Aalborg Universitet

AALBORG UNIVERSITY

DENMARK

COLWRIT – Collaborative Online Writing in Google Docs

Andreasen, Lars Birch; Winther, Frederikke; Hanghøj, Thorkild; Larsen, Birger

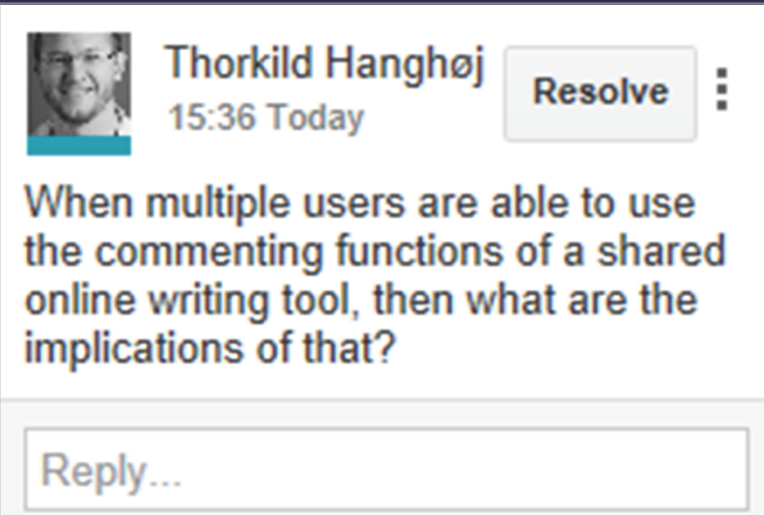[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

COLWRIT – Collaborative Online Writing in Google Docs: Presenting a Research Design

Lars Birch Andreasen, Frederikke Winther, Thorkild Hanghøj and Birger Larsen
Aalborg University Copenhagen, Denmark

