person unique, such as their personality, talents, and personal beliefs.

Personal Esteem
This involves an individual's self-worth based on their personal achievements and characteristics. High personal esteem means an individual feels confident and competent in their abilities.

Collective Identity
This involves the sense of belonging to a particular group, whether it be based on culture, ethnicity, or a shared community. Collective identity influences how individuals define themselves in relation to others.

Collective Esteem
This refers to the sense of worth derived from being part of a group. People with high collective esteem feel pride in their group affiliations and gain confidence from being part of a community.

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                    ↑
                    |
      Personal Identity        Collective Identity
                    |
Self-perception ————+————————————————————
                    |
      Personal Esteem          Collective Esteem
                    |
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                    ————————————————————→
                    Attributes shared with
                    social group
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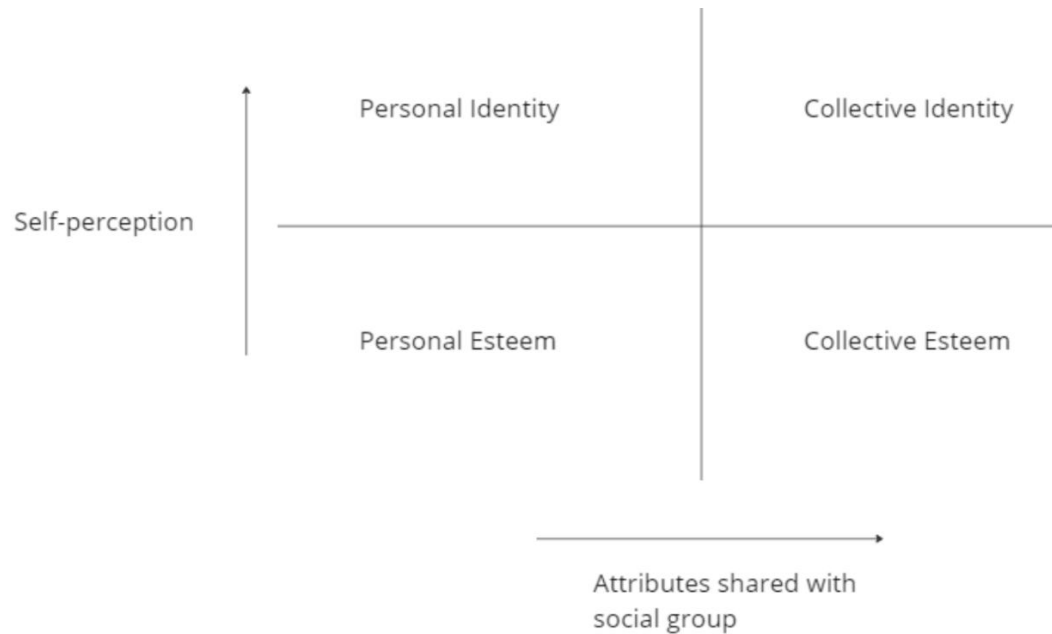
This figure illustrates the differences between personal identity, personal esteem, collective identity and collective esteem.
Personal Identity vs. Personal Esteem: Personal identity refers to the traits, characteristics, and roles that define an individual's unique self-perception in different social contexts. Personal esteem, in contrast, is about how individuals evaluate their own worth, confidence, and competence.
Collective Identity vs. Collective Esteem: Collective identity involves how individuals see themselves as part of a group, defined by shared values and affiliations. Collective esteem focuses on how the group evaluates its own worth, achievements, and reputation.

While each component plays a role in shaping one's sense of self, some argue that collective identity is particularly significant. Taylor (2010) suggests that collective identity holds greater importance than the other components because individual qualities are often understood in relation to the social groups one identifies with.

Within this framework, cultural identity emerges as a specific and influential form of collective identity. It not only reflects one's connection to a larger community but also encompasses shared traditions, values, and historical experiences that shape an individual's sense of belonging. Cultural identity provides a more focused lens on how group affiliations, particularly those tied to heritage and customs, influence personal identity and self-perception. This dynamic interplay between personal traits and cultural background makes cultural identity a crucial aspect of how individuals see themselves within broader social groups.

2.4 What is cultural identity?

Cultural identity is a key aspect of an individual's overall identity and is constantly evolving (Bahne, 2018). For people with complex cultural or national backgrounds, navigating their identity can be multifaceted, often blending ethnic and national elements, leading to a sense of "in-betweenness" or marginality (Talib & Lipponen, 2008). Just like personal and collective identity, cultural identity is dynamic, shaped by social interactions, personal experiences, and historical contexts.

While cultural identity shares similarities with personal identity, there are key differences. Personal identity centers on how individuals see themselves, focused on personal traits and characteristics, whereas cultural identity integrates these aspects with the broader influence of cultural background and experiences (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Cultural identity reflects not only who a person is but also how they connect to a larger cultural community, shaping their values, behaviors, and sense of belonging (Ashmore et al., 2004). This connection to cultural traditions, customs, and heritage adds depth to how individuals experience their identity.

Cultural identity also intersects with collective identity, which emphasizes group affiliations and shared social categories. However, cultural identity places a stronger emphasis on the shared traditions, values, and heritage of a particular group, making it distinct from broader collective identity, which might encompass a wide range of shared attributes (Valentine, 2000). This focus on culture highlights the customs and values that define specific cultural groups, giving cultural identity a unique dimension within the broader identity framework.
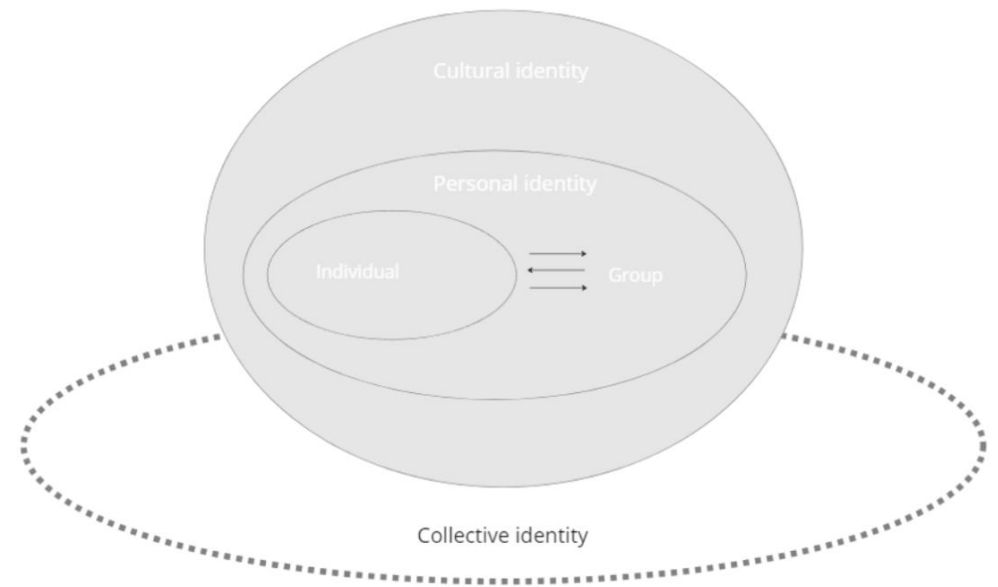
Figure about showing the relation between personal collective identity, cultural identity and personal identity. Explain figure:
Cultural identity is a sub-form within collective identity. Within cultural identity, the personal identity is being formed, affected by self-perception and shared attributes within a group.
Within the broader concept of collective identity, cultural identity serves as a subset that emphasizes cultural aspects. It highlights the unique customs, values, practices, and beliefs that characterize a specific cultural group. While collective identity encompasses various group affiliations, cultural identity zooms in on the cultural dimension, providing a more nuanced understanding of how individuals identify themselves within the broader collective.

2.5 Navigating within a bicultural identity

According to Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martinez (2015), biculturalism refers to the experience of individuals who have absorbed and integrated the cultural values and practices from two or more distinct cultures. These individuals can navigate and understand the complex blend of multiple cultural identities within their social framework, with ethnic or cultural identity often playing a central role (Tajfel, 1979).

Forming a cultural or multicultural identity, as Habermas (2008) mentions, involves a continuous negotiation between one's heritage culture(s) and the culture of the dominant society. This negotiation is shaped by factors such as individual attitudes, the host society's responses, and the unique characteristics of immigrant communities (Phinney et al., 2012).

And to better understand how individuals manage this negotiation between cultures, John Berry's (2003) acculturation model provides a framework. It explains the different strategies people use to navigate their cultural orientation, outlining four strategies:

Integration: There is a balance which allows individuals to preserve their heritage culture while actively participating in the larger society.

Marginalization: Individuals lack interest or opportunities to maintain their culture or engage with others, often due to cultural loss or exclusion.

Assimilation: Individuals prioritize blending into the new society, often neglecting their native cultural identity.

Separation: People focus on maintaining their heritage culture, avoiding engagement with the dominant society.
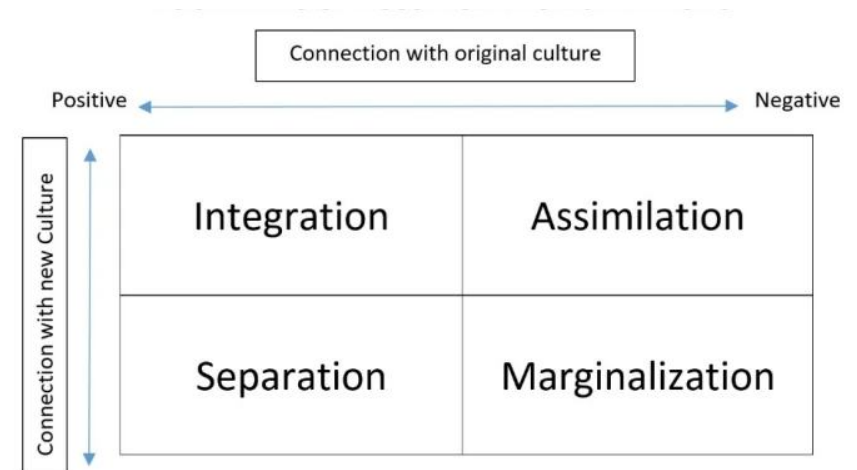
This figure represents John Berry's Acculturation Model (2003). It visually maps the relationship between an individual's connection to their heritage culture and new or dominant culture. It simplifies how individuals navigate their cultural identity based on these dual connections.

However, developing a bicultural identity is more complex than these categories suggest. It is a lifelong process influenced by many factors (Van Oudenhoven et al., 2006). Bicultural individuals often face challenges in balancing the expectations of their heritage culture and the dominant culture, especially when family and societal standards differ significantly (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). Factors such as cultural compatibility influence their ability to "frame-switch," or adapt behaviors depending on the cultural context (Berry, 2003). This allows them to adapt fluidly between their heritage and dominant cultures, helping them navigate social environments.

Beyond these strategies, studies revealed the complexity of bicultural identity formation. They show that bicultural individuals do not form a homogenous group but rather display diverse ways of integrating and orienting themselves culturally (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). Their attitudes, behaviors, and experiences are shaped by intercultural experiences, social networks, and personal beliefs (Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Several models have been proposed to classify bicultural individuals based on how they integrate and commit to their cultures. Ramirez (1984) identified two types: synthesized multicultural individuals and functional multicultural individuals, who are either mainstream-oriented or ethnically oriented. Here, the individual either places more emphasis on the dominant culture or on their heritage culture(s).

LaFromboise et al. (1993) introduced two additional models: alternating biculturalism and fused biculturalism. This differs from Ramirez's model. LaFrombroise et al.'s model doesn't focus on the individual choosing between the dominant culture or heritage culture(s), but instead provides a more dynamic approach where it is allowed to either switch between or fully integrate multiple cultures.

Alternating Biculturalism
In this mode, individuals shift between their heritage and host cultures depending on the situation. They adapt behaviors and attitudes from their heritage culture when with family or in ethnic community settings, while adopting traits from the dominant culture in professional or academic environments. This flexibility allows bicultural individuals to effectively navigate different social contexts.

Fused Biculturalism
In this model, individuals blend elements of both cultures into a unified identity. Instead of viewing their cultural identities as conflicting, they see them as complementary, creating a harmonious blend of values, practices, and beliefs from both cultures. Fused biculturals often feel empowered by their multicultural identity, seeing it as a source of strength and richness.
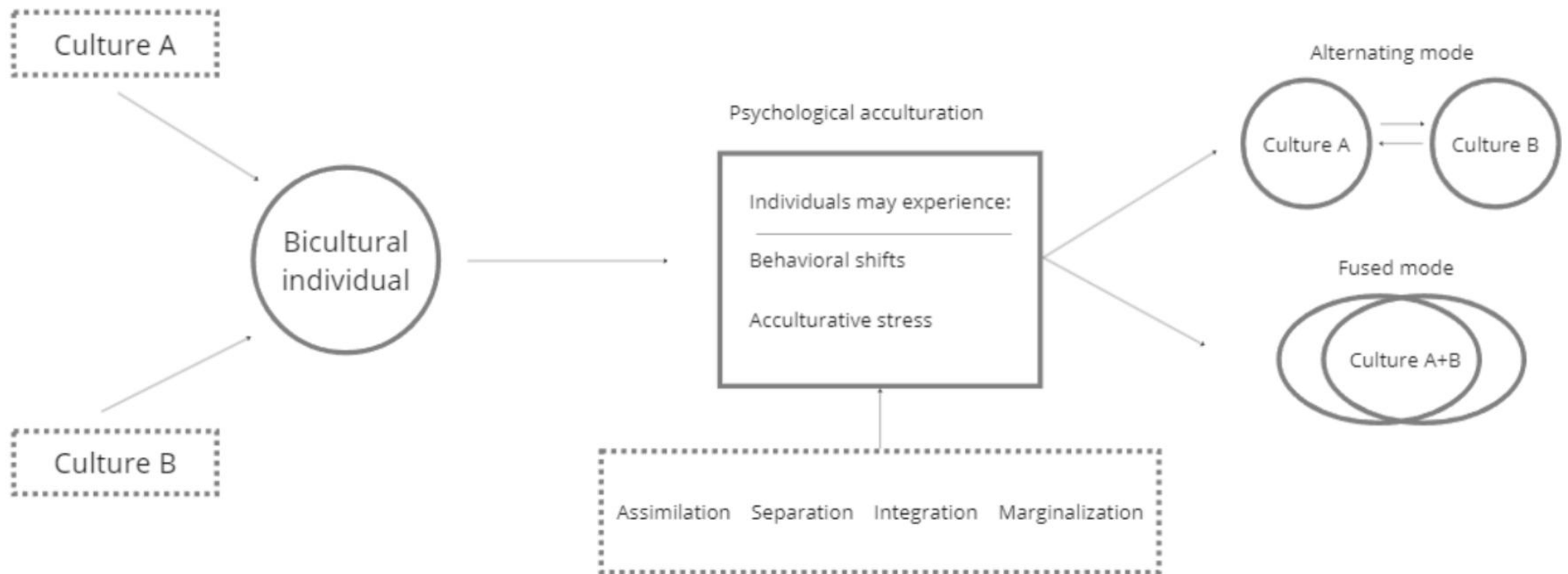
This figure illustrates how bicultural individuals navigate between their heritage and dominant cultures, using John Berry's acculturation model (2003) to frame their experience. This process affects their psychological well-being, with outcomes ranging from isolation to confidence depending on how they balance the two cultures.

Incorporating LaFromboise's models (1993), individuals may adopt either Alternating Biculturalism, where they shift between cultural contexts, or Fused Biculturalism, blending both cultures into one cohesive identity. Ultimately, the model reflects how bicultural individuals either prioritize one culture or combine both, affecting their emotional and cultural balance.

Understanding the multifaceted nature of bicultural identity reveals that individuals with bicultural backgrounds navigate complex cultural dynamics shaped by their interactions with multiple cultural influences. No two bicultural individuals have identical experiences, as their identities are uniquely shaped by personal, social, and cultural factors. Embracing these complexities and appreciating the richness of bicultural identities can inspire the development of more nuanced approaches that meaningfully support and empower these individuals.

2.5.1 Well-being of biculturals

Bicultural individuals often face unique stressors related to acculturation which refers to the process of adapting to and navigating between different cultural norms and values (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). These challenges can affect their psychological well-being, leading to higher rates of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic disorders (De Wit et al., 2008). Understanding the factors contributing to these mental health outcomes is essential for developing effective support systems for bicultural individuals.

Cultural identity conflict

One major factor impacting the well-being of bicultural individuals is cultural identity conflict. This occurs when individuals feel torn between the expectations of their heritage culture and those of the dominant culture (Phinney et al., 2012). Such conflict can manifest in different ways, such as struggling to reconcile cultural values, facing discrimination, or feeling marginalized due to cultural differences (Diaz & Bui, 2017).

For example, research on Albanian-American immigrants in the United States has shown that maintaining a strong connection to one's ethnic identity while also adapting to the dominant culture can contribute positively to psychological well-being (Sempértegui et al., 2019). In this case, the ability to balance and integrate both cultural identities led to better mental health outcomes. However, for some groups, this balance may not be as easy to achieve. A study on first-generation Mexican immigrants found that a strong attachment to ethnic identity sometimes increased the negative effects of acculturative stress, particularly when individuals experienced significant pressure to assimilate into the dominant culture. This pressure could lead to psychological distress as individuals struggled to preserve their cultural heritage while simultaneously adapting to the broader social context (McCord et al., 2019).

Self-determination theory
The self-determination theory provides insights into how cultural identity conflict affects psychological well-being. It suggests that individuals have three core psychological needs: autonomy (the need for independence), competence (the need to feel capable), and relatedness (the need for meaningful connections) (Ryan et al., 2015). Navigating multiple cultural identities can make it difficult for bicultural individuals to fulfill these needs (Chen et al., 2003).

Autonomy
This is crucial for well-being and is tied to self-concept clarity, which refers to having a stable and clear understanding of one's cultural identity (Campbell et al., 2003). When bicultural individuals experience conflict between cultural expectations, their autonomy can be undermined, leading to feelings of confusion and inner conflict. For example, being pressured to conform to cultural norms that don't align with personal values can create dissatisfaction and weaken a sense of autonomy.

Competence
As bicultural individuals become more skilled in navigating different cultural contexts, they can develop a sense of competence. This mastery of cultural adaptation can act as a protective factor against the negative effects of identity conflict and can improve their overall well-being (Chirkov et al., 2003).

Relatedness
Building relationships with others who share similar cultural backgrounds fosters a sense of relatedness. These connections can provide mutual understanding and validation, helping bicultural individuals feel less isolated and promoting psychological well-being (Berry, 2005). In addition, forming relationships with people from the dominant culture can aid social integration and provide access to important social networks and resources (Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Recognizing the complexities of bicultural individuals' experiences and the factors influencing their mental health can guide the development of culturally sensitive support products. These should aim to strengthen psychological resilience and well-being by addressing the specific challenges faced by bicultural individuals, helping them navigate the balance between their heritage and the dominant culture.

2.6 Factors shaping the bicultural identity

Bicultural identity development is a complex process shaped by multiple influences, including family dynamics, community, society, and the educational environment (Berry, 2006). The rise of transnational and transcultural marriages has highlighted the unique challenges and opportunities children face in navigating their bicultural identities (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

Family

Family dynamics play a central role in shaping how children in transnational and transcultural households develop their bicultural identities (Kasinitz et al., 2008). These families, where parents come from different cultural backgrounds, provide a unique space for children to navigate and integrate multiple cultural influences (García Coll et al., 1996). Rather than passively absorbing conflicting cultural values, children in these households actively participate in forming their identities within a diverse cultural framework (Phinney, 1990).

The family is often the first place where children encounter the complexities of bicultural identity (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). Through early interactions with parents and extended family members, children begin to understand and integrate personal and cultural dimensions of identity. These formative experiences shape their initial sense of self and cultural belonging (Schwartz et al., 2010).

Educational environment

Schools are crucial for bicultural identity development. They are often a primary context where bicultural individuals navigate multiple cultural expectations, offering opportunities for cultural learning and socialization (Ward, 2001). Bilingual education programs and multicultural curricula help foster an appreciation for diverse cultural perspectives, while culturally responsive teaching creates an inclusive environment that respects and validates different backgrounds (Gay, 2010).

The educational environment influences bicultural identity by affecting how well students perform in school and how easily they fit in socially (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). For instance, bicultural students may experience different cultural norms at home compared to school, which can create challenges in social adaptation. Bicultural students may struggle with cultural expectations, particularly when there is a mismatch between the home culture and the school's academic norms (Gibson et al., 2004). Culturally relevant teaching practices that honor students' diverse backgrounds can boost academic engagement and self-concept in bicultural learners (Kiang et al., 2016).

Additionally, the overall atmosphere at school and the relationships students have with their peers significantly shape their bicultural identity development. Positive peer interactions and cross-cultural friendships foster a sense of belonging and acceptance in a diverse environment (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). Conversely, experiences of discrimination or social exclusion based on cultural differences can harm bicultural individuals' sense of identity and well-being (Ward, 2001).

Community

Beyond the family, community and societal influences also play a pivotal role in shaping bicultural identity (Gibson et al., 2004).Places like cultural communities, organizations, and social groups give people the opportunity to connect with their heritage and preserve their cultural traditions (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). These communities provide support by helping individuals feel accepted, allowing them to explore and confidently embrace both of their cultural identities.

However, not all social influences are positive. In settings where cultural diversity is not fully embraced or where stereotypes prevail, bicultural individuals may face discrimination and marginalization (Gibson et al., 2004). These negative experiences can lead to feelings of disconnection from both cultural worlds and negatively impact self-esteem and identity formation (Ward, 2001). Therefore, creating inclusive social environments that celebrate cultural diversity and promote intercultural understanding is essential for supporting the healthy development of bicultural identities (Gibson et al., 2004).

