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Faculty of Education

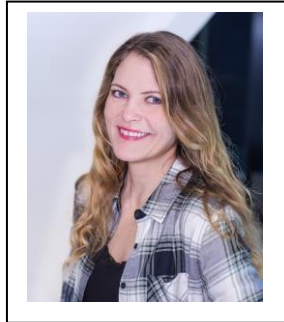
CEDiR

Cambridge Educational Dialogue
Research Group

Possibilities of Joint Exploration

Pupils' Conversations on Literature in a Scandinavian Perspective

By Marie Dahl Rasmussen, Aarhus University, Denmark and Margrethe Sønneland, University of Stavanger, Norway



A keystone in the Nordic school tradition is the belief that pupils learn when they use language actively to communicate with the teacher and each other. Our interest lies in this field of classroom communication, literacy and literature teaching. In our PhD projects, we are specifically concerned with peer conversations in mother tongue education and the role of these conversations in the students' comprehension and interpretation of literature. The aim of the projects is both to shed light on the potentials and barriers for these conversations to become dialogical and joint investigations of texts, and also to investigate how the text can generate affinity spaces in the conversations. The studies we will present are designed as qualitative case studies and build on ethnographic fieldwork in a lower secondary school in Norway (13 -14 years old pupils) and a primary school in Denmark (11-12 year old pupils). We will present transcribed examples from some of the conversations. Our preliminary analysis show how the groups cooperate differently on developing understanding, how they use language to render the text and the activity significance, and how they use and evaluate their own and each other's contributions.

Even if group work is widely used in Danish and Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools, it is our hypothesis that these hold an unexploited potential of learning. We believe that this potential can be unfolded by producing knowledge about the framing and forms of the conversations (how), the purpose of and the object for the conversations (what), and the disciplinary potential of the conversations (why).

Thursday 1st June 4pm Room G06/G07 Mary Allan Building