AALBORG UNIVERSITY COPENHAGEN

Thorkild Hanghøj
15:36 Today — Resolve
When multiple users are able to use the commenting functions of a shared online writing tool, then what are the implications of that?
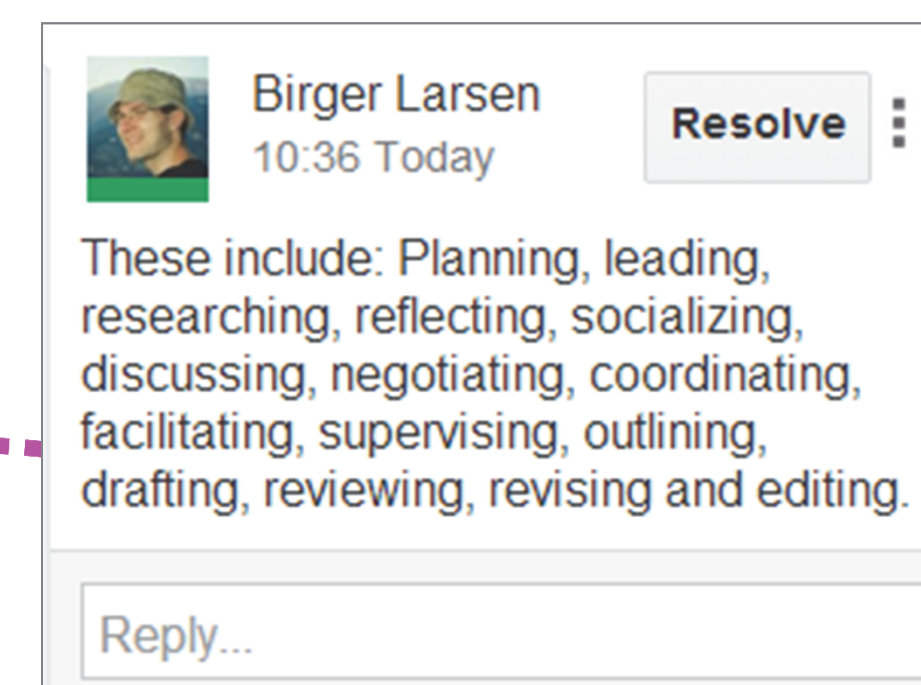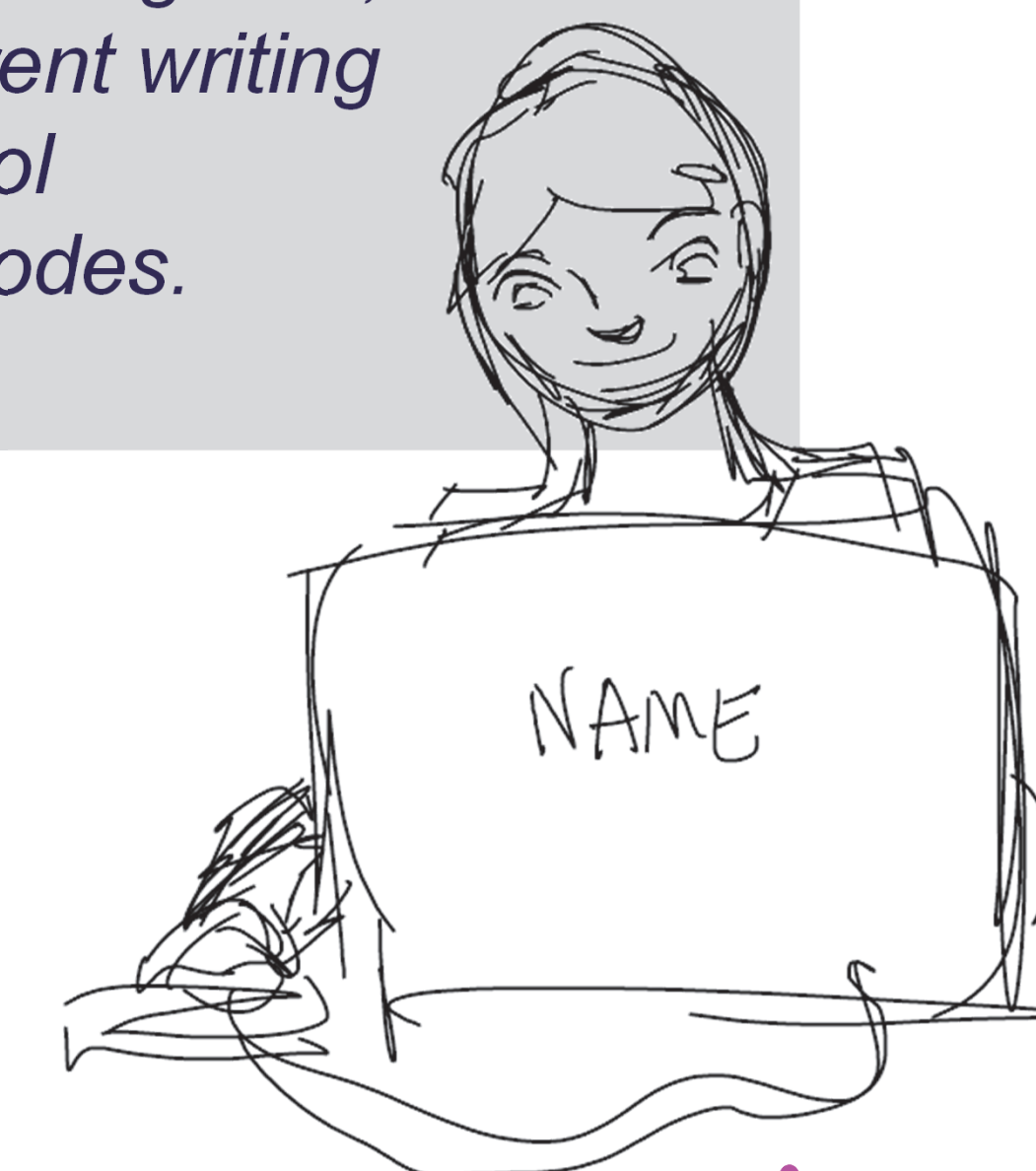Reply...