Understanding the various factors that shape bicultural identity development, including family, community, and educational environments, is crucial for appreciating how diverse cultural backgrounds influence identity. Bicultural individuals often navigate complex cultural landscapes, balancing the expectations of their heritage culture with those of the dominant society. This dynamic interplay between cultures is also reflected in the broader societal structures of cities where diverse populations live and interact, such as the Dutch city Rotterdam.

Rotterdam's identity

Rotterdam, with its deep history as a port city and a hub for migrants, stands as a prime example of such a multicultural environment. Unlike other Dutch cities such as Amsterdam, which is often associated with cosmopolitanism and tourism, Rotterdam's identity has been largely shaped by post-war immigration and industrial labor migration (Entzinger & Engbersen, 2014). This has resulted in a city where nearly 50% of the population has roots outside of the Netherlands, contributing to its "superdiverse" status (Crul et al., 2015). The city is not only diverse in terms of ethnic backgrounds but also in the wide range of nationalities, languages, and cultural practices.

Despite Rotterdam's incredible cultural diversity, the city has a uniquely strong sense of shared local identity. Citizens in Rotterdam often take pride in the city's diversity, viewing it as an essential part of what it means to be a "Rotterdammer" (Crul & Lelie, 2015). This contrasts with cities like Amsterdam, where multiculturalism is more tied to socio-economic sectors and where the city's identity is often shaped by international tourism and expat culture, Rotterdam's multiculturalism is deeply ingrained into its identity. This makes Rotterdam an excellent case study for exploring bicultural identity development in a contemporary urban setting.

Picture made by Jamie van Aerde (2011). The motto of Rotterdam, "010 isn't just a code," likely refers to the pride and identity of the city of Rotterdam, where "010" is the telephone area code for the city. This slogan emphasizes that for Rotterdammers, the number represents more than just a telecommunications identifier—it symbolizes the city's culture, community, and spirit.

2.7 Stages of bicultural identity formation

The development of bicultural identity is a complex and evolving process, shaped by multiple stages of exploration and self-reflection. Several models of ethnic identity development have been proposed, with many researchers agreeing that achieving a bicultural identity involves an initial period of crisis or awakening, followed by exploration, and culminating in a commitment to one's cultural identities (Berry, 2003; Cross, 1991; Marcia, 1980). This process is similar to the model of ethnic identity formation proposed by Phinney (1990), which focuses on how individuals gradually come to understand and integrate their ethnic background into their overall sense of self. Phinney's model highlights the progression from a stage where ethnic identity is unexamined, to a period of active exploration, and finally, to a point where individuals achieve a strong sense of belonging and commitment to their ethnic identity.

Bicultural identity formation mirrors ethnic identity development in many ways, as both involve navigating multiple cultural influences and negotiating a sense of belonging within diverse social contexts (Berry, 2003). While ethnic identity emphasizes the recognition and incorporation of one's heritage, bicultural identity integrates multiple cultural backgrounds, often influenced by immigration, acculturation, or exposure to diverse environments (Schwartz et al., 2010).

Similar to Phinney's (1990) stages of ethnic identity development, bicultural identity formation is a dynamic process involving exploration, commitment, and integration of cultural identities. These stages can be understood as follows:

1. *Unexamined Identity*
   This initial stage is marked by a lack of exploration of one's cultural identity. Individuals in this phase may accept the dominant culture's values and attitudes, sometimes internalizing negative views about their own heritage

2. *Identity Search/Moratorium*
   During this stage, individuals begin to question their cultural identity and actively seek to understand it. This exploration is often triggered by life events or societal circumstances that prompt deeper reflection on ethnicity.

3. *Identity Achievement*
   In the final stage, individuals reach a confident and clear understanding of their cultural identity. This stage represents the internalization and acceptance of one's heritage, allowing for a sense of pride and belonging.

As bicultural identity formation progresses through these stages, individuals move from a passive understanding of their cultural backgrounds to an active integration of their dual identities. Each stage from unexamined identity through identity search to identity achievement represents milestones that shape how bicultural individuals navigate between their heritage and the dominant culture. This journey is not just about recognizing cultural influences, but about developing the skills and confidence to fluidly navigate between these cultures, embracing the strengths and challenges each one presents.

At the core of this process is the ability to reflect on one's experiences and incorporate them into a cohesive sense of self, where both cultures are valued. Through self-reflection and gradual internalization, individuals achieve a balanced bicultural identity that offers a sense of belonging in both cultural worlds. This development fosters not only personal growth but also intercultural competence, enabling individuals to adapt effectively to different cultural settings and maintain a positive outlook on their dual identity (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008).

Understanding the stages of bicultural identity formation helps both individuals and communities provide better support. By encouraging self-reflection, offering cultural validation, and nurturing intercultural skills, we can help bicultural individuals achieve a strong, confident identity that allows them to thrive in diverse social environments. This process is essential for promoting not only individual well-being but also social harmony in multicultural societies.

2.8 The role of narratives

Narratives are powerful tools for both defining culture and shaping individual identities (Bruner, 1990). Through storytelling, cultural expectations are communicated and internalized, guiding individuals' self-conceptions and the way they frame their experiences (Mandelbaum, 2015). In this way, culture not only influences broad personality and identity development (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), but also becomes deeply ingrained in the fabric of individuals' identities (Holliday, 1999).

Although researchers often view culture as a dynamic and evolving system (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Tomasello,1990), there are empirical studies that tend to simplify culture by treating it as a static, one-directional influence on individuals (Oyserman et al., 2002). This oversimplification neglects the more complex interaction where individuals not only are shaped by culture but also actively participate in its construction, maintenance, and transformation (Hermans & Kempen, 1998).

To address this oversimplification, McLean and Syed (2015) proposed the master narrative framework, which emphasizes the role of power and societal norms in shaping individual identity. Master narratives are culturally shared stories that offer individuals frameworks to interpret their personal experiences (Bruner, 1987). Although these narratives are deeply rooted in specific cultural contexts, they operate as powerful and often invisible forces, subtly shaping societal expectations and pressuring individuals to conform (McLean & Syed, 2015). This framework explains how dominant cultural narratives reinforce societal norms and shape individual identities. It also emphasizes the role of power and oppression in limiting the variety of personal stories people are able to tell, often pushing individuals to conform to these dominant expectations.

Master narratives, though they take the form of stories, are closely connected to the structures of society (Mandelbaum, 2019). Those who do not conform to these dominant cultural stories, particularly regarding social identities, often face marginalization (Foucault, 1977). McLean and Syed (2015) distinguish between three types of master narratives: episodic, structural, and biographical. Each of these types plays a role in shaping the way individuals understand their place within a culture and how their personal experiences align or clash with societal expectations.

Episodic Master Narratives
These narratives are focused on specific events and often center around key historical moments, such as wars or major changes in society (such as the immigration history of the Netherlands, see chapter 1). They provide a framework for how individuals and groups should interpret significant events in their lives, shaping a collective understanding of history. People whose personal experiences align with these cultural narratives are often seen as fitting seamlessly into society's accepted story. In contrast, those whose experiences differ from or challenge these dominant narratives may face difficulties in gaining recognition or validation for their stories. This misalignment can lead to feelings of exclusion or marginalization, as their experiences do not conform to the commonly accepted cultural interpretations (McLean & Syed, 2015).

Structural Master Narratives
Structural narratives are deeply ingrained in the societal systems and institutions that govern everyday life, such as education, politics, and the legal system. These narratives shape how individuals navigate these systems and set expectations for how people should behave within them. For example, structural narratives might dictate what it means to be a "good citizen" or a "successful student," often reinforcing dominant ideologies. Deviation from these structural narratives can lead to marginalization, as individuals who do not meet these societal expectations may be seen as outsiders or failures (McLean & Syed, 2015).

Biographical master narratives outline culturally expected life paths that people are supposed to follow, such as progressing through education, establishing a career, getting married, and then eventually retiring. These narratives create societal norms that shape expectations based on factors like age, gender, ethnicity, and social class. WWhen a person's life story aligns with these established norms, they are more likely to receive social approval and validation. However, those who deviate from these norms, whether by following an unconventional career path, delaying marriage, or not fitting into traditional gender roles, may face social exclusion or pressure to conform (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Hammack & Toolis, 2021).

Individuals who find themselves at odds with master narratives must often create alternative stories to explain their differences and find belonging in smaller, subcultural groups (Gergen, 1991). An example of this is the "coming out" narrative which is about how individuals construct alternative life stories when their personal experiences deviate from dominant cultural expectations, particularly regarding sexuality (Savin-Williams, 1998). Where traditionally, societal norms and master narratives have upheld heterosexuality as the "default", leaving little space for non-heteronormative identities to be validated or understood. For LGBTQ+ individuals, the coming out process involves revealing their sexual orientation or gender identity, often in defiance of societal expectations and the master narratives that reinforce them.

By understanding how master narratives shape both societal expectations and individual identity formation, we gain insight into the power dynamics that affect personal narratives and the potential for creating alternative pathways of belonging in diverse cultural contexts.

The narratives of third culture kids (TCKs)

Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are individuals raised in a culture different from both their parents' home culture and their country of nationality. This multicultural upbringing places TCKs in a unique position, often exposed to diverse cultural influences that shape their identity, sense of home, and belonging. Their experience differs from those raised in a single cultural context, as they are constantly navigating and blending multiple cultural frameworks (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).
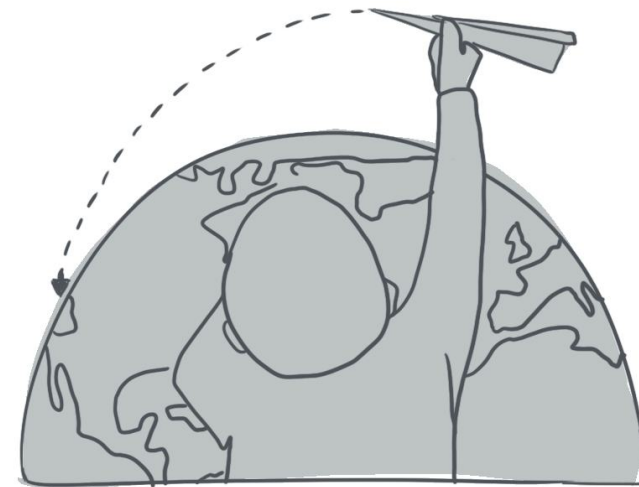
As they continue to grow, TCKs often develop what is referred to as a "third culture", a hybrid identity that combines elements of their parents' culture, the host culture, and their nationality. This blending allows TCKs to be adaptable and flexible across different cultural environments, but it also creates challenges. TCKs may experience a sense of rootlessness or feel as though they don't fully belong in any one culture. They may feel like insiders and outsiders simultaneously, as they can navigate between different cultural contexts while never fully integrating into any one of them (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Narratives play a key role in helping TCKs make sense of their experiences. By constructing personal stories that implement elements from multiple cultures, TCKs can process the complexities of living between cultures, and can serve as coping mechanisms to manage feelings of displacement or "cultural homelessness" (Schwartz et al., 2010). Through storytelling, they turn their multicultural experiences into a source of strength, helping them build a coherent sense of self.

TCKs often face "master narratives" of national identity, which emphasize belonging to a single culture or nationality. These dominant cultural stories can marginalize those who do not fit neatly into national categories. However, many TCKs create alternative narratives that embrace their hybrid identities, blending their multiple cultural experiences into a cohesive sense of self (Bhabha, 1994). Family narratives, in particular, play an important role in shaping TCK identity by providing a cultural foundation that TCKs build upon through their own experiences.

By learning about TCKs, we can better understand how to support individuals navigating multiple cultural influences, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and adaptive understanding of identity in multicultural societies. This approach could inspire innovative strategies for fostering bicultural resilience and adaptability in various social and educational contexts (Berry, 2006). For instance, McLean and Syed (2015) emphasize that tools enabling individuals to document and reflect on their cross-cultural journeys can significantly enhance self-awareness and community support. These reflective practices are particularly valuable in educational settings, where students can share their multicultural experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of identity and encouraging inclusion (McAdams, 1996).

2.9 Role of design

Design and artifacts play a vital role in shaping and expressing identity, particularly through the stories they carry within family and educational settings. These artifacts are not just decorative objects but are imbued with multigenerational narratives, making them powerful vehicles for constructing and sustaining cultural identity.

Artifacts as Carriers of Family Narratives

Artifacts found in family homes often serve as more than objects, they are containers of cultural knowledge and personal history. Moll et al. (1992) introduced the concept of "funds of knowledge," which refers to the valuable knowledge and skills that families accumulate through their cultural practices and lived experiences. These artifacts act as bridges between the past and present, preserving family histories and values. This concept highlights how everyday objects within the home (e.g. utensils or displayed items) carry meanings that go beyond their physical utility, connecting family members to their heritage. Pahl and Rowsell (2005) build on this idea, illustrating how such artifacts can enrich family literacy by linking home experiences with educational contexts.

By bringing these objects into educational settings, students can share and celebrate their personal and cultural backgrounds, allowing for deeper understanding and engagement. For instance, when children bring culturally significant items to school, these objects not only tell the stories of their families but also act as tools for literacy development and cross-cultural dialogue (Hymes, 1996).

Design Principles in Narrative Integration

The design of artifacts plays a crucial role in conveying and embedding narratives into everyday life. Kress (1997) emphasizes that design, particularly in educational environments, serves as a powerful form of multimodal communication. Elements such as color, texture, and shape in artifacts help communicate familial and cultural stories, making them accessible to both younger generations and outsiders. These design choices ensure that the narratives embedded in these objects are not only preserved but also shared across diverse groups. In educational settings, children often bring artifacts that symbolize their cultural identities. These items, ranging from national symbols to personal creations like drawings, serve as platforms for storytelling. They enable the children to share their personal and cultural backgrounds, thereby fostering a greater appreciation for diversity (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005).

By integrating these artifacts into classroom activities, teachers can enhance literacy skills while promoting a deeper understanding of the rich cultural narratives that exist within the classroom community. This approach is an example to help build bridges between home life and school, ensuring that cultural heritage is acknowledged and valued.

Sociocultural Implications of Narrative Artifacts

Artifacts in educational settings connect students' personal and cultural backgrounds to the classroom, making learning more meaningful. Bourdieu (1990) explains that objects carry "habitus" which he refers to as habits, values, and behaviors shaped by one's upbringing. These objects become tools for expressing identity, both individually and collectively. When students bring artifacts that reflect their culture and family history, they share not only stories but also connections to broader cultural experiences.

By incorporating these artifacts, teachers can help students see the links between their personal stories and the world around them. This creates a more inclusive environment that respects and values diverse backgrounds. Recognizing the cultural significance of these objects helps students feel more connected to their learning and their peers (Holland et al., 2001). This approach shows how important it is to include students' cultural and family experiences in their educational journey, enriching their understanding of diversity.

Conclusion

This literature review highlights the complex process of bicultural identity formation, emphasizing that this process is shaped by historical, social, and psychological factors. In the Netherlands, bicultural individuals continually navigate between their heritage and the dominant culture, shaping their identities through ongoing adaptation. Narratives, particularly those communicated through family artifacts and cultural stories, help individuals make sense of their dual identities, though they may sometimes limit self-expression when societal norms impose conformity.

Artifacts and design also play a crucial role in preserving and expressing cultural identity, especially in educational settings, where they foster inclusivity and support. By embracing and incorporating diverse cultural backgrounds into these educational settings, the children can navigate identity challenges more easily, developing resilience, adaptability, and a stronger sense of belonging. This integrated approach not only supports identity formation but also contributes to psychological well-being and social harmony.

To better support bicultural individuals, it is vital to create environments (whether in schools, families or communities) that celebrate and validate the richness of multiple cultural identities. Such recognition helps reduce identity conflicts and acculturation stress, fostering psychological resilience and overall well-being.

Chapter 3
Interviews

This chapter focuses on the gaps addressed in the literature research. Interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of how bicultural individuals experience and navigate their cultural identity

Introduction

The literature research provided valuable insights into the dynamics of bicultural identity formation. It highlighted the importance of narratives, social environments, and artifacts in shaping how individuals navigate their dual cultural identities.

However, several gaps emerged from the literature that limited a comprehensive understanding of how these theoretical concepts translate into the lived experiences of bicultural individuals. The literature often generalized bicultural identity formation without fully capturing the nuanced and evolving nature of individual experiences. Additionally, while theoretical frameworks such as narrative and identity formation were discussed, there was limited real-world data that illustrated how bicultural individuals personally interpret and reflect on their identities, particularly in the context of the Netherlands.

To address these gaps and verify the findings in a real-life context, interviews were conducted to explore how bicultural individuals, raised in the Netherlands, actively construct and reflect on their cultural identities. The aim was to capture how these individuals reconcile their heritage culture with Dutch societal norms, and to identify key influences and challenges in their identity formation.

3.1 Gaps addressed in literature research

The literature review exposed two primary gaps. First, while the theoretical frameworks discussed cultural adaptation and identity formation, there was a lack of specific narratives from individuals about how they actively navigate these cultural influences. Many studies examined biculturalism from a macro perspective, but few captured the micro, day-to-day reflections of bicultural people about their identity journeys. Secondly, although artifacts and sociocultural dynamics were explored, the literature lacked detailed insights into how these aspects manifest in personal experiences, particularly in the Dutch context.

The interviews aimed to address these gaps by focusing on the personal narratives of bicultural adults in the Netherlands, offering a grounded exploration of how these individuals experience, reflect upon, and negotiate their dual identities.

3.2 Interview

To capture the full range of experiences, the interviews were guided by the following research questions:

Main Research Question: How do bicultural people raised in the Netherlands construct their cultural identity and sense of belonging?

Sub-Questions:
1. How do bicultural individuals position themselves in terms of their Dutch and heritage cultural identities (e.g., as 'Dutch,' 'heritage culture,' 'both,' or 'neither')?
2. What factors influence the construction of their cultural identity and sense of belonging?
3. How has their cultural identity evolved over time, and what factors have contributed to shifts in their sense of belonging?

These questions were designed to elicit personal narratives and reflections on how bicultural individuals balance the expectations and values of both their heritage and Dutch cultures.

Analyzing the interviews

The interviews were first transcribed. Following this, a thematic analysis was conducted using Phinney's (1990) ethnic identity development framework as a guiding structure. Quotes from the participants were organized in chronological order to trace the participants' reflections on their cultural identities throughout different stages of their lives. This method helps to highlight significant moments, such as identity shifts, periods of uncertainty, and eventual acceptance or resolution of their bicultural identity.

3.2.1 Interview participants

Participants for the interviews were recruited through personal networks, targeting individuals who self-identified as bicultural and had either been born in or spent a significant portion of their lives in the Netherlands. A total of 13 participants were selected, reflecting diverse backgrounds and cultural experiences. This diversity aimed to ensure that the study captured a broad spectrum of bicultural experiences within Dutch society.

Participant	Gender	Place of Birth	Heritage	Additional Notes
1	Female	Netherlands	Nigerian, Cameroonian, Ghanaian	
2	Female	India	Indian	Moved to the Netherlands at age 3
3	Male	Netherlands	Turkish	
4	Female	Netherlands	Surinamese (Hindustani), Turkish	
5	Female	Netherlands	Dutch, Surinamese, Chinese	Sister of Participant 6
6	Female	Netherlands	Dutch, Surinamese, Chinese	Sister of Participant 5
7	Female	Netherlands	Surinamese, Chinese	Sister of Participant 8
8	Female	Netherlands	Surinamese, Chinese	Sister of Participant 7
9	Male	Netherlands	Dutch, Indonesian	
10	Male	Netherlands	Chinese	
11	Male	Netherlands	Slovak, Czech	
12	Male	Netherlands	Macedonian	
13	Female	Netherlands	Korean	

This table shows the participant's demography, stating their gender, place of birth, heritages and additional notes

3.2.2 Insights

Reflection on Cultural Identity

Participants often shared that their cultural identity remains in the background of their daily lives and is not something they actively think about:

"I don't really think about it. My cultural identity just is. It's part of me, but I'm not always thinking about what it means to be both Dutch and Surinamese."
The cultural identity of this participant exists passively without deep daily reflection.

"It's not something I sit down and consider daily. I'm just living my life, and my culture is a part of that.". This participant emphasizes how cultural identity is integrated into daily life without conscious thought.

"I guess I'm Dutch and Indonesian, but I don't think about it unless someone points it out.". This participant reflects how cultural identity comes into focus mainly when prompted by external forces.

Ambiguity and Search for Identity

Many participants felt unsure about their cultural identity, often feeling caught between two worlds without fully belonging to either:

"Sometimes I feel stuck between cultures. I'm not fully Dutch, but I'm not entirely Surinamese either.". This participant expresses the challenge of not feeling fully aligned with either culture.

"It's confusing. I feel like I belong everywhere and nowhere at the same time."
This captures the experience of ambiguity, where they can't choose between multiple cultural spaces.

Interest in Cultural Heritage

Despite the ambiguity, participants showed interest in learning about their cultural roots and exploring their heritage:

"I never really thought about it much growing up, but now I want to know more about my family's history and what makes us who we are.". This shows a growing curiosity about their cultural background as they mature.

"There's definitely a curiosity about my cultures. It's definitely something I want to explore more in the future.". This participant expresses a growing interest in exploring their heritage.

Reflection on Cultural Identity

The interviews themselves prompted participants to reflect more on their identity, leading to moments of realization:

"I don't really know how to define my cultural identity. it's not something I've ever been asked before.". This participant initially struggled to articulate their cultural identity due to a lack of prior reflection.

"Talking about it during this interview made me realize I actually do have a lot to say about my identity. I just needed the space to think about it.". The interview process helped this participant clarify their thoughts on their cultural background and identity.

"This conversation has made me more aware of how I feel about my cultures." The interview created a space for participants to reflect on how they manage their dual cultural identities, which they hadn't previously considered.

Diversity of Individual Experiences

Even among participants from similar backgrounds, there were significant differences in how they experienced their cultural identity:

"Growing up in the same house, we still had totally different experiences with our cultures. My sister didn't really bother learning the language, but it was important to me". This shows how personal priorities can shape different cultural experiences, even among close family members.

"I feel like my sister sees our heritage in a different way. She's approaches it differently than I do". This participant notes how their sister's approach to connecting with their heritage differs from their own.

Risk of generalization

Due to the depth and personal specificity of the narratives, it is difficult to generalize the findings to a broader population. Each participant's experience with bicultural identity was highly individualistic, influenced by unique personal and cultural circumstances, which makes the results less applicable on a wider scale.

Self-selection bias

The recruitment of participants through personal networks may have introduced a self-selection bias, as individuals who chose to participate may already have a particular interest in exploring their cultural identity. This could lead to an overrepresentation of participants who are more reflective or engaged with their biculturalism, potentially skewing the findings.

Memory reliance

The interviews relied on participants' recollections of past events, which may not fully reflect their experiences as they happened. As their perspectives have likely shifted over time, subtle inaccuracies could emerge, with memories being reshaped by current views, possibly altering the authenticity of the narratives. This reliance on retrospective accounts could affect the accuracy of insights into the evolving nature of bicultural identity.

Conclusion

The interviews offered in-depth insights into the lived experiences of bicultural individuals, revealing the complexities of how they navigate their cultural identities. Participants shared diverse perspectives, with some feeling a passive connection to their cultural heritage while others actively sought to explore and understand their roots. Themes such as ambiguity, pride, and curiosity emerged, showing that bicultural identity is not static but continually shaped by personal experiences and social interactions.

The research highlighted how external factors, like family dynamics and societal expectations, influence the way participants connect to their cultural identities. Despite shared backgrounds, even siblings had differing approaches to cultural engagement, emphasizing the personal nature of these experiences. While the interviews provided rich, individual stories, they also underscored the challenge of generalizing findings across a broader population.

As the next step, the focus will shift from personal narratives to researching existing products that support cultural identity development. This will involve analyzing how these products facilitate cultural exploration and engagement, providing further insights that will inform the design phase of the project. By understanding the current landscape of tools available for bicultural children, we can identify gaps and opportunities for innovative solutions that foster a deeper connection to their cultural heritage.

# Chapter 4
Deconstructing existing products

This chapter focuses on the deconstructing existing products to analyze how they are being used to support cultural identity. The ViP framework will be taken as inspiration to analyze these products.

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore existing products that help children develop their cultural identity, using the Vision in Product Design (ViP) framework (Lloyd, Hekker, & van Dijk, 2006) as a method to deconstruct and analyze them. The ViP framework is particularly useful for breaking down products into key components (product, interaction, and context levels) to better understand how they engage children in cultural identity formation.

By applying this framework, I aim to identify patterns and qualities that foster cultural pride, creativity, and emotional engagement. This approach allows for a thorough analysis of how current products engage support children with their cultural identity, without delving into the redesign or future-focused aspects.

The purpose of this deconstruction is to identify patterns and insights into what works well and what can be improved in fostering cultural identity in children. These insights will serve as a foundation for the next steps in the design process, particularly in developing the workshops.
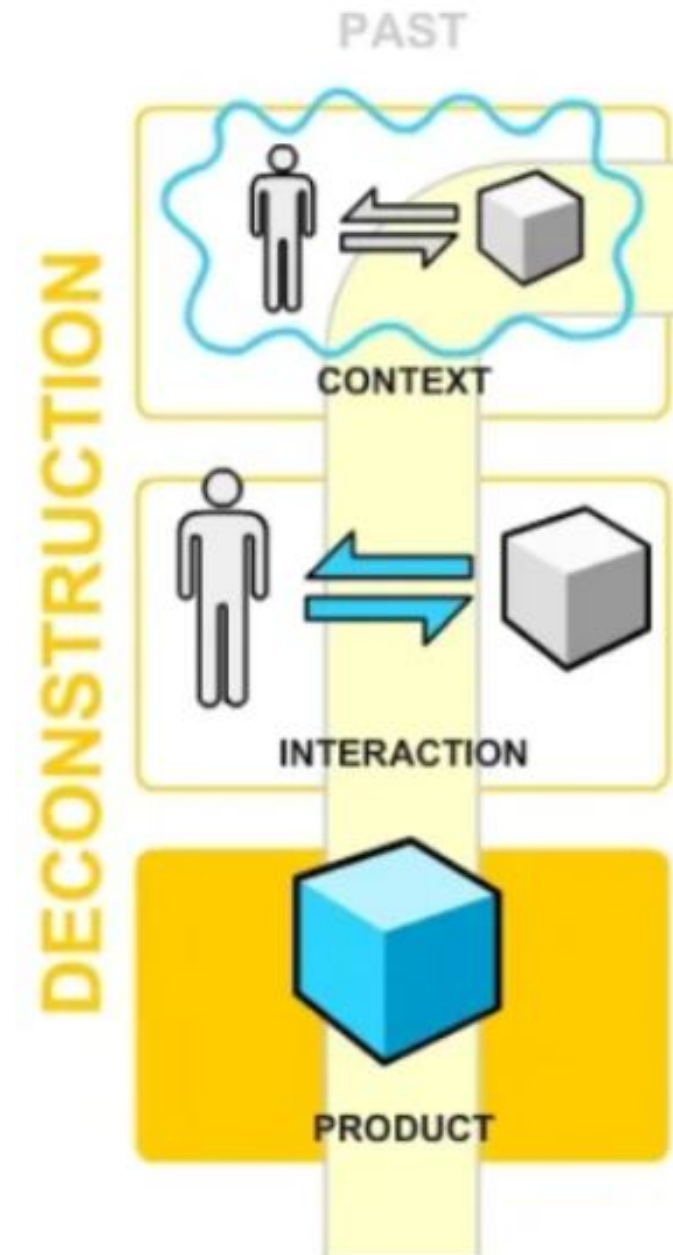
The ViP (Vision in Product Design) framework (Lloyd, Hekker, & van Dijk, 2006) will be applied to deconstruct existing products that help bicultural children with their cultural identity formation by analyzing them through three phases: product, interaction, and context levels:

The product level focuses on analyzing the extrinsic and intrinsic characteristics of the product. Extrinsic values include technical aspects such as materials, dimensions, and features. Intrinsic values do not depend on how users interact with the product but rather reflect the design qualities that are built into the product. (affordances)

The interaction level explores the interaction qualities between the child and the product. Here, the analysis will explore how the product engages children emotionally and cognitively.

The context level considers the environments in which these products are used, such as schools or homes, identifying the cultural and societal challenges they address.

4.1 The four categories

Eventually, these factors were clustered into 4 categories, each representing different approaches to fostering cultural identity. These categories are:

Stories involve the traditional and powerful mediums for transmitting culture and values, providing both mirrors and windows for children to see themselves and others.

Co-creation focuses on hands-on activities that allow children to actively partake in cultural expression, solidifying their understanding and appreciation through creation.

Interactive learning games offer interactive and engaging ways to learn about cultural norms and values, making education a fun and communal experience.

Care involves role-playing and caregiving scenarios that embed cultural norms and values, fostering empathy and deeper emotional connections.

4.1.1 Category: Story

During the research, I identified numerous story-based products aimed at helping children with cultural identity formation. These products utilize storytelling to connect children with their heritage in ways that resonate emotionally with them. A common thread among them is the focus on cultural expression, using relatable characters and narratives to reflect cultural values and traditions. These products engage children emotionally, promoting cultural pride and understanding, which is why I grouped them together into the "Stories" category. Their shared emphasis on storytelling as a cultural teaching tool and emotional engagement informed this categorization.

Product level

Format: Depending on the format, story-based products can be conveyed through paper (e.g for books or pictures), digital platforms (e.g for apps and social media), DVDs (e.g. for movies), verbally, etc. Each offers a different mode of engagement.

Features: Story products include elements like visuals, audio narration, or interactive features that make the narrative accessible to children of different learning styles and preferences. The Coco film, for instance, uses vivid animation, cultural music, and voice acting to capture the essence of Mexican traditions. While a family picture is more a personal, tangible artifact.
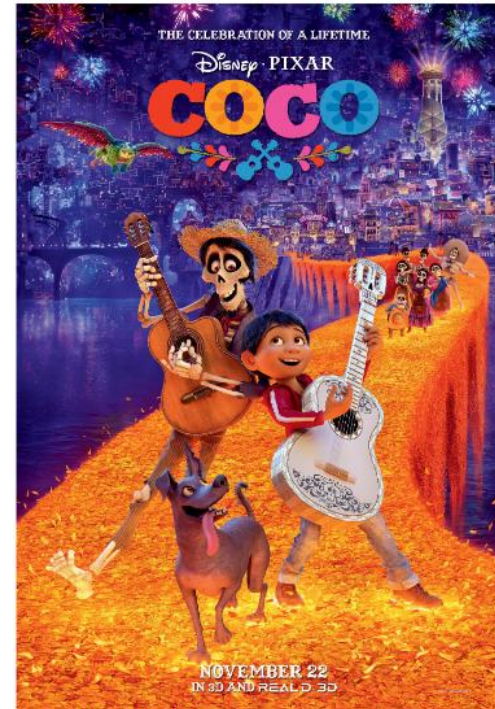
The movie Coco effectively highlights Mexican heritage, particularly through its representation of Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). Using vibrant animation, traditional music, and cultural symbols such as calaveras (sugar skulls) and ofrendas (altars), the film immerses viewers in this significant cultural celebration. The story of Miguel's journey to reconnect with his family and heritage promotes Mexican cultural values and traditions (Unkrich & Molina, 2017).

Interaction level

Active participation

Interactive elements, like choosing story outcomes, engage children more deeply, allowing them to personalize the narrative, which enhances their involvement.

Personal reflection

As the children connect with cultural themes of the stories, such as Miguel's journey to embrace his roots in Coco, children are encouraged to draw parallels to their own lives. This reflective interaction deepens their understanding of identity by fostering a connection to family traditions and lineage, making cultural heritage more personally meaningful.

Immersive experience

This is a quality designed into a product like Coco that creates an immersive environment for cultural storytelling. It engages viewers by using vibrant storytelling, traditional music, and cultural symbols from Mexican heritage. This immersive environment helps children emotionally connect with their cultural background, making the story both meaningful and memorable.

Inspiration

The inspiration designed in these products stems from its narrative. Products like family stories or Coco present characters who inspire children to adopt these values in their own lives. These characters act as role models, helping children develop a sense of pride in their cultural identity.

4.1.2 Category: Co-creation

During the research, I identified various co-creation workshops designed to help children explore their cultural identity through facilitated hands-on activities. These workshops emphasize active participation, allowing children to express their cultural heritage through tangible creations such as artwork, crafts, or digital projects. Co-creation encourages collaboration and collective cultural exploration, making it an interactive and community-driven learning experience. This shared, creative process fosters a sense of pride in cultural heritage, which is why I categorized them under "Co-Creation." The common thread is their focus on cultural exploration through collaborative creation, engaging children emotionally and creatively in their identity formation.

Product level

Format: Co-creation workshops take many forms, from physical workshops in schools or community centers to online platforms where children can engage in cultural crafts, digital creations, or virtual collaborations. Materials used may include traditional tools like paints or fabric, as well as digital resources for creating artwork or digital storytelling.

Features: Co-creation workshops often include collaborative tools such as interactive tutorials, design templates, and shared platforms where children can showcase their work. For instance, in digital co-creation platforms, children can collaborate remotely, designing culturally relevant items or telling stories with multimedia elements.

This picture was taken in the Rotterdam Central Library that exemplifies the co-creation approach in cultural identity formation. Titled "Tapijten van Ver", this project was a collaboration between children from Delfshaven and artisans from Morocco. The children explored Amazigh patterns and colors used in traditional Moroccan carpets, deepening their understanding of this cultural craft. Through the creative process, where tradition and imagination intersected, participants learned from each other. This hands-on co-creation experience not only fostered cultural exploration but also aimed to instill pride in both the women artisans and the children for their collective contributions.

Interaction level

Supported cultural awareness

Children experience supported cultural awareness as they receive encouraging feedback from peers and facilitators throughout the co-creation process. This guidance helps them feel empowered to explore and express their cultural identity, reinforcing their connection to their heritage while boosting confidence in their creative contributions.

Sense of unity

Interaction fosters a sense of unity as children collaborate with peers and facilitators. Working together on shared cultural projects creates camaraderie, encouraging them to appreciate and celebrate their cultural heritage collectively.

Reflective discussion

The workshops are designed to create opportunities for children to engage in reflective discussions, where they can articulate their cultural identity and share insights with peers. This fosters a deeper understanding of their heritage and encourages self-awareness, enriching their cultural exploration through dialogue.

Creative expression

The workshops provide structured spaces for children to creatively express their cultural identity through personalized choices in patterns, symbols, and colors, allowing them to explore and reflect on their heritage.

4.1.3 Category: Interactive learning games

During the research process, many interactive learning games were identified as valuable tools for helping children explore their cultural identity. These games use a blend of gameplay mechanics and culturally themed challenges to engage children both emotionally and cognitively. By prompting children to reflect on their heritage while navigating game tasks, they effectively combine learning with entertainment. This fusion of fun and education makes these games a powerful tool for cultural exploration, which is why they were categorized together under "Interactive Learning Games."

Product level

Format: Interactive learning games can take the form of digital apps, physical board games, or prompt cards. These formats allow for both structured gameplay and flexible, on-the-go learning opportunities.

Features: Common features include tasks, quizzes, and prompts that encourage players to reflect on cultural symbols, traditions, or stories. For example, prompt cards might ask questions about the player's cultural background, sparking discussions that help children connect with their identity. Digital games might involve interactive characters or customizable avatars reflecting different cultural traditions.

One of the interactive learning games identified is the Culture Wheel card game, designed to foster cultural exploration and sharing among participants. The game involves players standing in a circle and taking turns sharing cultural stories based on prompts from the game's cards. Each card focuses on a different cultural component, such as traditions or values. After each player shares their story, the group rotates, and the next player shares on a new component. This interactive format encourages in-depth conversation about personal heritage, making cultural learning engaging and communal.

Interaction level

Engaging

Interacting with the game should be enjoyable and immersive, keeping children interested in participating while incorporating cultural lessons seamlessly into the gameplay experience.

Emotional growth

As children navigate the cultural challenges presented in the game, they experience personal growth, fostering emotional development and a deeper connection to their heritage.

Stimulated experience

Prompts and questions within the game spark curiosity, encouraging children to explore cultural facts, traditions, and histories through play, thus deepening their knowledge.

Prompted insights

Through gameplay, children are prompted to uncover new cultural knowledge, learning about historical events, symbols, or traditions in moments of discovery designed into the game's structure.

4.1.4 Category: Care

During the research, I identified various products that emphasize caregiving roles tied to cultural traditions, categorizing them under "Care." These products, like plush toys (Guacardo) and digital caregiving tools (e.g., Tamagotchi) help children learn empathy, responsibility, and cultural values. Through role-playing caregiving scenarios in homes, schools, or community spaces, children emotionally connect with their heritage while learning through immersive, hands-on experiences. These qualities highlight the educational and cultural significance of caregiving, making these products fit naturally into the care category.

Product level

Format: Care-related products come in a variety of formats, including physical toys (e.g., plush toys like Guacardo), digital platforms (e.g., virtual pets like Tamagotchi), role-playing kits, and even augmented reality experiences.

Features: These products often incorporate interactive elements such as decision-making, caregiving actions, and feedback systems. Whether it's consistently caring for a virtual pet in Tamagotchi or using a role-playing kit to simulate caregiving scenarios, these features help teach values of empathy, responsibility, and cultural connection. Additionally, these products can serve as companions, encouraging children to share stories or experiences, deepening their emotional engagement such as with Guacardo.

Guacardo is a small, plush avocado toy with arms, legs, and a playful face, originally from the Latinx youth website "wearemitu" (Elias, 2019). It became more than just a fun object for its owner, Vanessa Elias, as it evolved into a symbol of her Latinx heritage. Living in an environment with a smaller Latinx population, Guacardo allowed Vanessa to stay connected to her roots. For Vanessa, Guacardo became a way to embrace her identity and maintain a sense of cultural pride, even in a place where her community was less represented. Guacardo allowed Vanessa to express her Latinx identity and connect with her heritage in a new context.

Tamagotchi is a digital pet that requires users to care for it by feeding, playing with, and cleaning up after it (Bandai Co, 1996) . Released in the 1990s, it has become a symbol of digital caregiving, teaching responsibility and empathy. The core interaction with a Tamagotchi revolves around nurturing the virtual pet to ensure its health and happiness, which fosters a sense of responsibility in users. This interactive experience mirrors real-life caregiving roles and can subtly reinforce habits and attitudes toward taking care of others, helping children connect these virtual practices with values from their cultural background.

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Interaction level

Gratitude for tradition

Engaging with products like Tamagotchi or Guacardo helps children appreciate the values and traditions that caregiving roles represent. As they care for these objects, they build gratitude for the cultural knowledge and responsibilities they are learning, reflecting an emotional appreciation for their heritage.

Cultural preservation

By engaging with care products, children develop a deeper understanding of cultural traditions and practices. These products allow children to experience and perpetuate cultural caregiving norms, reinforcing their role in the continuation of their heritage. Through active participation, children help keep these traditions alive, bridging the gap between past and present.

Empathy

Products such as Tamagotchi or role-playing kits nurture empathy by providing children with opportunities to care for others, whether it's a virtual pet or a culturally significant figure like Guacardo. This experience helps children emotionally connect with the object of their care and builds empathy, enhancing their understanding of the emotional and cultural aspects of caregiving.

4.2 Limitations

Speculative evaluation

One of the limitations in applying the VIP framework is the speculative nature of the evaluation. The analysis of existing products using context, product, and interaction levels relied heavily on my own subjective interpretations rather than feedback from actual users. While the framework offers structured deconstruction, the insights drawn from this process may not fully reflect how bicultural children truly experience and interact with these products. This makes the evaluation speculative, based more on theoretical understanding rather than real-world testing or participant feedback.

Over-reliance on identified qualities

While the VIP framework allows for a thorough deconstruction of existing products, it may inadvertently lead to an over-reliance on the existing features of those products. This means that the creative ideation for new products could be influenced or constrained by the designs already present in the market. The framework encourages designers to analyze the past, but in some cases, this could limit forward-thinking innovation, particularly when new cultural expressions or needs emerge that aren't well addressed by current products.

Generalization by clustering

One key limitation of my approach is that the VIP framework typically focuses on deconstructing a single product, whereas I applied it to multiple products grouped into categories (e.g., stories, co-creation). This broad application may have diluted the depth and specificity of the analysis, leading to more generalized insights rather than a focused deconstruction of individual product attributes. Grouping products together under broad categories may have obscured unique design features and context-specific interactions, which the VIP framework traditionally seeks to explore in detail. misrepresentations that fail to honor the true complexity and fluidity of these cultures.

Varied importance of qualities

Another limitation of the existing product analysis is the assumption that all identified qualities (e.g. empathy, creativity, and personal connection) carry equal importance in fostering cultural identity. In reality, certain qualities may hold more significance depending on the child and context. Moving forward, it will be challenging to measure the specific impact of each quality on children's experiences. To address this, the evaluation of these qualities will focus on identifying which qualities most effectively help children preserve their cultural pride. Rather than assuming equal weight, further research will be done to see which qualities resonate most with the children..

Not full use of framework

Another limitation of applying the VIP framework in this project is that I only utilized it for the deconstruction phase and did not extend its use to the design of present or future products. Since my primary interest was in understanding and analyzing existing products, the framework was not used to guide the development of new concepts. This decision limits the potential for innovative thinking that the full VIP process could bring, as it typically includes both deconstruction and future-oriented design strategies to respond to evolving cultural needs.

Not prioritizing context level

Another limitation was that I did not prioritize the context level when deconstructing the existing products. Since each product is used in different environments, such as homes, schools, or community spaces, researching all possible contexts would have required more resources and time than was available. Instead, I focused on the product and interaction levels, as I was more interested in how the products themselves engage with children and foster cultural identity, rather than exploring the varied contexts in which they are used.

Conclusion

In this analysis of existing products, the VIP framework was applied to deconstruct products across four categories: Stories, Co-Creation, Interactive Learning Games, and Care. Each category revealed unique ways in which products help children engage with their cultural identity through storytelling, hands-on creation, interactive play, and caregiving scenarios. By clustering these products, key qualities such as emotional engagement, cultural preservation, and creative expression were identified as central to fostering cultural pride and understanding.

However, the analysis highlighted limitations, such as the speculative nature of product evaluations and the challenge of generalizing insights across multiple products grouped into categories. Despite these limitations, this research offers valuable insights into how children might interact with these cultural identity-building tools.

The next step in this research is to conduct a workshop with primary school children at Het Tangram. This workshop will build on the findings from the product analysis by creating activities that test how the children interact with the identified qualities from the 4 categories.

Chapter 5
First wall scenario

This chapter explores bicultural identity development by combining interview insights with Phinney's (1990) framework. A scenario around the "first wall" phase, where bicultural individuals question their identity and belonging, is developed to highlight key challenges and identify design opportunities for supporting them.