Study purpose

- The emergence of **online collaborative writing tools** (e.g. Google Docs) opens up new opportunities when students are co-producing texts
- The **COLWRIT study** (Collaborative Online Writing) explores how the collaboration and writing processes of university students are affected, when creating their shared text through the use of collaborative writing tools like Google Docs

Collaborative writing processes

- *CW [collaborative writing] is an iterative and social process that involves a team focused on a common objective that negotiates, coordinates, and communicates during the creation of a common document.*
- *The potential scope of CW goes beyond the more basic act of joint composition to include the likelihood of pre- and post task activities, team formation, and planning.*
- *Furthermore, based on the desired writing task, CW includes the possibility of many different writing strategies, activities, document control approaches, team roles, and work modes.*

Lowry, Curtis & Lowry (2004)

Birger Larsen
10:36 Today — Resolve
These include: Planning, leading, researching, reflecting, socializing, discussing, negotiating, coordinating, facilitating, supervising, outlining, drafting, reviewing, revising and editing.
Reply...

NAME

Ethical implications

- **Agreed consent** will be obtained from all informants (students) in relation to data logging and observations
- All data will be **anonymized**
- All informants (students) are **invited to participate in a research seminar**, where we present and invite for discussion of the preliminary findings of the study

Mixed methods

Quantitative

- Logging of **all changes** as well as **all comments** in student Google Docs
  - **Automatic analysis and visualisation** of collected data
- Logging and analysis of project related **closed facebook posts** → **Digital Footprints** app

Qualitative

- Pre and post surveys
- **Observation & video** to capture complex interpersonal on/offline working processes
- **Interviews & focus groups** to get students' opinions and feedback
- **Diaries** to capture students' own reflections and important moments
- Different **student groups** involved as **informants** and **co-researchers**
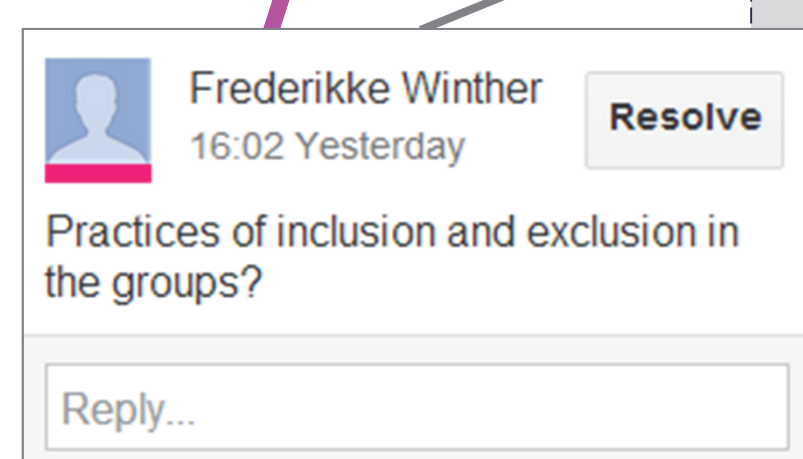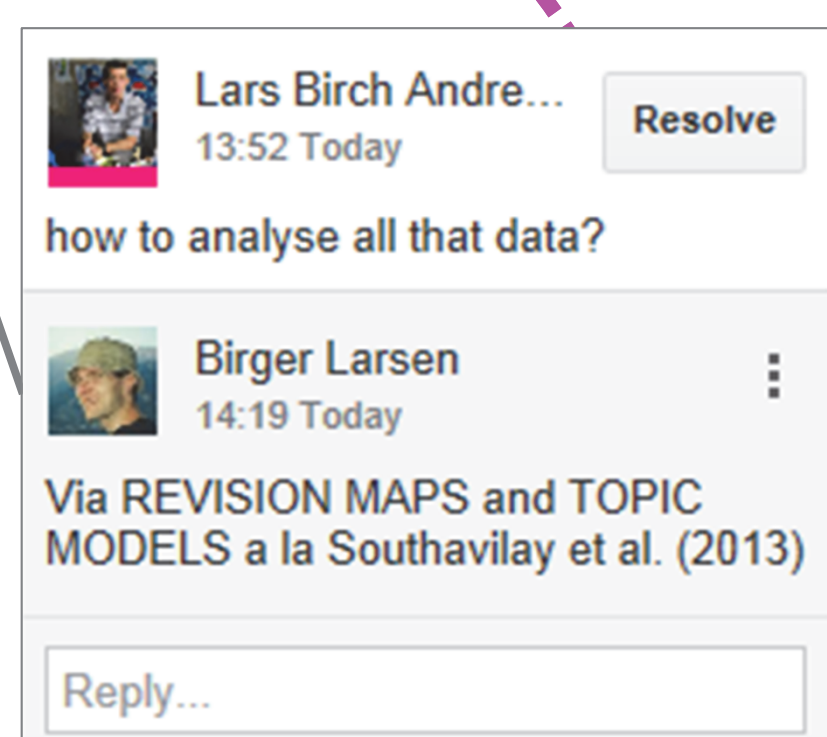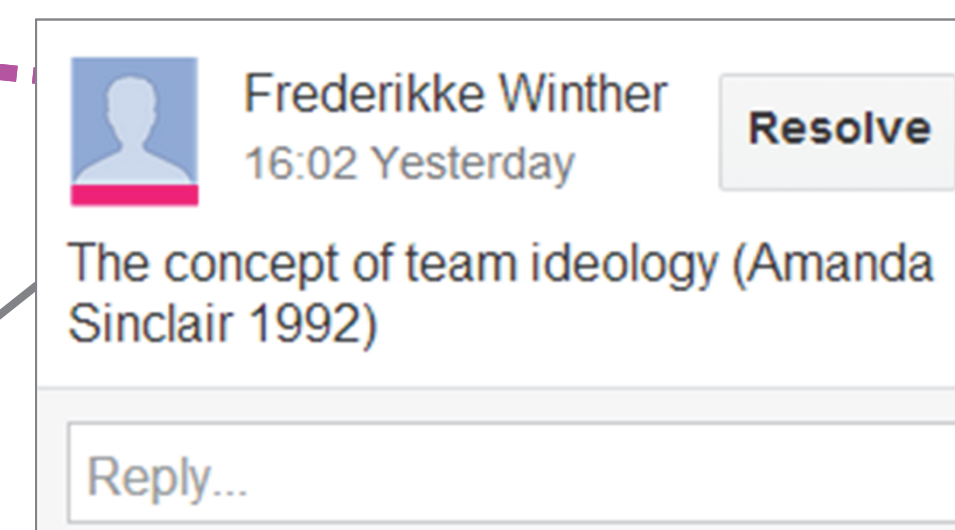- Study to be carried out during 12 weeks of problem based project work in fall 2014