5.1 First wall scenario

Taking inspiration from Phinney's framework (1990), a scenario around the "first wall", was developed based on interview insights. This is a phase when bicultural individuals question their cultural identity and sense of belonging. Though not reflective of every participant's experience, this scenario highlights common challenges and provides a practical framework to guide the creation of support solutions for this critical identity stage.
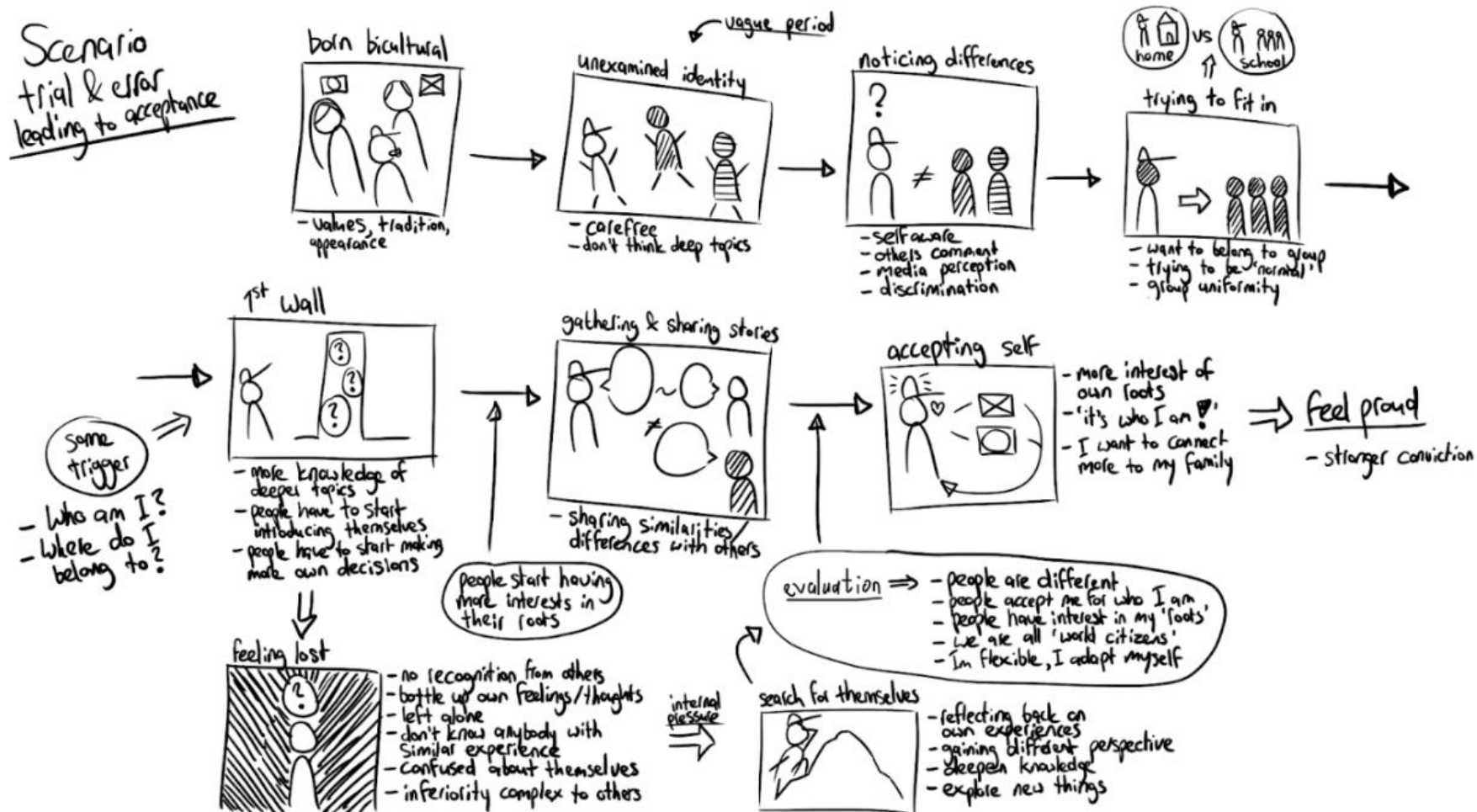
Phase 1: Early Foundation

In the early stages of childhood, a bicultural individual passively absorbs values, traditions, and cultural norms from their family environment. At this stage, they are unaware of the deeper implications of their bicultural heritage, simply living within the environment provided by their parents and community. This phase lays the foundation for future identity development without conscious reflection.

Phase 2: Unexamined Identity

During early childhood, typically before adolescence, the individual doesn't give much thought to cultural identity. Their understanding of identity is simple, as they are mostly carefree and unaware of the complexities of belonging to multiple cultures. The influence of their bicultural background is present but remains unexamined at this point.

Phase 3: Awakening and Self-Awareness

Around the age of 10, as the individual enters primary school, they begin to notice differences between themselves and their peers. This phase marks an awakening to their bicultural identity, often triggered by external factors such as comments from peers, media representations, or experiences of exclusion. The child starts to become more self-conscious about their cultural background, appearance, and values, prompting questions about belonging and identity.

Phase 4: The First Wall

By the time the individual reaches high school, typically around age 15, they confront the "first wall." This phase is characterized by deeper questioning of identity as they start to introduce themselves to new social groups and make more independent decisions. The earlier simplicity of their cultural identity gives way to confusion and complexity, and they may struggle with feelings of isolation and self-doubt as they try to reconcile their dual heritage.

Phase 5: Feeling lost

During this stage, often caused by the "first wall," the individual may feel lost, isolated, and uncertain about their identity. Without clear guidance or shared experiences to lean on, they often grapple with confusion regarding their place within both cultures. The length of this period varies, with some finding resolution quickly and others taking years. This stage is marked by a search for clarity and personal alignment amid the uncertainty.

Phase 6: Gathering and Sharing Stories

As the individual matures, they begin sharing their personal stories and listening to others' experiences. This phase allows for a deeper understanding of both their own identity and how others navigate similar challenges. Through these interactions, they start to see commonalities and differences, which helps break the isolation of the previous phase and fosters a sense of connection.

Phase 7: Acceptance and Pride

Eventually, the individual reaches a point of self-acceptance where they embrace their cultural roots and heritage. This phase is characterized by pride in their bicultural identity, allowing them to confidently affirm, "This is who I am." With a stronger connection to their cultural background, they continue to explore and grow, developing a balanced sense of belonging in both their cultural worlds. This phase marks a period of self-confidence and balance in navigating their dual cultural worlds.

Conclusion

The scenario of the "first wall" captures the common struggles and experiences that bicultural individuals face as they navigate their dual cultural heritage. While not every individual will experience these phases in the same way, the framework provides valuable insights into the critical identity challenges that arise, particularly during adolescence. By understanding these stages (from the passive absorption of culture in early childhood to the eventual acceptance and pride in bicultural identity) designers can develop more effective tools and programs to support bicultural individuals through these formative experiences.

This scenario lays the groundwork for designing interventions that promote cultural pride, self-awareness, and belonging, ultimately fostering a healthier identity development process.

Chapter 6
Scoping

Using the first wall scenario as foundation, the project scope and design goal will be defined

6.1 The scope

Why children 9-12 years old?

The "first wall" scenario emphasizes that bicultural children aged 9-12 are at a critical stage of identity formation. At this age, they begin exploring their cultural identity and sense of self, but have yet to encounter the intense social pressures of adolescence, such as peer influence. Research suggests that this stage is critical for developing competence and a clear sense of identity, factors essential for long-term well-being (Schwartz et al., 2010).

The interviews (see chapter 3) reinforced this idea, as many participants recalled how their sense of cultural identity started to form in late childhood but wasn't fully addressed until later. Participants often reflected that at this age, cultural identity "just existed" in the background of their lives, only becoming a point of reflection when external factors like peer interactions or media prompted them to think about their dual heritage. Therefore, focusing on children in this age group is critical for providing early support in their cultural exploration, helping to equip them with a strong foundation before they encounter more complex identity challenges later in adolescence.

Why primary school?

The educational environment plays a significant role in shaping a child's identity, particularly in multicultural contexts. The interview insights highlighted that many participants often felt uncertain about their cultural identity when there is no structured support or space to explore it openly. They didn't actively think about their cultural background unless it was brought up by others (see chapter 3). This suggests that without intentional reflection and discussion, cultural identity remains unexamined.

By encouraging cultural exploration in schools, children can develop a clearer sense of self and build resilience before encountering the pressures of adolescence. As noted in the literature research, schools are ideal for implementing these strategies because they are important to children's social lives and provide a space where children can engage with peers from various cultural backgrounds (Ward, 2001).

Preparing for first wall

Based on the scenario (see chapter 4), the "first wall" is a critical moment when bicultural individuals begin questioning their identity, often leading to feelings of confusion and isolation. Later, through sharing stories and engaging with others, they find connection and eventually reach self-acceptance and pride in their heritage.

Children aged 9-12 haven't yet experienced this phase of sharing and understanding their cultural identity. Therefore, to help them navigate the challenges ahead, the design will focus on easing their experience of the "first wall" by fostering early cultural reflection and expression. By introducing tools that encourage children to explore and share their heritage before adolescence, the aim is to strengthen their cultural pride and resilience, preparing them for the identity challenges that lie ahead.

Impact scenario

The impact scenario focuses on helping bicultural children aged 9-12 before they encounter the "first wall," a phase where they question their cultural identity. At this age, children are starting to explore their cultural identity but haven't faced the pressures of adolescence. My goal is to design something that encourages early cultural reflection and expression, building resilience and pride.

Later in life, individuals often gather stories from others, which helps shape their identity, but children lack these tools. By providing support before they face the "first wall," the aim is to ease their transition, making cultural identity challenges easier to navigate.

6.2 Design goal

This leads to the following design goal:

"Help primary school children between the age of 9-12 preserve their sense of pride of their cultural heritages for when the first wall appears"

Impact Scenario

design intervention
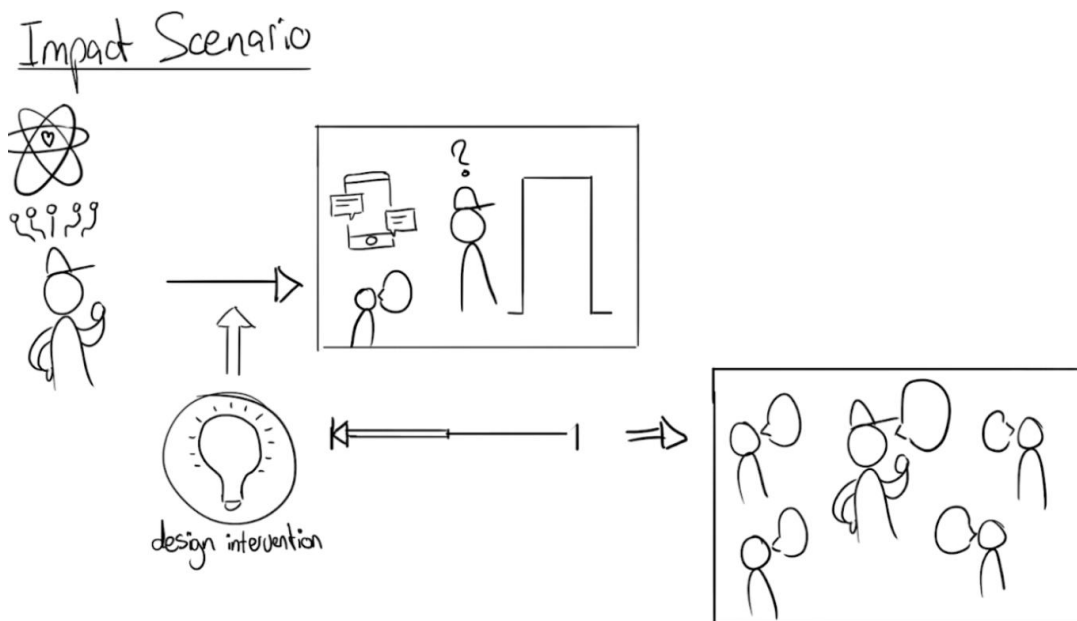
Conclusion

Based on the scenario (see chapter 4), the "first wall" is a critical moment when bicultural individuals begin questioning their identity, often leading to feelings of confusion and isolation. Later, through sharing stories and engaging with others, they find connection and eventually reach self-acceptance and pride in their heritage.

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Chapter 7
Workshops

After defining the project scope and design goal, 2 workshops are conducted. This chapter will explain the workshop process and the evaluation of the interaction qualities.

Introduction

The workshop was conducted at Het Tangram, a primary school in Rotterdam, chosen as an ideal setting for exploring bicultural identity development. Rotterdam, as highlighted in the literature research, represents a contemporary urban environment where diverse cultures intersect (see chapter 2). This makes it a valuable context for examining how bicultural children navigate their sense of identity.

The workshop's primary goal was to assess how well the qualities identified in the four key categories (Stories, Co-Creation, Interactive Learning Games, and Care) help the children preserve their sense of pride in their cultural heritage. By engaging in activities designed around these categories, the workshop sought to understand which methods best resonate with the children.

Workshop process

The participants were a group of 6 bicultural primary school children aged 10-11, selected by their teacher from Het Tangram in Rotterdam. The workshop involved two sessions with the same participants, ensuring continuity in engagement and feedback collection.

Workshop Structure
Session Length: Each session lasted between 1 to 1.5 hours and concluded with a short feedback session to capture the children's immediate reflections on the activities. The workshops were around 2 weeks from each other.
Workshop Setup: The workshops were conducted at Het Tangram, where the children were introduced to the tools and activities. They were guided by me with clear instructions on how to proceed with each task, ensuring they understood the purpose and structure of the workshop.

Data collection

Participation Observations: The children's involvement throughout the workshop was carefully monitored, focusing on how they interacted with the provided materials and their peers. Key patterns in how they expressed cultural aspects during the activities were observed, offering insights into their comfort levels and creative engagement.

Creative Outputs: Visual and physical outputs from the children, such as drawings and crafted objects, were collected. These were analyzed to understand how the children represented their cultural backgrounds through the use of tangible elements. Recurring themes and cultural symbols provided further insight into their personal connections to their heritage.

Verbal Feedback & Interactions: Structured questions and discussions during the workshop helped gather verbal responses from the children. Their reflections and dialogue about cultural identity were noted, analyzing both their engagement with the tasks and their emotional responses to them.

7.1 First workshop

Objective: The following questions guide the first workshop as they align with the core goals of fostering bicultural children's exploration of their cultural identity. By focusing on how the children perceive their own cultural identity and testing different methods to facilitate reflection, the workshop is designed to uncover effective ways to encourage children to engage with their heritage.

- How do the children think about their own cultural identity?
- What methods can facilitate the children in reflecting on their cultural identity?
- Which qualities from the 4 categories resonate with the children through the workshop activities?

Prepared activities

Zog and Miko video: The role-playing activity for the first workshop involved an immersive video designed to engage children in the fictional world of Zog and Miko, two alien characters from different planets with distinct cultural backgrounds. Drawing inspiration from Dora the Explorer, the video followed the characters on their journey of cultural discovery and exchange. Similar to Dora, the video frequently broke the fourth wall, addressing the children directly with questions or encouraging them to enact certain actions. This interactive approach was intended to encourage reflection, discussion, and participation, helping the children actively explore cultural identity alongside Zog and Miko's experiences.
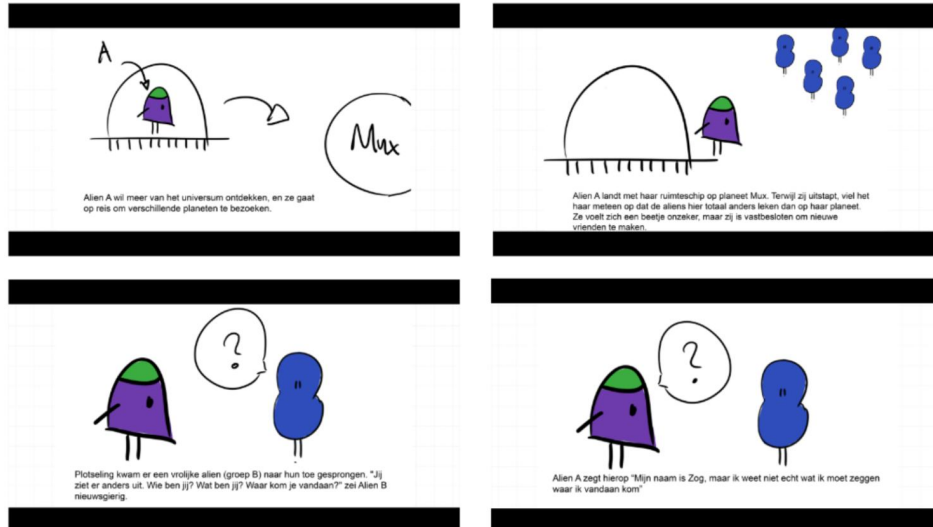
Roleplay contextual cards: Before watching the video, the children were divided into two groups: one representing Zog and the other representing Miko. Zog's group explored her experiences of feeling different due to her heritage, while Miko's group focused on his more homogeneous cultural background. Each group received background information through the cards about their character, including details about their cultural values, interests, and hobbies. For example, Zog's group learned about her favorite food, while Miko's group learned about the unique ways he greets others.

The intention behind this activity was to raise awareness of cultural differences and similarities by encouraging the children to step into the characters' shoes. It aims to further promote empathy and cultural understanding about how diverse backgrounds shape experiences and perspectives.
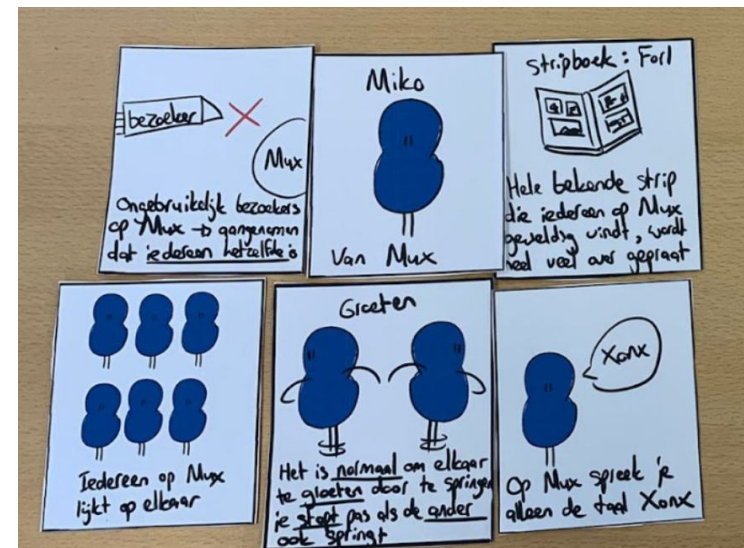
Toolkit prompts: The role-playing video activity also included a sub-activity where the children were tasked with solving problems presented by the aliens in the story. At certain points, the video would pause, and the children were asked to help Zog and Miko by using the toolkit provided. For example, one prompt was to "create something that helps Zog and Miko express their cultural identity."

The toolkit consisted of a variety of materials, including pencils, clay, blocks, tape, stickers, post-it cards, and decorative cloth, selected to allow for hands-on, inclusive participation. These materials encouraged creative expression through multiple mediums, enabling children to visually and tangibly represent cultural elements.

The intention behind this activity was to foster creativity while allowing the children to actively reflect on how they express their own cultural identities. By engaging in problem-solving tasks tied to the narrative, the children not only connected with the characters but also explored their own sense of cultural pride and self-expression. The insights of the children's creations with this toolkit can be seen in Appendix B
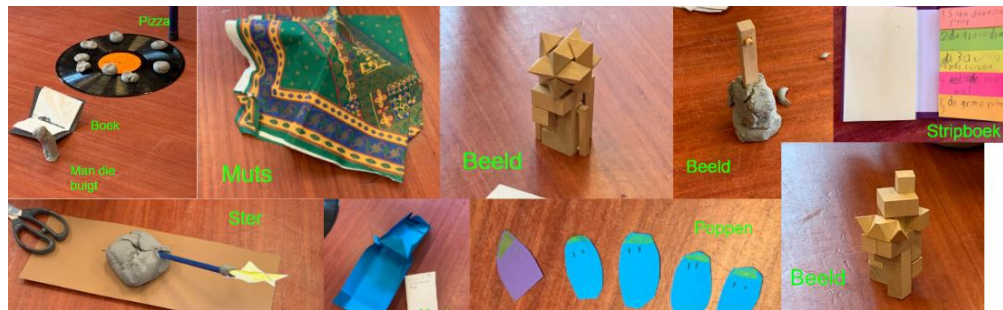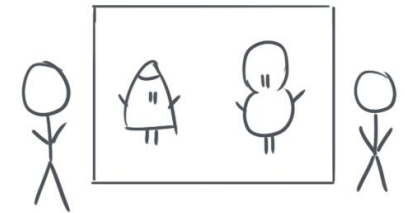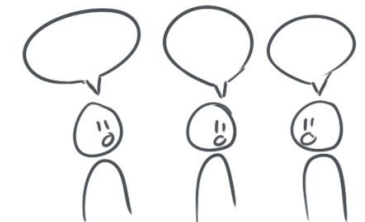
First workshop process

The workshop began by introducing children to Zog and Miko through character trait cards. Next, was engaging the children in an interactive roleplay video, where they follow Zog and Miko's journey. During the video, the children used the toolkit for specific tasks. At last, the workshop concluded with a group discussion where children shared their experiences and answered questions from the facilitator.

7.1.1 First workshop insights

The workshop at Het Tangram was designed to explore how bicultural children perceive and express their cultural identity through creative activities, focusing on testing the effects and qualities identified from existing products. The goal was to support these children before they encounter the "first wall" phase of identity questioning, equipping them with tools for self-expression and confidence in their heritage. Key observations include:

Immersive roleplay (story)
 Roleplay proved to be an engaging method, helping children step into different personas and cultural contexts. This immersive experience made the exploration of cultural identity dynamic and relatable, keeping the children's attention throughout and made them want to participate actively.

Fictional Characters vs. Personal Experience (story)
While effective for engagement, the fictional characters did not always align with the children's real-life experiences. This highlights a gap in translating complex personal and cultural identity into concrete, fictional representations.

Limitations of personal connection (story)
While fictional narratives sparked creativity, they limited deeper personal connections, as children found it more difficult to reflect on their own experiences through these characters.

Struggling to express (Co-creation)
The creative task, where children had to use the toolkit to help Zog and Miko express their cultural identity, proved difficult for some. Without proper facilitation, a few participants struggled with translating their ideas into physical creations.

Lack of reflective discussion (Co-creation)
 There was limited discussion between the children during the activities. While they engaged in the tasks, there wasn't much collaborative dialogue or sharing of ideas about cultural identity.

Lack sense of unity (Co-creation)
Although the children worked in groups, the lack of personal story-sharing limited opportunities for deeper connection and unity. Activities encouraging storytelling and collaborative discussions could foster stronger group cohesion and a more meaningful sense of unity.

Distracted to engage (interactive learning games)
There was an uneven pace in how the children completed their creations. Some children finished much faster than others, leading to distractions while they waited for the rest of the group. This highlighted the need for better time management or supplementary activities to keep the children engaged while maintaining the group dynamic.

Stimulated curiosity (interactive learning games)
The character cards, which depicted different personas with distinct cultural backgrounds, were particularly helpful in encouraging children to understand and empathize with cultural differences.

Empathy through roleplay (care)

The character cards, which depicted different personas with distinct cultural backgrounds, were particularly helpful in encouraging children to understand and empathize with cultural differences.

7.1.2 First workshop implications

Improve personal connection (care)

To address the lack of personal connection observed in the first workshop, an additional activity will be introduced to enhance this aspect. This new activity will encourage children to bring in items from home that represent their cultural heritage or to create artwork that reflects personal experiences related to their background.

Facilitate Reflective Discussion (care)

Due to the lack of opportunities for the children to talk about their own stories in the first workshop, they were unable to share much of their own cultural traditions or reflect on the importance of preserving them. To address this, the workshop will introduce structured opportunities for the children to discuss their own cultural traditions.

Lack of cultural preservation exploration (care)

Due to the lack of opportunities for the children to talk about their own stories in the first workshop,they were unable to share much of their own cultural traditions or reflect on the importance of preserving them. To address this, the workshop will introduce structured opportunities for the children to discuss their own cultural traditions.

The first workshop provided valuable insights into how children engage with activities designed to explore their cultural identities. While roleplay and creative tasks were engaging, limitations such as the lack of personal connection and minimal discussion highlighted areas for improvement. By implementing the changes, the next workshop will be better equipped to address the core qualities identified, such as personal connection, empathy, and cultural reflection.
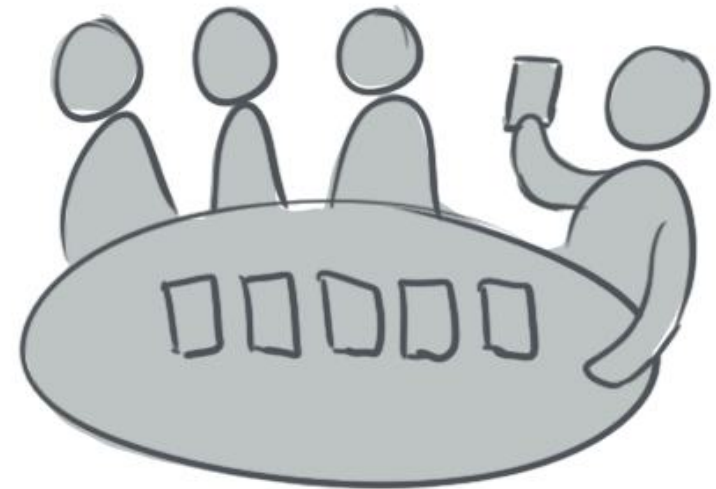
7.2 Second workshop

Objective: The second workshop aims to assess whether the changed activities made in response to the first workshop's feedback successfully improve personal connection and reflective discussion among participants. Additionally, it seeks to evaluate how these new activities continue to support the other identified qualities.

Prepared activity

Prompt cards: In this activity, children will participate in guided discussions about their cultural identities, using prompt cards to spark conversation. The purpose is to deepen personal connections and encourage meaningful group discussions by allowing each child to share and reflect on their cultural background. This activity is designed to offer a structured yet adaptable framework for personal storytelling and collective reflection, creating an open environment for children to explore their cultural experiences.

Second workshop process

In this activity, each child randomly selects a prompt card with a question about cultural identity, personal experiences, or traditions. After reading the question aloud, they share a personal story related to their culture, such as a favorite dish or important tradition. The group then discusses the same question, comparing experiences and identifying similarities and differences. The facilitator guides the conversation with follow-up questions to encourage deeper reflection on how cultural traditions foster connections to family and community.

7.2.1 Second workshop insights

The follow-up workshop was designed to further explore and understand the cultural experiences of primary school children, utilizing prompt cards to initiate discussions about their personal cultural narratives. Here's a comprehensive breakdown of the insights gained:

Immersive roleplay (story)

The children still remembered Zog and Miko two weeks after the first workshop due to the immersive video roleplay activity. They occasionally thought about the characters, showing a lasting impression. This reflects personal reflection, as the roleplay deepened their emotional connection to cultural themes and made the experience more memorable, enhancing their engagement with cultural identity exploration.

Emotional granularity (story)

Using prompt cards helped children reflect on their emotions tied to cultural experiences, fostering personal reflection. This process deepened their connection to their heritage, aligning with the quality of personal reflection by helping them better understand and take pride in their cultural background.

Sense of unity (Co-creation)

The sharing of personal and cultural narratives not only enriched the workshop's discussions but also strengthened the bonds among the participants, fostering a space where each child's unique cultural heritages could be celebrated.

Inclusive facilitation (Co-creation)

The role of the facilitator was crucial in guiding the discussions, ensuring inclusivity, and maintaining the flow of conversation. The need for moderation was evident in managing the order of discussion, encouraging depth, and enriching the conversation.

Lack of deepening cultural awareness (Co-creation)

Many participants felt their sense of cultural pride was already strong before the workshops. While the activities offered a chance to reflect on this pride, the children expressed that the workshops didn't significantly deepen their cultural awareness. They saw the workshops as a pleasant opportunity for reflection but didn't experience further growth in their cultural pride. This indicates a missed opportunity for fostering deeper connections, which should be addressed in future iterations.

Engagement (interactive learning games)

The shift from a more interactive, hands-on format to discussion-based activities received mixed feedback. Some children appreciated the opportunity to share their personal experiences, finding it easier to relate to real-life scenarios compared to the fictional alien characters from the first workshop. Others missed the physical involvement and found more engaging with the creative, problem-solving tasks of the first workshop.

Stimulated curiosity (interactive learning games)

The discussions prompted by the cards often led to spontaneous exchanges where children would relate their experiences to those shared by others. As children recognized both similarities and differences in their peers' stories, they began to reevaluate their own thoughts and feelings about their cultural identities.

Improve personal connection (story)

The workshops did not fully engage the children in connecting their caregiving activities to preserving their cultural heritage. While empathy and responsibility were fostered, the fictional scenarios lacked ties to real-life traditions, making it harder for the children to relate their actions to cultural preservation. The group setting, less intimate than a family context, further limited personal and sensitive exploration of these traditions.

Facilitate Reflective Discussion (Co-creation)

While the workshops prompted meaningful discussions about cultural traditions, they lacked hands-on activities for the children to enact these traditions. The focus remained on reflection rather than action, missing an opportunity to deepen emotional connections and foster a stronger sense of gratitude toward their heritage.

The care-related qualities identified in the follow-up workshop couldn't be fully explored in the structured school setting. A more intimate environment is needed for deeper emotional connections and responsibility for preserving traditions, as the children lacked opportunities to physically engage with these customs.

7.2.2 Second workshop implications

Ethical considerations

Due to the sensitive nature of discussing personal family stories, ethical concerns emerged during the workshop. Some children might come from complex family backgrounds, and reflecting on such topics could lead to emotional distress. While not be further addressed in the current project, prioritizing emotional safety is essential for future iterations to ensure a supportive environment.

Deepening cultural awareness (story)

Due to the lack of more profound reflection on cultural identity, the workshops did not fully deepen the children's sense of cultural awareness. To address this, future workshops should focus on activities that encourage a more personal exploration of the children's traditions and values, promoting a stronger connection to their heritage.

Enacting traditions in family setting (Care)

Due to the lack of opportunities for children to actively engage in their cultural traditions, the workshops were unable to fully foster a sense of cultural continuity. To address this, future workshops should explore more family-based settings where children can enact their traditions, as such environments allow for a more personal and intimate exploration of cultural identity.

Conclusion

The workshops at Het Tangram offered valuable insights into how bicultural children perceive and express their cultural identities. The activities explored key qualities from four categories (Stories, Co-Creation, Interactive Learning Games, and Care), but highlighted both successes and areas for improvement. In particular, the Care category faced challenges, as the school setting lacked the intimacy needed to explore cultural preservation and gratitude for traditions. A family-based environment may be better suited for these aspects.

Moving forward, the project will focus on two distinct settings: school (group) and home (individual). School sessions will emphasize group discussions, empathy, and cultural exchange, with refined opportunities for reflection and storytelling. Home activities will support individual reflection and the practice of cultural traditions, fostering a more personal connection to cultural heritage.

Chapter 8
Redefining the scope: 2 directions

Based on workshop insights, the project scope was refined to focus on two settings: home and school. This chapter will create goals that support children's exploration and expression of cultural heritage in both personal and communal contexts.

Introduction

After completing the follow-up workshop, it became clear that separating the desired effects into two distinct settings (home and school setting) would be crucial to achieving the goals of the project. This decision stemmed from workshop insights showing that different environments foster different qualities more effectively. To address both the personal and communal aspects of bicultural identity development, the project will now take two design directions.

8.1 Cultural engagement at home

The idea to focus on the individual home setting emerged strongly from initial interviews, where participants reflected on their childhood experiences and expressed a desire for more immersive, relatable ways to engage with their culture (see chapter X). Many participants felt nostalgic for fairy tales, media, or activities that could have helped them connect with their heritage more deeply during childhood. This revealed a gap in cultural education that the home environment can uniquely fill.

The home, as an intimate and familiar space, provides the ideal context for children to connect with their culture in a personal, meaningful way. Here, cultural traditions can be woven into daily routines, family interactions, and creative activities, making cultural engagement feel natural and relevant to children's personal lives. The home setting allows for deeper emotional engagement where children can explore their traditions in a more personal and intimate manner.

Qualities

Cultural heritage preservation (care): During the workshops, children naturally gravitated towards creating tangible items that represented their cultural practices. Crafting these symbols resonated with them, showing they view culture as a collection of meaningful, concrete traditions. This hands-on activity helped them internalize and better understand their heritage by anchoring their memories to these physical creations.

Empathy cultivation (care): Through the act of gift-giving during the workshops, children learned to consider others' emotions and needs. This practice helped them understand the emotional impact of their actions and strengthened their emotional ties to their heritage. The empathy developed also contributed to a broader sense of belonging, as children realized that their traditions play a role in fostering meaningful relationships within their communities.

Gratitude for Tradition (care): While the workshops encouraged discussions about cultural traditions, they did not provide enough opportunities for children to enact or embody these traditions. Without hands-on, immersive activities, the emotional connection to their heritage remained somewhat surface-level. Focusing on more practical engagement, particularly in home settings, will allow children to physically enact their traditions.

These qualities lead to the following design goal and interaction vision:

Design goal

"Design a product that helps primary school children inherit cultural traditions at home"

Interaction vision

"It should feel like showing a drawing to your parents that you were proud to make"

With the interaction qualities of:
- Excitement
- Eager to please
- Sense of pride
- Reflective preservation

8.2 Cultural engagement at school

From the literature research (see chapter 2), schools provide a structured environment where children can benefit from the diverse perspectives of their peers, making it an ideal space for fostering cultural exchange and reflection. During the workshops, it became clear that the collaborative atmosphere of the school setting encourages children to openly share their personal stories, compare cultural experiences, and develop empathy for others' traditions.

Moreover, the school setting is particularly effective for community building. Facilitated discussions ensure inclusivity and respect, helping children feel a sense of belonging while appreciating both their heritage and the diversity around them. The structured environment supports this collective exploration in ways that other settings may not.
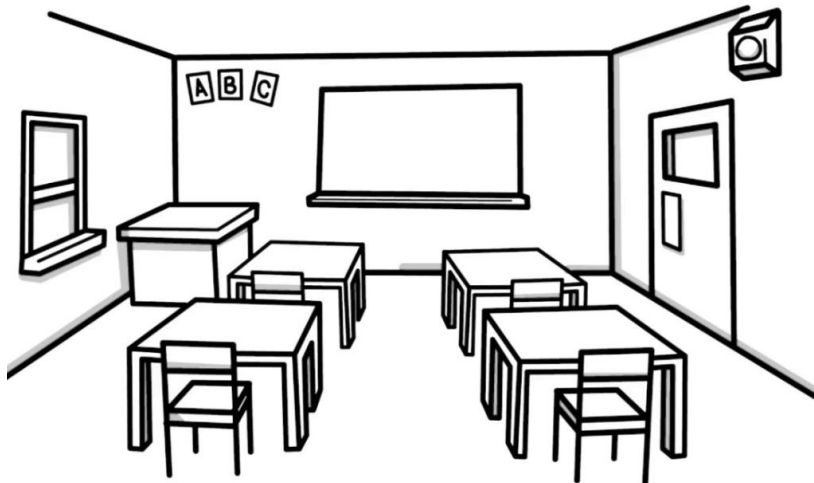
Qualities

Emotional granularity (interactive learning games): Understanding and expressing emotions are key to deepening connections to cultural identity. The workshops demonstrated that when children are prompted to reflect on and discuss their cultural experiences, they improve their ability to articulate feelings, strengthening emotional ties to their heritage.

Facilitated community building (co-creation): As children shared their stories during the workshops, they found common experiences, strengthening social bonds and fostering belonging. This supportive environment encouraged children to feel valued and respected, making them more confident in expressing their cultural identities.

Immersive engagement (story): The workshops also emphasized the value of active participation in cultural activities. Immersive engagement through role-play, storytelling, and interactive tasks connected to that story made cultural learning more dynamic and enjoyable. These hands-on experiences helped children retain knowledge and sparked genuine interest in their heritage.

These qualities lead to the following design goal and interaction vision:

Design goal
"Design a product that helps primary school children to share and gather stories at school"

Interaction vision
"It should feel like listening and communicating to the talking tree in Efteling"

With the interaction qualities of:
• Immersive engagement
• Active participation
• Safe environment to open up
• Facilitated discussion

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project identified the importance of addressing bicultural identity development in both home and school settings. Insights from the workshops revealed that cultural heritage preservation, empathy cultivation, and gratitude for tradition are best fostered in the home environment, where personal and intimate engagement with culture occurs. Meanwhile, emotional granularity, facilitated community building, and immersive engagement are most effectively nurtured in the structured and collaborative school setting. These findings informed two distinct design directions that address both individual and collective cultural identity exploration, ensuring a comprehensive approach to fostering cultural pride and connection in bicultural children.

Chapter 9
Iterations and tests

In this chapter, I will generate ideations for the two design directions (home and school settings) and test these concepts. The goal is to explore how each setting can support cultural identity development and refine the ideas through iterations based on the test results.

Introduction

After redefining the project's scope into two distinct design directions (home and school setting), I proceeded with ideation and testing to explore potential concepts for each environment. Each setting's unique qualities shaped the ideation sessions, guiding the development of targeted activities aimed at addressing specific interaction qualities.

9.1 Designing for home environment

The ideation session for the home setting was focused on how cultural traditions could be embedded into daily routines and personal reflection.

Ideation

Heritage kits: These kits offer hands-on activities for the children to engage directly with cultural traditions at home. It provides tangible ways for families to pass down cultural knowledge through shared experiences.

Cultural map drawing: It's a creative and reflective way for children to connect with their background. I like this idea because it encourages children to visually explore their cultural heritage.

AR detective game: The idea is to turn heritage discovery into an interactive treasure hunt, focusing more on the immersive aspect.
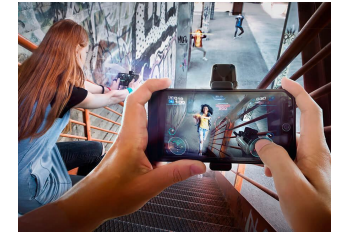
Cultural diary: This idea allows for deep personal reflection. It's a simple way to establish a routine of strengthening their connection to their tradition
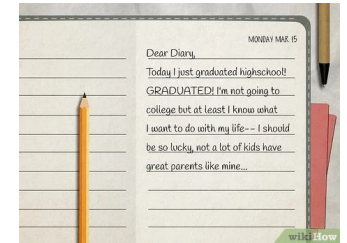
9.1.1 Testing ideas for home

The testing phase for the home setting focused on exploring how children can engage with their cultural heritage through hands-on activities and personal reflection. The goal was to identify activities that could be easily integrated into daily routines while encouraging children to reflect on and preserve their heritage

Cultural photography
Taks: Participants were asked to carry out a cultural activity at home (e.g., cooking a traditional dish) and document the process through photographs. These photos were then used as a prompt for reflection and discussion about the activity.

Outcome: Participants found this activity engaging and insightful, as it allowed them to reconnect with their cultural traditions through a familiar, hands-on task. The photographs acted as both a personal keepsake and a tool for storytelling, giving participants a tangible connection to their heritage.

Cultural map drawing
Taks: Participants were asked to create a map that visually represented their cultural identity. The map could include symbols, places, or important memories that connected them to their cultural roots.

Outcome: The map drawing activity provided participants with the opportunity to creatively express their understanding of cultural heritage. However, without strong facilitation, some participants struggled to connect the abstract idea of a "cultural map" with their real-life experiences. Despite this, the exercise did highlight how visual representation can serve as an effective method for preserving and internalizing cultural memories when well-facilitated.

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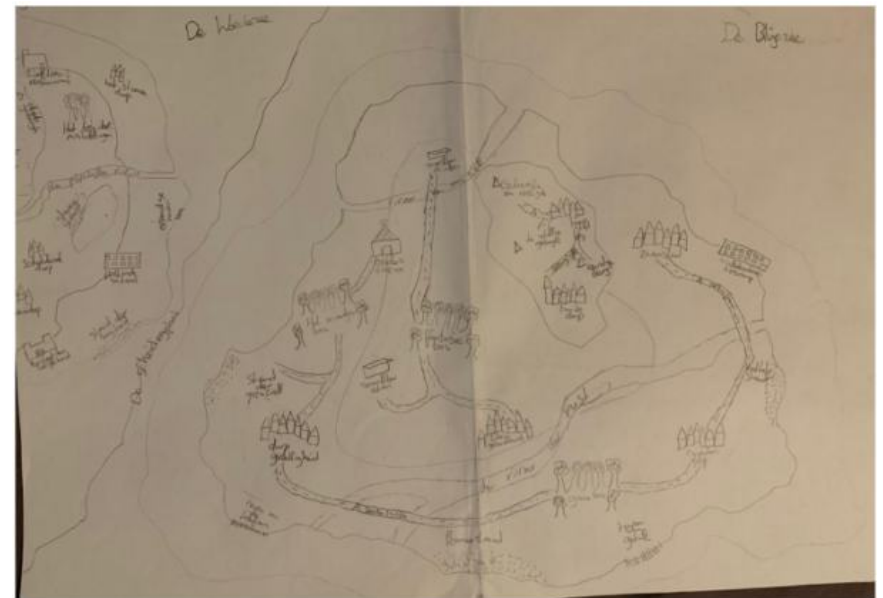
Implications
Diary: The diary idea couldn't be fully tested due to the need for a longer period to evaluate its effectiveness. When asked about the concept, participants expressed uncertainty, explaining that they would need to engage with the diary over time to truly assess its value.

AR detective game: Creating a quick prototype for this wasn't feasible, as the concept requires a more concrete and developed version to properly test its interactive and immersive qualities.

Conclusion
The testing for the home setting demonstrated that when children engage in hands-on, reflective activities, they can more easily develop an emotional connection to their heritage. The photography exercise was particularly effective in fostering gratitude for tradition, while the map drawing exercise showed potential for cultural heritage preservation, provided it is accompanied by appropriate facilitation to guide reflection.

9.2 Designing for school environment

The ideation session (see Appendix C) for this setting focused on how group-based activities can encourage children to share personal stories and learn from one another.

Ideation
Glowing balls: The idea of glowing balls emerged as a tool to help children take turns talking by putting a "spotlight" on them, encouraging active participation. I liked this concept because the glowing balls could change colors, prompting children to talk about specific emotions tied to their cultural experiences.

Interactive mural: The mural allows the children to visualize and contribute personal stories or symbols to a shared wall, turning the environment into a creative space for collective cultural storytelling.

Cultural time capsule: I liked the nostalgic element where the idea is that they can look back at these capsules in the future and reminisce about their past selves, helping them reflect on how their connection to their heritage has evolved over time.

9.2.1 Testing ideas for school

The testing phase for this section focused on evaluating how children engage with their cultural heritage through interactive group activities and emotional reflection. The aim was to assess whether these activities could foster a deeper connection to their cultural identity while promoting meaningful discussions and shared experiences.

World map introduction
Taks: Participants used a world map to point out regions or countries connected to their cultural backgrounds. They then shared personal stories related to those regions.