Lars Birch Andre...
13:52 Today — Resolve
how to analyse all that data?

Birger Larsen
14:19 Today
Via REVISION MAPS and TOPIC MODELS a la Southavilay et al. (2013)
Reply...

The *tyranny* of participation – the *dark side* of collaboration

- To think that collaborative participation is always a liberating and emancipating mode or strategy is both a **naïve** and a **utopian** point of view.
- Collaborative participation can lead to **tyranny** of the dominant and hence the reinforcement of oppression and control.
- Especially in the **absence of reflexivity** and understanding of different ways and approaches to participation.

cf. Ferreday & Hodgson (2008)

- So **what** is being negotiated during the writing process: work and writing strategies? Or personal and participative legitimacy?
- And **how** is it being negotiated: by open arguments or subtle indications?

Frederikke Winther
16:02 Yesterday — Resolve
The concept of team ideology (Amanda Sinclair 1992)
Reply...

Frederikke Winther
16:02 Yesterday — Resolve
Practices of inclusion and exclusion in the groups?
Reply...

Expected results

We expect to be able to:
- Describe **significant variation** in the students' approaches to collaborative online writing, especially in relation to the students' **different roles** and **different phases** of the writing process
- Understand different aspects of the **groups' collaboration and negotiation** in relation to **coordinating and creating** a shared text
- Understand the **meaning and interplay of different online and offline resources** (e.g. Google Docs, whiteboards, handwritten notes etc.) in relation to collaborative writing
- Develop **pedagogical guidelines** for the use of Google Docs in relation to project work and collaborative online writing processes

Frederikke Winther
16:02 Today — Resolve
I want to understand how the comment function is used by group members in order to provide feedback
Reply...

Drawings © 2014 by Signe Birch Jensen