Outcome: Participants enjoyed the visual aspect of the map that made the process interactive and engaging. It helped foster mutual respect and understanding as the participants found both commonalities and differences in their cultural backgrounds

Cultural time capsule
Taks: Participants were given prompt cards that asked them to create drawings based on specific cultural themes. The drawings, which represented their cultural background and traditions, were then placed in a jar symbolizing a "time capsule" that would preserve their cultural identity for the future.

Outcome: While the prompt cards provided clearer direction and stimulated reflection on cultural themes, the activity still felt passive for participants. Simply creating and storing drawings didn't provide enough of a communal experience to build shared cultural connections.
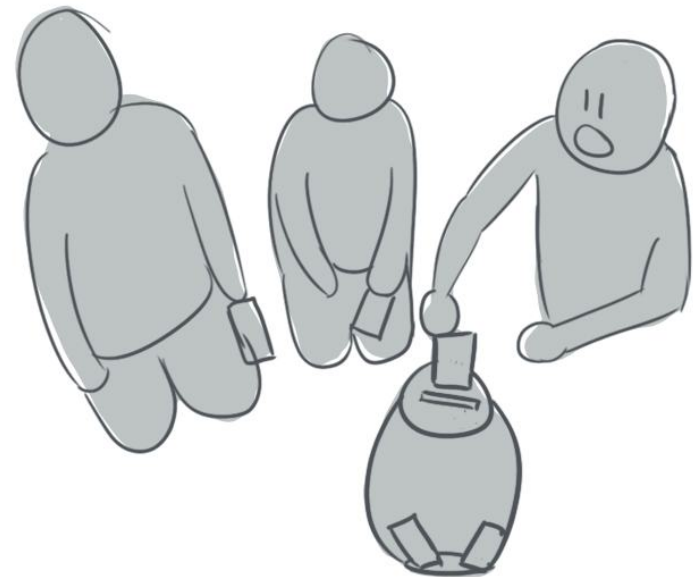
Glowing balls

Taks: During group discussions, participants used glowing balls that changed color to represent different emotions they felt while sharing cultural stories. The idea was to visually link emotions to the personal stories being told.

Outcomes: The glowing balls, while visually appealing, did not contribute significantly to emotional reflection. The participants enjoyed the aesthetics of the glowing balls but found that assigning colors to emotions didn't deepen their engagement with the stories being shared.
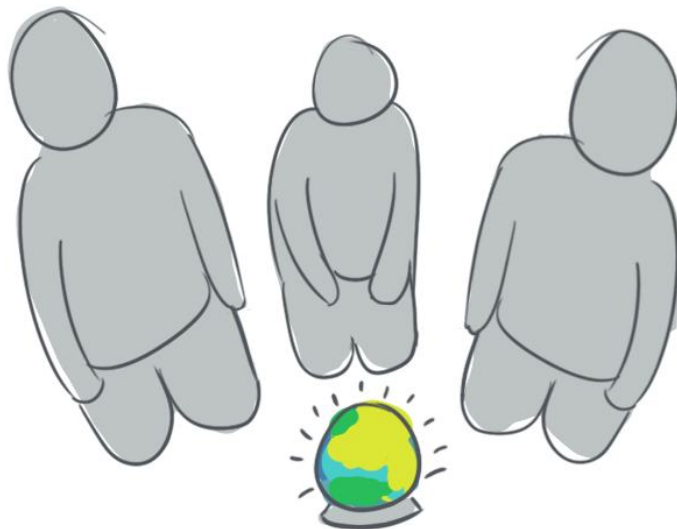

Conclusion

The testing for the home setting demonstrated that when children engage in hands-on, reflective activities, they can more easily develop an emotional connection to their heritage. The photography exercise was particularly effective in fostering gratitude for tradition, while the map drawing exercise showed potential for cultural heritage preservation, provided it is accompanied by appropriate facilitation to guide reflection.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the ideation and testing process across both home and school settings highlighted distinct opportunities to cultivate the desired interaction qualities. For the home setting, hands-on activities such as cultural activity photography effectively fostered gratitude for tradition, while cultural map drawing showed potential for cultural heritage preservation, provided there is strong facilitation. In the school setting, the world map introduction proved successful in building community through cultural exchange, though other activities like the glowing balls and time capsule required more engaging, interactive elements to enhance emotional depth and connection.

These insights will guide the refinement of the design concepts to better support the dual focus on individual cultural reflection at home and collective cultural exchange in school.

Chapter 10
Final concept

Based on the insights gathered from the workshops and testing phases, a final concept was developed. This concept incorporates the key findings from the project to create an engaging and effective toolkit aimed at helping children explore and preserve their cultural identity.

Zog & Miko's
Culturele avontuur

TUDelft

10.1 Final concept

After reassessing the test insights, I combined the design directions for home and school into a unified three-phase toolkit. This final concept incorporates qualities like cultural heritage preservation, empathy, and gratitude for tradition at home, alongside emotional granularity, community building, and immersive engagement at school.

The three-phase workshop aims to create a smooth transition between personal reflection at home and collective exploration at school. Each phase builds on the previous one, helping children explore their cultural identity in layers, fostering both individual pride and group appreciation.

See Appendix D for final concept elements.

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Phase 1: Sensitize

The first phase of the workshop introduces children to cultural identity using Zog and Miko, fictional characters that reflect cultural differences. Through their story, children explore their own backgrounds in a playful yet meaningful way, seeing parallels between the characters' challenges and their own experiences of belonging and difference.

This phase consists of the following tools:
DVD: The DVD presents Zog and Miko's journey of cultural discovery. Through storytelling, the children are introduced to the importance of cultural identity, appreciation, and empathy.

World map: The world map serves as a tool for cultural exploration, with participants pointing out regions connected to their heritage. This acts as an element to facilitate open dialogue.

Evaluating qualities in phase 1

Immersive engagement (story): Based from the workshop insights, the DVD helped immerse children in Zog and Miko's world, making the experience more engaging and increasing their active participation in other activities. The direct involvement of Zog and Miko asking the children to use the world map to introduce themselves, led to the desired effect of facilitating open dialogue.

Emotional granularity (interactive learning games): By reflecting on the characters' challenges with cultural differences and feelings of isolation, the children were able to create more meaningful emotional responses. This made their emotional articulation clearer.

Phase 1 starts with watching the video, then the children have to perform tasks including the usage of the world map. And lastly they get homework from Zog and Miko
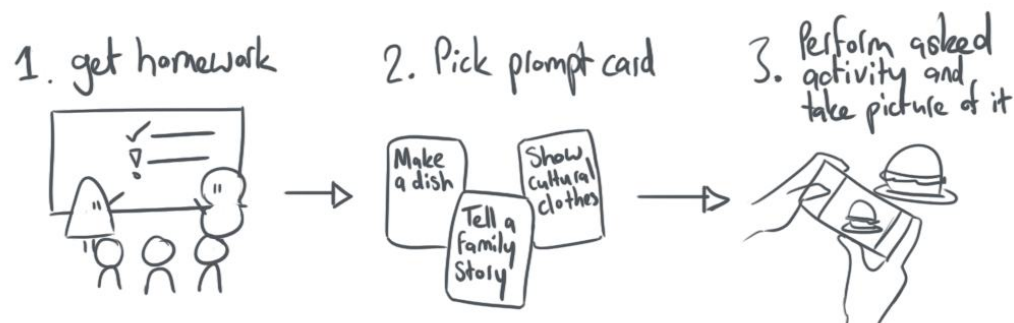
Phase 2: Cultural exploration as homework

In phase 2 of the workshop, children move from school-based activities to a more personal, home-centered engagement with their cultural heritage. This phase emphasizes the importance of family involvement and help children deepen their understanding of their cultural roots while fostering empathy and appreciation for their traditions.

This phase consists of the following tools:
Prompt cards: After the introduction in Phase 1, children are provided with prompt cards that assign specific cultural activities to complete at home. These activities include tasks such as preparing a traditional meal, celebrating a cultural holiday, or engaging in a meaningful family tradition.

Mini printer: Once the children have completed their cultural activity, they document the process by taking pictures with their phones. The toolkit provides a mini printer, allowing them to print the photos and bring them to school for the next phase.

Evaluating qualities in phase 2

Cultural heritage preservation (care): The test insights showed that hands-on activities like preparing traditional meals or celebrating cultural events helped children internalize their heritage. Photographing these moments provided a visual record that strengthened their connection to cultural traditions, similar to how drawing cultural maps reinforced memory and preservation.

Gratitude for tradition (care): Actively engaging in cultural practices with family deepened children's emotional ties to their heritage. This approach proved more effective than simply discussing traditions, fostering a greater appreciation through hands-on participation.

Empathy cultivation (care): By involving family in these activities, children gained a better understanding of the emotions and significance behind family traditions. This shared experience nurtured empathy and strengthened their connection to both their culture and family.

Phase 2 starts with getting homework from Zog and Miko. Then the children have to pick a prompt card that will ask them to perform n activity at home. They have to do the activity together with their family and take a picture of it which they need to bring back to school.

Phase 3: Back to school reflecting and sharing

The final phase brings the children back to the classroom, where they share the cultural activities they engaged in at home with their peers. This stage emphasizes collective reflection, facilitated by Zog and Miko through the AI-powered glowing ball, and aims to foster a sense of community and shared cultural pride.

This phase consists of the following tools:

Glowing ball: The glowing ball lights up in different colors to indicate that Zog and Miko "speak" through the glowing ball, they help facilitate discussions by having a direct conversation with the children

Wall collage: After sharing their stories and printed photos, children decorate their images with stickers and place them on a wall, creating a "Cultural Memory Collage" that stays in the classroom. Leaving these memories on the wall creates a lasting impact, as the children have personally contributed their own stories and experiences to the space.
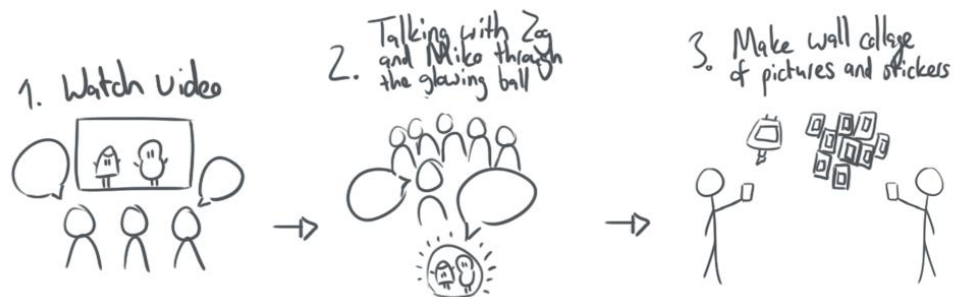
Phase 3 starts with coming back to school and watching part 2 of the video. Then the children can talk with Zog and Miko through the glowing ball. Lastly, the children can decorate the school wall with the pictures of their performed activities and stickers.

Evaluating qualities in phase 3

Facilitated community building (co-creation): Workshop insights revealed that group sharing, guided by Zog and Miko, fostered mutual respect and empathy as children shared their personal stories. This strengthened social bonds, fostering unity and a shared sense of belonging. The glowing ball added an engaging, interactive element, making community building more dynamic and inclusive.

Active participation (story): Group discussions with the glowing ball and the creative process of decorating photos kept children engaged. These visual and interactive elements immersed them in reflection and participation, reinforcing their connection to cultural diversity within the classroom.

Conclusion

The final concept merges both home and school settings into a cohesive three-phase cultural identity workshop. The children are being guided from sensitizing them at school, to a personal reflection at home, to collective sharing in the classroom. This helps the children to become more aware of cultural identity and helps them preserve their pride in their cultural heritages.

In the next chapter, the discussion will reflect on the project's outcomes and providing recommendations for future iterations and broader implementation.

Chapter 11
Discussion

This chapter reflects on the project's outcomes, providing recommendations for future improvements, addressing limitations, and offering personal insights gained during the process.

10.1 Conclusion

The goal of this project was to help primary school children (ages 9-12) preserve their sense of cultural pride as they approach the "first wall" in their identity development. Through a combination of literature review, interviews, workshops, and iterative testing, the project developed a three-phase workshop toolkit designed to foster cultural heritage preservation, empathy cultivation, and deep emotional engagement with cultural identity.

The literature highlighted the importance of early interventions in identity development and the role of cultural pride in fostering belonging, emphasizing the value of hands-on activities and storytelling. Interviews revealed a desire for more immersive, relatable ways for children to engage with their cultural heritage at home and school. Workshops indicated that while children responded well to sharing cultural stories in group settings, there was a need for greater emotional depth and practical engagement with traditions, which was addressed in the toolkit design. Testing confirmed the effectiveness of activities in engaging children and prompting reflection.

The project successfully developed a toolkit that facilitates both personal reflection and collective engagement, guiding children through sensitization to cultural identity, exploration of traditions at home, and sharing in a community setting. This approach supports children in building pride, empathy, and a sense of responsibility for preserving their cultural heritage, effectively meeting the project's goals.

10.2 Recommendations

Ethical Considerations for Family-Centered Activities
Not all children may feel comfortable sharing family-related cultural activities due to diverse family situations (e.g., separation, bereavement, foster care). To ensure inclusivity and emotional safety, alternatives should be offered, such as sharing cultural experiences from friends or community settings.This could include:
- Encouraging children to share cultural experiences from other settings, such as with friends, within their community, or through school-led events.
- Providing private, one-on-one conversations with a facilitator for children who may feel uneasy sharing in a group setting.

Enhancing AI capabilities of glowing ball
- The glowing ball currently enhances engagement through interactive cues, but future improvements could include deeper, personalized interactions. This would make conversations more dynamic, allowing Zog and Miko to ask follow-up questions, offer guidance, and reflect on cultural topics, fostering continuous learning and emotional awareness.
- As AI becomes is integrated into the toolkit, privacy and data protection must be prioritized. Implementing strict data protection protocols to ensure that any collected data is handled responsibly and in accordance with privacy laws.

Involving the community

One interesting recommendation is to involve not just the school but the broader community in the workshops and toolkit activities. By integrating local community figures, cultural experts, or family members into the workshops, children can learn from real-world role models who share their cultural background. This collaboration could take the form of guest speakers, community-driven cultural events, or even field trips to local cultural centers. Involving the community strengthens the connection between the children and their cultural heritage, reinforcing the bond between their personal experiences, school life, and the broader cultural environment. This added community engagement would deepen the learning experience and promote a greater sense of belonging and pride in their heritage..

Extending Zog and Miko to the home setting

Currently, Zog and Miko serve as interactive characters within the school setting, but an exciting possibility would be to create a product that extends this interaction into the home environment. A product or digital tool that allows children to communicate with Zog and Miko outside of school would create a continuous cultural learning experience. This home interaction could include storytelling activities, cultural challenges, or prompts for family-based cultural explorations. This extension of Zog and Miko into the home setting would ensure that children can engage with cultural identity exploration in a more personal and flexible way, bridging the gap between school and home.

Deeper Exploration of Cultural Artifacts

The use of cultural artifacts during the interviews proved to be an effective tool for sparking conversation and allowing participants to select objects that held personal meaning. While artifacts were initially used as a research method, incorporating them as a design element in the toolkit could add significant value. Artifacts could be integrated into both school and home activities, giving children tangible ways to explore and connect with their cultural heritage. For example, children could bring family artifacts to workshops or create their own artifact collections at home, fostering meaningful discussions and deepening their connection to their cultural roots. This approach could serve as a hands-on, emotional bridge between children's past, present, and future cultural experiences.

10.3 Limitations

The goal of this project was to help primary school children (ages 9-12) preserve their sense of cultural pride as they approach the "first wall" in their identity development. Through a combination of literature review, interviews, workshops, and iterative testing, the project developed a three-phase workshop toolkit designed to foster cultural heritage preservation, empathy cultivation, and deep emotional engagement with cultural identity.

The literature highlighted the importance of early interventions in identity development and the role of cultural pride in fostering belonging, emphasizing the value of hands-on activities and storytelling. Interviews revealed a desire for more immersive, relatable ways for children to engage with their cultural heritage at home and school. Workshops indicated that while children responded well to sharing cultural stories in group settings, there was a need for greater emotional depth and practical engagement with traditions, which was addressed in the toolkit design. Testing confirmed the effectiveness of activities in engaging children and prompting reflection.

The project successfully developed a toolkit that facilitates both personal reflection and collective engagement, guiding children through sensitization to cultural identity, exploration of traditions at home, and sharing in a community setting. This approach supports children in building pride, empathy, and a sense of responsibility for preserving their cultural heritage, effectively meeting the project's goals.

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Enhancing AI capabilities of glowing ball

- The glowing ball currently enhances engagement through interactive cues, but future improvements could include deeper, personalized interactions. This would make conversations more dynamic, allowing Zog and Miko to ask follow-up questions, offer guidance, and reflect on cultural topics, fostering continuous learning and emotional awareness.
- As AI becomes is integrated into the toolkit, privacy and data protection must be prioritized. Implementing strict data protection protocols to ensure that any collected data is handled responsibly and in accordance with privacy laws.

10.4 Personal reflection

This project began as a personal journey rooted in my own experience growing up as a bicultural individual in the Netherlands. Throughout this process, I decided to document my reflections on cultural identity through an autoethnography journal. The intention behind this journal was to capture my personal thoughts and emotions as they emerged over the course of the project, allowing me to observe how I navigate my own sense of belonging.

It's important to note that the journal is distinct from the formal project insights, as it serves as a separate reflective exercise focused solely on my personal experiences. While the project's research aimed to understand how bicultural children navigate their cultural identities, my journal offered a parallel yet separate exploration, one that centered on my evolving understanding of my own cultural identity, independent of the project's findings. This personal journey allowed me to delve deeper into how I perceive my own identity, which is dynamic and shaped by my lived experiences.

Before starting this project, if someone would ask me "What are you?" or "Where are you from?", I would identify myself as a Dutch individual with Filipino, Surinamese, and Chinese heritages. I thought of myself as someone who carried these identities simultaneously but in a relatively fixed way. However, over the course of the project, I realized that this view was quite simplistic. The way I experience my cultural identity changes depending on the context (whether it's the people I'm with, the environment I'm in, or the activities I'm doing).

For example, when I'm with my Surinamese family, I feel more connected to that part of my heritage, as the shared traditions, food, and language bring it to the forefront of my identity. Similarly, when I'm with my Filipino family or cooking traditional Filipino foods, I feel a stronger connection to my Filipino roots. On the other hand, when I'm with my Dutch friends and speaking Dutch, I feel more Dutch. This fluidity in how I perceive my cultural identity has been one of the most significant realizations during this project. But I realized over the course of this project that it doesn't just stop at that.

I've come to understand that cultural identity is not solely tied to my ancestors heritages or the place where I was born and grew up, but about how I choose to define myself at any given moment. It's an ongoing process, shaped by the cultures we are exposed to and influenced by over time. I've seen how people who migrate to new countries begin to adopt elements of the local culture, which gradually becomes part of their identity. This made me reflect on my own experience and realize that cultural identity isn't just about where you come from, it's also about where you are now and how the cultures around you shape your perceptions, behaviors, and worldview. If a particular culture profoundly influences how you live or think, that too becomes part of your evolving identity.

Therefore, I've come to understand that my cultural identity will continue to shift as I encounter new environments and experiences. It's not static (defined only by what I already have) but dynamic (constantly shaped by what is to come), a blend of past influences and present surroundings that will keep changing as I move through life. This adaptability is what makes cultural identity such a deeply personal and evolving journey.

This project has helped me not only contribute to the understanding of how bicultural children can be supported in their identity development but also deepen my awareness of my own cultural journey. It has reaffirmed the importance of embracing the dynamic nature of identity, rather than seeing it as something fixed or predetermined. In the future, I look forward to continuing this exploration, both personally and professionally, as I navigate my own cultural influences and help others do the same.
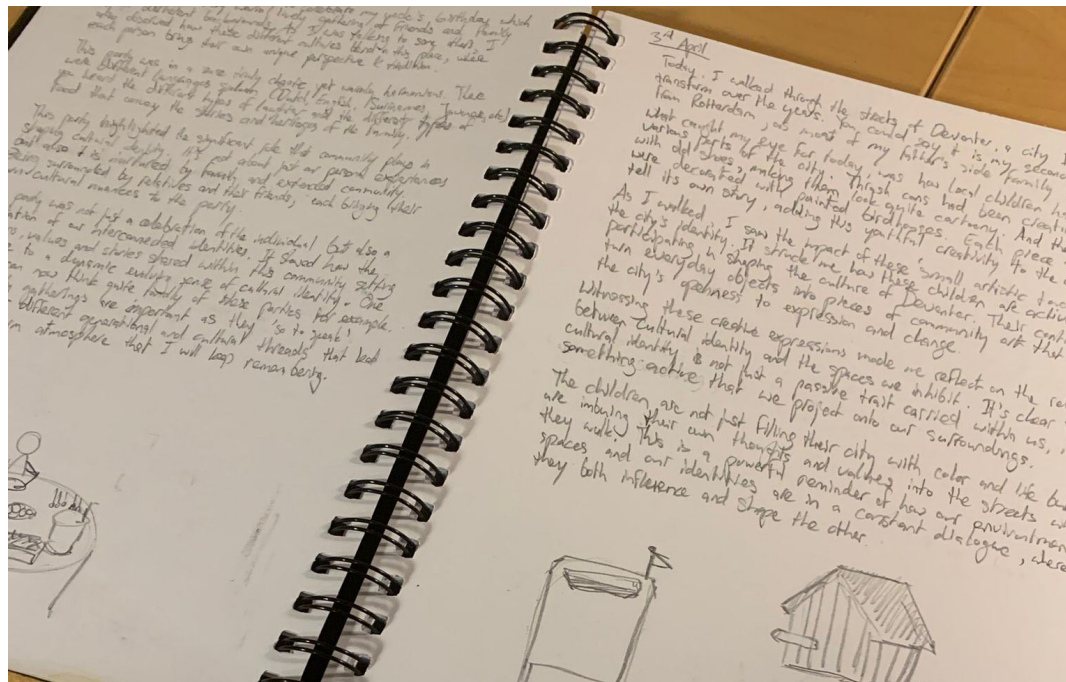
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Appendix

Appendix A: Interview insights

Growing up

Ik ben geboren en opgegroeid in amsterdam. Ik ben geboren in Nederland, dus qua nationaliteit ben ik Nederlands, maar qua etniciteit ben ik half kameroens en tot mijn 22e dacht ik dat ik dus was mijn andere helft Ghanees is, maar ben er later achter gekomen dat ik ook deels Nigeriaans ben.

Als jong kind kreeg ik een speciale waist band (volgens de Afrikaanse cultuur mag alleen je man dit zien waar je mee getrouwd bent). Dit is iets speciaals voor mij sinds ik het van mijn moeder heb gekregen als een soort cadeau.

Ik spreek niet de talen van mijn ouders. Ik heb veel niet meegekregen wat anderen wel hebben meegekregen, dus ik had als kind altijd al dat mensen dan opmerkingen maakten van "Oh, maar waarom weet je dat niet of waarom heb je dat niet geleerd?"

Womanhood (dus vrouw zijnde) in de Afrikaanse cultuur is wel een groot ding. Er komt heel veel verantwoordelijkheid bij, vooral als een oudste dochter, maar tegelijkertijd zorgde dat er ook voor dat ik een hele sterke band hebt met mijn cultuur.

In mijn omgeving was ik niet de enige Ghanees. Dus ik voelde ook nooit alleen. Ik was altijd trots om een Ghanees te zijn, want er waren toch zoveel om mij heen. Het is gewoon altijd onderdeel van mij geweest. Ik heb het altijd geaccepteerd.

Ik heb deel genomen aan culturele activiteiten vroegen, naar feestjes gaan, traditional weddings gaan weet je.

Conflict

Ik heb altijd vanaf jongs af aan gezegd. Ik val buiten de boot, want in Nederland val ik buiten de boot als Nederlander. En in Afrika val ik buiten de boot als een afrikaan.

Omdat ik minder van de cultuur heb meegekregen als kind, dat ik toch minder het gevoel heb alsof ik daar echt over kan spreken. Dan naar mijn gevoel denk ik wat ik meemaak heeft soms dan meer te maken met mijn huidskleur dan met mijn afkomst.

Vooral van Ghanese ouderen kreeg ik vooral vragen van "Ja waarom weet je dit niet over het cultuur? Waarom hebben je ouders dit niet geleerd?", waardoor ik op een gegeven moment wel niet meer ging zeggen dat ik Ghanees was om de confrontatie te vermijden, terwijl ik daar nog steeds gewoon trots op was

Er zijn momenten geweest waar ik mij soms buitengesloten voelde omdat ik de talen niet kan spreken. Dan dacht ik "Ach, ik wou dat ik de taal kende", maar dat had nooit echt verdere invloed op hoe ik mij voelde bij anderen. Als dat het geval was, dan had ik nu echt wel twee talen gesproken.

Nadat ik mijn havo diploma had gehaald en ik verder ging met het VWO, kwam ik in een klas en toen waren er wel heel veel Ghanese meisjes. Toen ging ik me toch wel iets meer verbonden voelen. Dus ik zou wel zeggen, in mijn tienerjaren is die interesse naar mijn culturen meer gekomen. Doordat ik dan ook toen meer mensen ben gaan ontmoeten.

Acceptance

Ik identificeer me gewoon als iemand die in Nederland woont die Amerikaans is. Dus ik woon in Nederland, Maar ik ben Afrikaans en ik claim dat ook gewoon met heel mijn hart dat ik Afrikaans ben.

Toen ik 22 was, kreeg ik opeens de nieuws van mijn vader dat zijn moeder uit Nigeria komt. Dit was echt een shock. Maar nu, als ik het makkelijk wil houden, zeg ik ook gewoon, ik ben half Ghanees, half kameroens. Omdat ik dat al mijn leven al heb gezegd en zo was het altijd.

Nou vooral bij concerten of in de kerk waar ik Ghanese liedjes zing, dan voel ik toch wel die samenhorigheid met mijn cultuur en dan voel ik trots dat dat een onderdeel is van mij.

Misschien ook wel de reden dat ik op een school ben gaan werken, omdat ik ook gewoon echt tegen die kinderen kan zeggen van "Kijk, ik heb het gedaan, weet je. Ik ben net zo donker als jullie. Ik kom uit uit Bijlmer, net als jullie. Het is allemaal mogelijk, ik heb het overleefd. Er zijn Mensen voor ons die het hebben gedaan. Er zijn Mensen na ons die het zullen doen, dus Waarom kan jij het niet?"

Tegen mijn vroeger zelf zou ik zeggen "het is niet erg dat je de talen niet spreekt, weet je? Je kan gewoon tegen al die ouderen zeggen dat je Ghanees bent en je spreekt het niet en wat, wat ga je nu doen?". Het is niet alsof je leven harder voelt omdat je de taal niet spreekt.

Adapting

Maar mijn ouders komen uit India. Ik was ook geboren in Nederland

Tijdens mijn babyjaren verhuisde we naar India en ik ging naar een Indiase school. Daar moest ik uniformen dragen.

Maar we verhuisde weer terug naar NL vlak voordat mijn basisschool begon. Ik moet Nederlands leren en ik kreeg zelfs bijles.

Soms had ik het gevoel dat ik iets moet doen, omdat "zo is het". Het is een soort "typisch" beeld van Indiase meisje dat ik na moest doen. Ik geef de gasten eten enzo en soms gebeurt het automatisch, maar Als het teveel gebeurt, dan voel ik me wel een beetje van. Waarom ben ik dit aan het doen? Maar ja, dan doe ik het wel, Omdat het ook wel het gevoel hebt dat het moet.

Vroeger wilde ik wil echt ergens bij horen. Ik had ook gedachtes van "oh dit is wat ik zie in mijn omgeving, dus dat is waarschijnlijk meer de juiste".

Vroeger wilde ik me denk ik iets meer Nederlands willen zijn. Omdat ik meer omringd was met Nederlandse mensen

Toen ik op de middelbare school was, wist ik niet eens of er andere indians waren. Ik voelde me als de enige van Indiase afkomst

Ik had een vriendengroep, Maar ik voelde me niet altijd helemaal. passendaarbij. Er was soms een gebrek aan ondersteuning. Ze begrepen me niet altijd.

Association

Er was een keer zo een moment dat NL de WK had gewonnen. Toen had ik ook wel deels dat Nederlandse gevoel, misschien ook omdat iedereen om je heen dat ook voelde.

Tot in mijn laatste jaar op de middelbare kwam ik een keer een ander meisje tegen en die was van "Oh ben je Indiaas? Oh, ik ook. Hoe kennen we elkaar nog niet?". En toen begonnen we goeie vriendinnen te worden

Ik had niet het gevoel dat ik een stereotypical Indian was, tenzij ik het over feestdagen heb dan waren anderen van "oh we gaan lekker eten Indiaas eten"

Ik heb sneller het gevoel me waardig genoeg te voelen met de Indiase cultuur omdat ik in NL ben opgegroeid en niet in India.

Ik was soms verbaasd dat als ik opeens veel Indiase mensen over straat zag lopen, dan dacht ik, what happend? Waar komen ze opeens allemaal vandaan?

Er waren wel momenten waar ik me heel Indiaas voelde. Tijdens Holly toen hadden we heel veel mensen bij ons thuis kwamen en we gingen muziek luisteren en samen eten.

Ja, ik probeer gewoon the best of both world aan te nemen in mijn leven. Van beide culturen is het lastig om er soms doorheen te navigeren, want je moet balans daarin vinden tussen de twee culturen. En dat heb ik gevonden met trial and error.

Acceptance

Qua uiterlijk zie ik er niet Nederlands uit, dus dan geef ik altijd als een uitleg gelijk achter na dat ik Indiaas achtergrond heb maar ben opgegroeid in NL. Maar ik voel me niet helemaal Nederlands, dus ik zeg dat er ook nog achteraan van, hé, maar mijn ouders komen ook uit India. Ja.

Ik denk dat ik wel me iets meer Indiaas voel. Dus dat is in die opzichten wel veranderd met vroeger.

Ik merk dat ik me waarschijnlijk heel Nederland gedraag, ik heb veel Nederlandse trekjes.

Ik associeer me met mijn thee kopje. In de eerste opzichten ziet het er niet heel Indiaas uit, Maar het heeft wel een Indiase gedachte of element erachter. Het is ook wel universeel, iedereen drinkt wel thee. In heel veel culturen past het en dat vind ik er ook wel fijn aan.

Aan mijn jongere zelf zal ik de tip geven, het is niet gek hoe jij je voelt. Het is niet raar, is logisch. Een acceptatie gegeven naar mijzelf toe.

Ik vind het wel belangrijk om mijn achtergronden van mijn cultuur te behouden. Als ik later kinderen heb, dan zou ik ze ook wel de Indiase cultuur willen meegeven. Dus ik zou het niet willen dat het helemaal verwaaid werd.

Grootste realisaties gerelateerd aan mijn culturele identiteit Als ik niet volledig bij mijn culturen kan zijn of zal zijn. Maar have fun with it.

Crisis

Geboren en getogen in Rotterdam in en mijn ouders die zijn allebei in Turkije geboren.

Toen ik 5 was, was ik in een klas met mensen uit veel verschillende culturen en daar voelde ik me best wel Turks eigenlijk

In mijn kindertijd heb ik veel van die identiteitscrisissen gehad en dat was heel lastig. Ik verhuisde een keer toen ik jong was en was op school waar alleen maar Nederlanders om me heen waren. Ik dacht al "dit is een hele andere sfeer dan bij mijn oude school". En dan ja, toen kreeg ik eigenlijk wel gelijk een soort van de neiging om mezelf wat meer aan te passen op hoe de anderen doen en zijn.

Ik vond het best moeilijk, want ik vroeg me af. Moet ik echt iets kiezen? Terwijl dat niet per se nodig was. Ik had het gevoel dat ik op school, een ander persoon was en thuis weer een ander persoon, terwijl dat eigenlijk nergens op slaat. Ik kan gewoon. Het is zeg maar mogelijk om alles te combineren, maar ja, ik had daar best wel. Moeite mee eigenlijk.

Als kind zag ik dat Turkse cultuur niet heel erg werd gewaardeerd door veel mensen. Op nieuws zag ik ook gewoon Turks cultuur op een positieve manier, en zelfs soms racistische manier naar voren gebracht. Ik denk om dat te voorkomen dat ik vooral meer geneigd naar het Nederlands zijn. Een soort van dat ik echt dacht van oké, ik, Ik wil er gewoon bij horen en Ik wil niet dat Mensen slechte dingen over mij gaan denken. Ik denk dat vooral.

Als kind ging ik niet goed om met discriminatie. Ik begreep het niet. Dus. Ja, Ik dacht vooral van, oké, ja, dit ligt aan mij, terwijl dat helemaal. Niet zo was.

Eigenlijk voor de rest van mijn hele leven was ik omringd geweest met 100% Nederlanders ook op school

Awareness

Op de middelbare was er wel een meisje in mijn klas. We waren niet per se beste vriendinnen, maar ik voelde toch wel een soort connectie. Zij kwam uit Marokko en ze had ook een beetje stuk van het zelfde verhaal en met haar kon ik ook wel altijd soort van goed omgaan. En soms, ja voelt het wel dat je elkaar dan wat sneller. Begrijpt of zo?

Op middelbare school werd het soort van wat intenser. Ik werd meer zelfbewustzijn dat ik echt dacht "Oké? Ja, Ik ben de enige die hier anders is of zo".

Ik merk soms wel in dat dat anderen mij soms anders zien of. Ja soms als wel ja minderwaardig eigenlijk, Omdat ze zien dat ik geen Nederlander ben. Ik denk dat als je dit al heel lang meemaak dan begin je af en toe wel zelf het te geloven. Vroeger zou ik dat heel erg vinden als iemand iets slechts over mij zegt of denkt, en het is door mijn afkomst. Maar nu probeer ik wel wat sterker in mijn schoenen te staan. Ik probeer ervoor te zorgen dat het minder met me doet.

1 grote realisatie, wat ik niet helemaal door had, was dat ik altijd wel mijn Turkse identiteit heb onderdrukt. Ik dacht dat dat gewoon was.

Ik heb wel eens gehad dat ik voor mijn verjaardagen mensen gingen uitnodigen voor het eten. En toen waren ze daar super positief over en blij over en ook gewoon die simpele dingen. Dat is eigenlijk gewoon het Turkse cultuur van "dit is hoe wij het doen". En ja, Het was wel leuk om dan zo mijn Nederlandse vriendinnen enthousiast daarover te zien. Ik denk dat dat ook wel ervoor zorgt dat ik wat zekerder over ben.

Eigenlijk dat weer niet, dus dat vind ik eigenlijk een beetje grappig, want in Turkije voel ik me juist heel Nederland, Omdat ik daar weer door Mensen om me heen een beetje de Nederlander wordt genoemd en anders wordt gezien eigenlijk.

Proud

In Turkije was ik op een festival. Alleen maar Turkse mensen om me heen. En ja, het voelde gewoon een beetje alsof ik daar niet helemaal bij hoorde, terwijl ik het wel leuk vond. Ik merkte gewoon dat de cultuur zo anders was als dat ik gewend ben in Nederland. En de mensen daar kijken mij ook aan omdat ik dan net iets anders ben. Of Ik weet niet of ze dan met kleding stijl ligt of wat dan ook, Maar ik voelde gewoon dat ik er niet helemaal bij past ofzo.

Eigenlijk best recent eigenlijk een beetje, weet je akkoord over te praten of zo. Maar ik had ja sinds we met de Masters zijn begonnen eigenlijk. Toen zag ik opeens dat er ook andere mensen hier op Delft zijn. Dan had ik ook wel echt het gevoel had van oh, ik kan eigenlijk ook wel gewoon zijn.

Op dit moment lees ik niet echt Turkse super boeken. Dat heb ik vroeger wel gedaan. Maar ik denk dat als ik dat zou doen, dat het eigenlijk wel heel erg zou helpen. En ook wel vroeger hielp dat ook dat ik gewoon soms keek ik met mijn familie die Turkse series en programma's enzo en dat helpt me wel met het meer identificeren met de cultuur?

Ik denk dat ik het behouden van mijn culturen wel heel belangrijk vind, Omdat dat gewoon, ja, eigenlijk heel erg met mij te maken heeft. Het is gewoon wie Ik ben.

Ik probeer gewoon zo zelfverzekerd mogelijk te zijn en Ik wil eigenlijk het liefst zo trots zijn op wie ik ben en dat ik twee culturen heb is juist heel uniek en best wel iets moois. Dus dat probeer ik wat meer te embracen.

Ik ben Firoza, ik woon in Waddinxveen, Maar ik kom uit Rotterdam. En ik heb Hondoestaanse, Surinaamse en Turkse afkomst.

Ik zie niet eens als een Nederlander uit. Ik heb geen Nederlandse naam. Mijn ouders hebben geen Nederlandse naam.

Mama heeft me bewust Nederlands geleerd. Ze wilde niet dat mijn vader ons Turk zou leren, want dan zouden we geen goed Nederlands kunnen spreken.

Ik heb geen Nederlandse opvoeding gehad. Ik snap bijvoorbeeld dat stereotypisch gezien kinderen om 6 uur naar huis moeten of ze mogen hun schoenen aanhouden thuis. Dit had bijvoorbeeld mijn beste vriendin toen.

Omdat ik vroeger heel veel op Turks leek, werd er gezegd Turkse aap en dan schaamde ik me er altijd voor, want vroeger was het zo een ding, oh, je bent een Turk, je bent een Marokkaan, ik schaamde me voor me afkomst en Ik wilde niet zeggen, Ik ben Turks, Ik wil ik zeg altijd, Ik ben hier staand.

Ze wilde dat niet. Ik denk toch dat het de middelbare dat ik niet wilde zeggen. Ik ben Turks, want dan krijg je gelijk zo'n stomme stomme blik zo een stomme stereotyperen.

ik heb meer voor mijn Surinaamse identiteit moeten vechten, want mijn moeder zegt altijd, ze van Nederland is. We zijn ook dus nooit naar Suriname geweest om het mijn moeder dat nooit wilde. Ze voelde daar geen band mee en Ik was daar altijd jaloers op, want ik voel me wel Suriname, want Ik vind dat leuk. Ik ben geen Nederlander. Ik heb geen Nederlands bloed.

Ik twijfelde heel erg. Niet echt een identiteitscrisis, maar toch weer wel, want ik kan geen Turks, Maar ik lijk meer Turks. Ik ben meer opgegroeid met mijn Surinaamse kant. Ik ken die woorden, gerechten, de cultuur, de bijgeloof, de tradities. Ik ken alles van Suriname, maar ik spreek die taal niet en ik lijk er niet op. Toen ik 15 of 16 was, was ik heel erg met mijn Surinaamse kant. En daarna weer heel erg Turks en nu ben ik weer een mix van beide.

Ik vind het jammer dat ik geen Turks en Surinaams kan. Ik schaam me toch wel dat ik geen Turks kan. Maar voor het Surinaams verdedig mezelf altijd dat je srangtongo niet mocht spreken van de Nederlanders vroeger, want anders werd je daar weer op gestraft, geslagen of whatever, want het is onbeleeft naar die mensen toe.

Op mijn 15e begon ik me in te lezen in de Turkse taal. Ik begon echt Turks te leren. Ik heb het niet altijd vol kunnen houden, maar ik kreeg wel de gedachte van oké, nu is het genoeg geweest en ik moet binnen een jaar Turks weten.

Als ik Surinaams eten aan het maken ben dan voel ik me echt een suri, dan ben ik niet van Oh, Ik ben Turks. Maar als ik dan weer in een Turkije ben dan wil ik niet volledig Turks zijn, want ik kleed me ook niet als de Turken in een lange jurk ofz. Ik moet toch wel laten zien dat ik ergens anders vandaan ben.

Enkele uitdagingen met het zoeken naar mijn culturele identiteit was toch wel mijn uiterlijk. Hoe kan ik van twee zijn als je kijk naar mijn naam? Hoe kan ik van twee zijn als ik meer naar eentje neig? Maar hoe kan ik nou naar eentje neigen als ik daar helemaal niks van af weet? Dit zijn wel wat vragen die ik me afvroeg

Ik ben bewuster bezig ik. Ik voel me meer. Ik ben bewust van mijn culturele Achtergrond. Dat was ik eerst niet. Ik leefde gewoon zo en omdat ik zo opgevoed was, Maar ik stelde geen diepere vragen, Maar ik denk sinds de middelbare en vooral wat ik echt gewoon levendig weet. Sinds mijn geschiedenis opleiding ben ik echt zelf meer naar mezelf gaan zoeken.

Ik ben geen Nederlander. Op papier staat dat ik Nederlands ben, ik ben ook blij met Nederland dat ik hier studeer. Maar als we kijken naar bloed, ik heb Turks en Surinaams bloed. Jij mag trots zijn op jouw land en jouw helden uit de geschiedenis en Ik ben hetzelfde over de mijnen.

Ik ben Surinaams, maar ik weet dat ik er niet op lijk, ik heb het gevoel dat ik donker dan moet zijn, dat ik gekrulde haren moet hebben. Alsof ik mijzelf moet bewijzen. Maar als je naar Suriname gaat, iedereen is daar Surinaams, letterlijk iedereen ongeacht verschillende huidskleuren.

Ik heb mezelf aangeleerd om eerst Surinaams te zeggen als ik me introduceer aan anderen, want mensen onthouden toch wel dat ik Turks ben, maar ze moeten ook onthouden dat ik Surinaams ben. Daarom zeg ik dat ik Surinaams-Turks ben maar tegenwoordig richt me nu ook meer op mijn Turkse kant omdat ik vind dat ik dat ook ben.

Ik denk nu dat ik juist wel van mijn Turkse kant wil leren, omdat ik het zo lang niet heb gedaan. En van mijn vader heb ik sowieso geen dingen geleerd over de cultuur. En dan nu kom ik erachter door middel van internet door memes. Dan zie ik een Turks zinnetje en dan begin ik ervan te leren van Oh, Dit is wat Turken dus doen, oh, dit doen ze dus.

Ik ben Jean en ik kom uit Deventer. Mijn moeder is Surinaams en mijn vader is Nederlands.

Ik wist niet dat het niet per se normaal was voor mijn vriendinnetjes om elke dag rijst eten. Ik had toen echt geen idee wat zij aten dus en toen was eten eigenlijk helemaal niet een verschil in cultuur.

Ik denk dat ik toen niet echt door had dat ik Misschien een andere Achtergrond zou hebben dan. Anderen uit de klas, dus Ik denk dat ik me toen gewoon heel erg Nederlands voelde, Omdat ik in Nederland woonde en op een Nederlandse school zat Nederlands praten.

Ik herinner dat ik aan papa en mama ging vragen van "Oh, maar hoeveel? Procent ben ik dat dan?". Ik heb letterlijk een soort zo een cirkel getekend. En zo vond ik het heel leuk en Ik denk dat je dan ook meer soort van gaat gedragen naar wat je bent ofzo. Je begint gewoon meer interesse tonen ineens aan je afkomsten.

Nou, Ik had bijvoorbeeld keer met levensbeschouwing. Toen we moesten Iedereen een persoonlijk verhaal gaan opschrijven. Ik vond het best wel moeilijk om iets te bedenken. Ik ging toen met de docent praten en die zei tegen mij van "Oh, maar je hebt toch allemaal verschillende afkomsten? Ja, Dat is toch heel bijzonder. Dat is niet echt normaal. Moet je daar niet over schrijven?" Dus dat ben ik wel gaan doen en schreef ik uiteindelijk mijn verslag over de afkomst van de familie. Voor het schrijven ging ik daar dus meer over nadenken. Toen dacht ik dat het best wel raar was hoe die docent had tegen mij gezegd van dat mijn afkomsten niet bepaald "normaal" was.

Ik vond dat wel echt heel leuk, ook echt heel mooi om een achtergrondverhaal over mijn familie te hebben leren kennen. Eerst had ik daar zelf niet per se de gedachte bij. Ik dacht van, ja, China ligt daar, Suriname ligt daar. Ik denk dat het voor mij gewoon heel erg realisatie moment was van hoe goed ik het heb in Nederland, want oma en opa hebben ervoor gekozen om naar Nederland te verhuizen, zodat Iedereen naar school kon en goed etcetera. En Ik denk. Dat ik daardoor gewoon ineens heel erg bewust was van dat zij die keuze ook soort van voor mij hebben gemaakt. En ik daardoor heel erg gelukkig mocht zijn met waar ik woon.

Ik heb het gevoel dat iedereen mij wel als Nederlands zou zien, maar ook wel zoiets hebben van oke, je hebt wel echt andere afkomsten. Maar dat hebben ze meestal wel door als ik samen met iemand ga eten of koken.

Naarmate je ouder wordt kom je er wel achter wat mensen thuis eten dus toen kwam het besef meer over dan de rol van eten en cultuur en zeker toen ik uit huis ging toen. Was dat nog groter?

Ik denk dat ik heel erg heen en weer ga. Als ik bijvoorbeeld een maand lang hier alleen maar in Delft zou zitten, wat bijvoorbeeld tijdens corona was. Dan heb ik naar mijn idee best wel een Nederlands leven, dus dan voel ik me ook heel Nederlands. Maar stel, We hebben net een Pasen gehad met de familie dan. Voel ik me wel weer meer Surinaamse Chinees, omdat je dan meer in de omgeving zit met mensen van die cultuur.

Soms ging ik uit of was ik gewoon op school? En dan krijg je gewoon opmerkingen van "ja, maar jij bent sowieso wel prima, want jouw hele familie is Natuurlijk bruin, want jullie zijn niet Nederlands". Of dat Mensen zeggen van "maar waar kom je nou echt vandaan?" en dan door blijven vragen? Ik heb ook wel eens gehad een vraag gekregen van "hoe lang verblijf je eigenlijk in Nederland?". Dat vond ik eigenlijk wel raar, want toen dacht ik, ik spreek gewoon best wel goed Nederlands en ik zit weer gewoon op school en ik snap die vraag niet.

Als ik mijn verhaal vertel dan merk ik wel verschil in reactie op mijn verhaal en die van iemand anders, want veel mensen zeggen van, oh ja "Ik heb ook wel zoiets meegemaakt", terwijl bij mij was het een wat anders, dan voel ik me ook wel een beetje anders ten opzichte van de anderen

Omdat ik de eerste in de familie was die bij een studentenvereniging bijvoorbeeld is gegaan. Toen dacht ik, "oh, is dat dan iets super Nederlands?" Toen ging ik daar over nadenken en zeker ook in de vereniging waren er weinig mensen met dezelfde Achtergrond.

Als iemand in NL aan mij vraagt waar ik vandaan kom, dan zeg ik, Deventer. Maar als ik op vakantie ben en iemand vraagt aan mij, waar kom je vandaan, dan zeg ik, ik ben Nederlands.

Wat ik wel grappig vond, toen ik naar Colombia vorig jaar ging? Toen was ik samen met een vriendin die er gewoon Nederlands uit ziet. En wanneer iedereen aan haar vroeg van waar kom jij vandaan? Zeiden ze ook erbij dat ze sowieso uit Europa. Maar toen ze het aan mij vroegen en ik antwoord dat ik ook uit Nederland kom. Dan zeggen ze "maar je hebt sowieso roots uit Zuid-Amerika, want jij kan niet Nederlands zijn". Ik vond het wel bijzonder.

Ik denk meer van "je bent gewoon altijd die persoon geweest". Op een gegeven moment wordt het duidelijk van "oh ja, dit zijn mijn echte afkomsten".

Ik heb het gevoel dat alle invloeden wel verweven zijn in mijn leven. En ik denk ook omdat alles voor mij zo normaal heeft gevoeld, voelt het ook niet als een uitdaging. Bepaalde familietradities dat is voor mij gewoon normaal, want het is altijd zo geweest.

Ik denk dat saimon noedels mijn identiteit het best zou beschrijven. Het is niet echt Nederlands eten en het heeft wel invloed van de familie, maar het is wel iets wat ik hier in Nederland graag zou eten en ook veel eet om het zo even te zeggen. En heel veel vrienden om mij heen eten dit niet per se, dus ik vond dat eigenlijk wel een goede combinatie van beide culturen.

Ik ben Lisa. Mijn ouders zijn van Surinaamse afkomst met Javaanse en Chinese roots.

De stad waar ik dan woon, Deventer, daar heb je best veel Turkse culturen. En vroeger had ik ook wel Turkse vrienden. Ik vind het ook wel leuk om hun cultuur te leren kennen.

Op school had ik het idee dat buitenlandse cultuur voor de anderen moeilijk te begrijpen is. Ze kunnen zich moeilijk daarin verplaatsen omdat ze denken dat iedereen van de Nederlandse cultuur is. Iedereen woont in Nederland, dus Iedereen is een Nederlander in de zin. Maar dat is niet zo en Iedereen heeft zijn eigen cultuur en er zijn verschillende. culturen hier in Nederland. En ze denken heel zwart op wit.

Wij doen wel heel veel met familie en we zien elkaar echt best wel regelmatig. En wat ik dan wel mee oppik is dat het niet zo is in de Nederlandse cultuur, zij zijn niet zo hecht met hun familie zoals ik ben met die van mij.

Bijvoorbeeld als je bij iemand ging spelen, dan merkte je wel meteen dat het anders is. Voor mij is de Surinaamse cultuur meer gastvrij dan de Nederlandse cultuur.

Als kind dacht ik niet zoveel over de verschillen in culturen. Ik merkte dus wel dat het misschien ietsjes anders verloopt dan dat je gewend bent. Maar ik probeerde mij dan ook wel aan te passen op de anderen, hun normen en waarden, hoe zij het doen, hoe zij het dan ook graag zouden willen.

Ik heb nog een een vriendin die van Antilliaanse-Molukse afkomst. En het was ook wel leuk om zeg maar onze culturen met elkaar te verschillen. Ik kwam erachter dat onze eten, familie en vrienden best wel iets met elkaar in overeenkomst hadden.

Een keer tijdens mijn stage heb ik wel opgemerkt dat er wat opmerkingen werden gemaakt over mij. Ja, Ik was dan wel de enige buitenlander, zeg maar een gekleurd iemand die tussen Nederlandse mensen aan het werk was. En toen werden er wel vervelende opmerkingen gemaakt over dat buitenlanders zo zijn of ze zijn dit zeg maar.

Op sommige momenten dat ik me ongemakkelijk voelde door bepaalde opmerkingen van anderen was het soms lastig om anderen mensen hierover te benaderen. Bijvoorbeeld bij mijn stage ben ik gewoon een stagiaire en dat ga je dan niet makkelijk bespreken.

Ik heb een keer stage gelopen in Suriname. En ik merkte wel dat de werkcultuur daar een andere cultuur is dan de Nederlandse cultuur. En daar had ik het best wel lastig mee in Suriname. Omdat in Nederland ben ik gewend aan bijvoorbeeld optijd te zijn voor afspraken of werken volgens de agenda, terwijl in Suriname dat dan juist niet zo is.

Ik ben zelf kinderverpleegkundige. Ik kom wel soms in situaties terecht waar je bijvoorbeeld verschillende culturen tegenkomt. Ik merk wel dat de Nederlandse werkers soms wel moeite hebben met de culturen die ze tegenkomen op de werkvloer. Ze vinden het lastig om zich aan te passen aan de culturen die zij dan tegenkomen. Soms is het moeilijk om zich in te beelden in de andere cultuur.

Ik ben gewoon wel eigenlijk dezelfde persoon, maar toch denk ik dat je toch een ander persoon bent op je werk, dan dat je thuis bent.

Ik denk wel dat we gewoon eigenlijk dezelfde mensen zijn. We zijn gewoon hetzelfde. Wat Alleen anders is, is misschien de kleur en de culturen, maar verder zijn we gewoon precies dezelfde mensen. Ik vind niet dat je iemand anders moet gaan behandelen, omdat ze bijvoorbeeld een andere kleur hebben dan jij, of als ze bijvoorbeeld van een andere cultuur komen.

Waar ik ook ben, daar ben ik gewoon. Ik woon en kom uit Nederland. Ik ben gewoon een Nederlands persoon, zeg maar. En als een vraag van ja, waar liggen je roots? Dan zou ik het ook gewoon zeggen? Van ja, Ik ben wel van Surinaamse afkomst.

Ik denk dat koken wel iets is waarin ik mij sterk Surinaams voel. Nu ik ouder word vind ik het vaker leuk om bepaalde gerechten van de Surinaamse cultuur te leren. Het is zeg maar dat ik die gerechten wil overnemen. Bijvoorbeeld als bepaalde personen er niet meer zijn van waar de recepten vandaan komen.

Appendix B: Workshop creation insights

Task 1:
- Pizza, book, and the man who bends (that group A created) represent hobbies and habits that give the children a direct form to. The children use this to show others a visual representation of who they are.
- The star (that group B created) is a metaphor to say 'you are as special as us.'"

Task 2:
- The hat and statue (that group A created) are hobbies, habits, and traditions that the children gave a direct form to.
- The statue (that group B created) is also a habit that gives the children a direct form but they create it in such a way that you can interact with it.
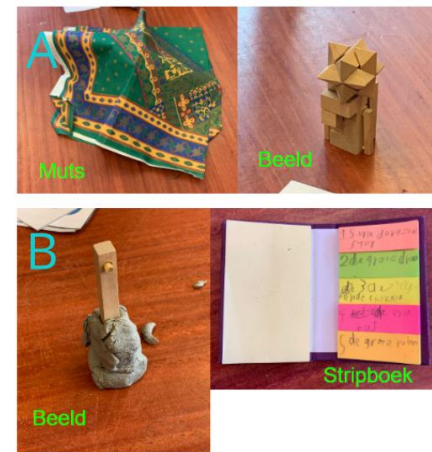
Task 2:
- The statue (that group A created) is a hobby that gives the children a direct form. They even made up a song for it (also a bit as a joke).
- The gift with dolls (that group B created) is a present that the children use to share the message that they can simply belong together. They use this as a kind of role play where they can interactively play with the dolls 'like a sort of tea party.'"

Appendix C: Ideation

"Create food that I can taste"

being a tasked assistant
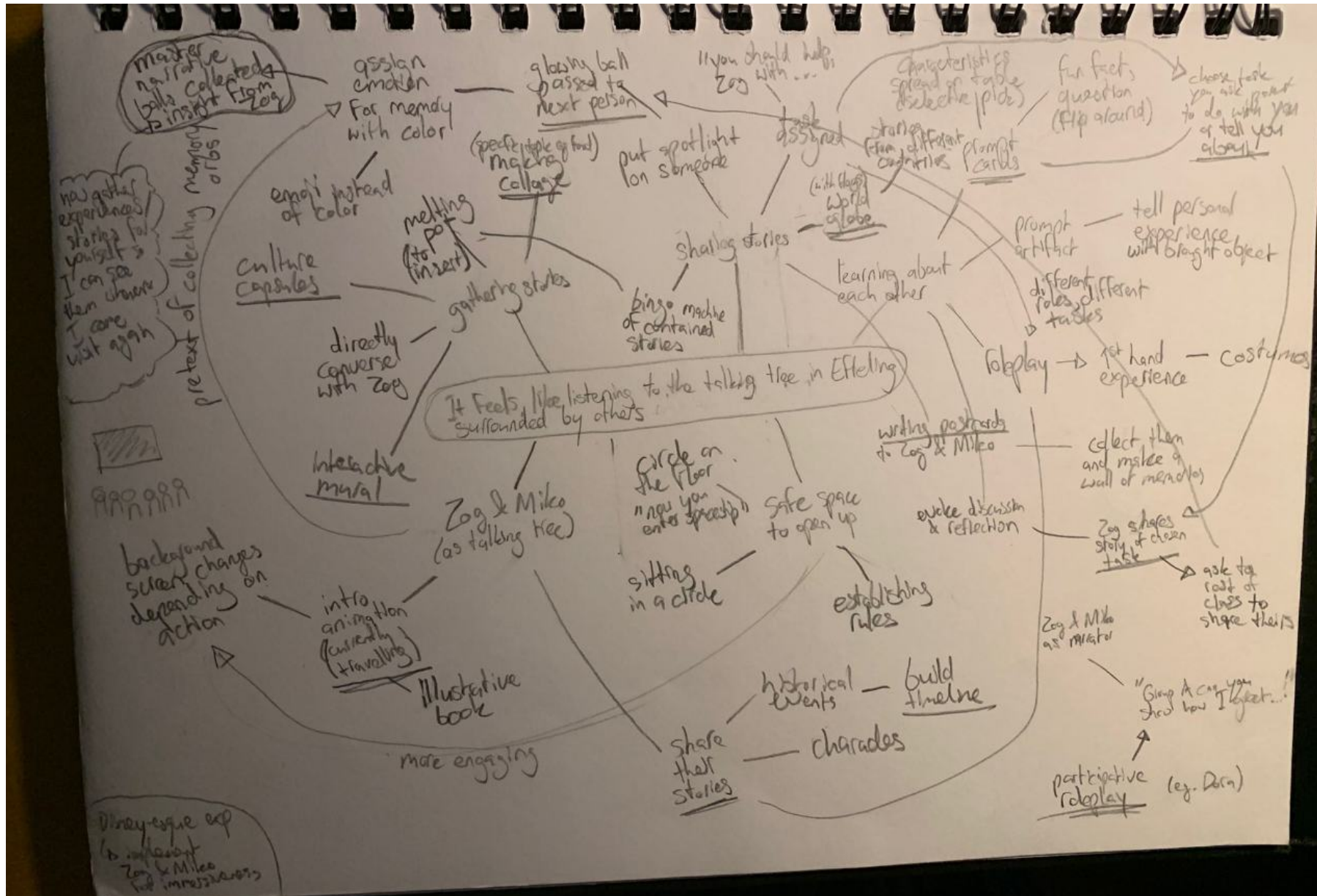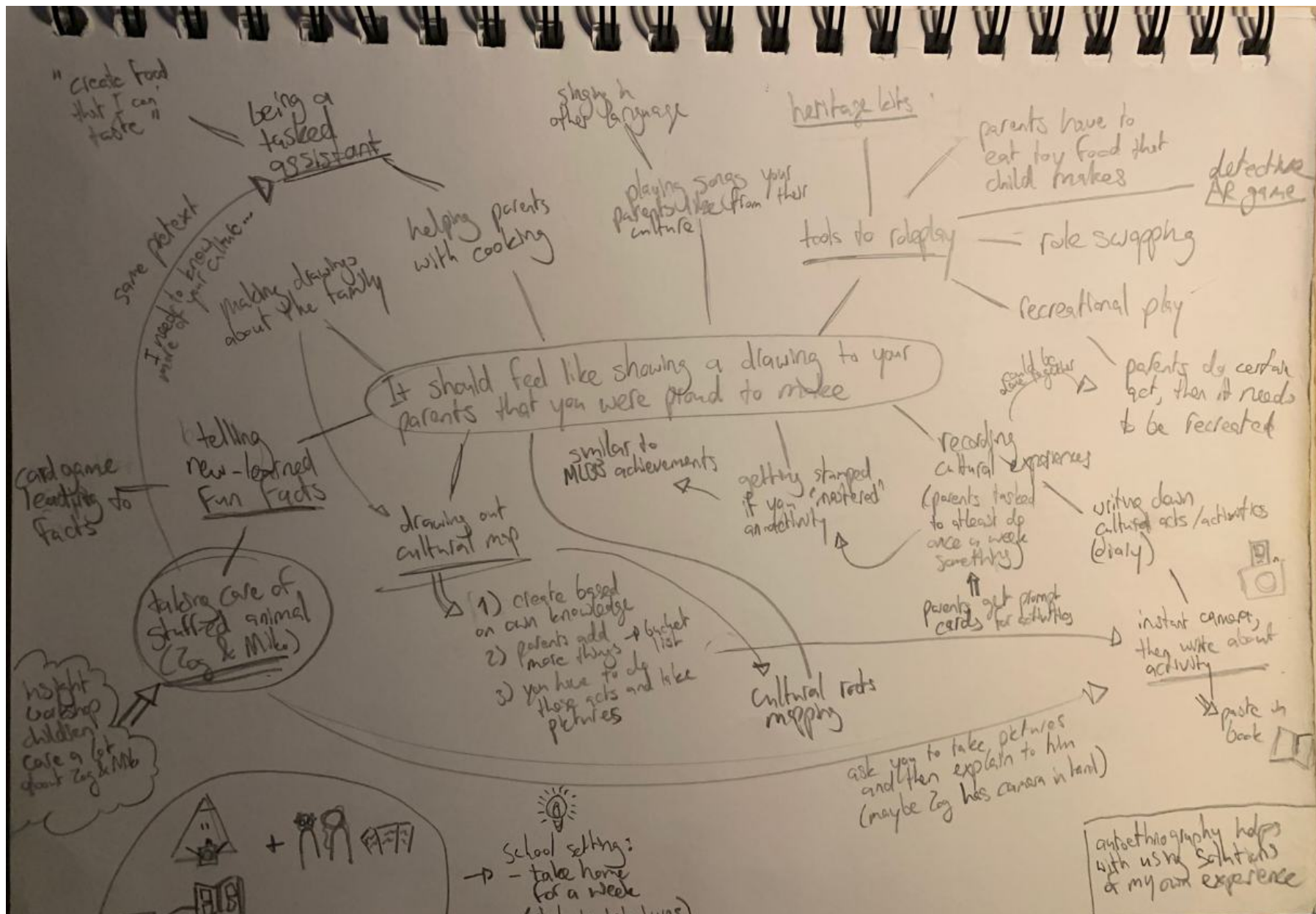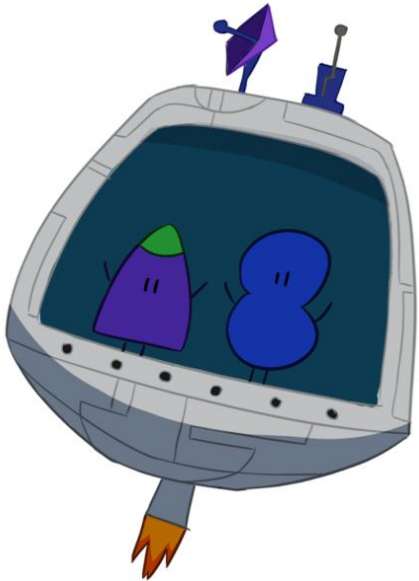
same pretext

I need to practice more of your culture...

making drawings about the family

helping parents with cooking

singing in other language

playing songs your parents like from their culture

heritage lists

parents have to eat toy food that child makes

detective AR game

tools to roleplay — role swapping

recreational play

It should feel like showing a drawing to your parents that you were proud to make

could be done together → parents do certain act, then it needs to be recreated

telling new-learned fun facts

card game relating to facts

taking care of stuffed animal (Zog & Miko)

drawing out cultural map

similar to MUSE achievements

getting stamped if you "mastered" an activity

recording cultural experiences (parents tasked to at least do once a week something)

writing down cultural acts/activities (diary)

1) create based on own knowledge
2) parents add more things → bucket list
3) you have to do those acts and take pictures

parents get prompt cards for activities

instant camera, then write about activity

insight workshop children care a lot about Zog & Miko

cultural roots mapping

ask you to take pictures and then explain to him (maybe Zog has camera in tail)

paste in book

School setting:
→ - take home for a week

autoethnography helps with using solutions of my own experience

Appendix D: Final concept

These are stickers to decorate the wall.
Used in phase 3 of the workshop

These are maps of the Netherlands and the
world map. Used in phase 1 of the workshop.

These are the prompt cards. Used in phase 2 of the workshop.

Actiekaart

Mijn vader vertelt me soms over onze stamboom en waar onze voorouders vandaan komen.

Familie verhaal

Praat met je familie over waar jullie vandaan komen en maak een foto van dit moment.

Actiekaart

Op planeet Kemp worden potten met kleurrijke lijnpatronen doorgegeven binnen de familie. Elke pot is dus een belangrijke familie erfstuk.

Betekenisvolle voorwerpen

Zoek met je familie een voorwerp dat belangrijk is in je cultuur en maak er een foto van

Actiekaart

Mijn favoriete gerecht van planeet Mux wordt Vakao genoemd

Smaken van thuis

Kook samen met je familie je favoriete gerecht uit jouw cultuur en maak er een foto van

Actiekaart

Vroeger las mijn moeder me altijd voor het slapengaan het boek Forl, een bekend verhaal over het ontstaan van onze planeet Mux.

Vertel een verhaal

Vertel een verhaal of sprookje uit je cultuur aan iemand thuis en maak een foto van dit moment

Actiekaart

Op planeet Kemp dragen wij een groene hoofdmuts als teken voor goede gezondheid en wijsheid

Kleding met een verhaal

Draag traditionele kleding uit jouw cultuur en laat iemand een foto van jou maken.

This is how the glowing ball has been programmed to have a discussion with the children. The program Voiceflow has been used for this.