CHAPTER 1
General introduction
1.1 Introduction
This thesis focuses on teacher conduct during whole-class discussions around curricular texts in primary school history and geography lessons. It characterises teachers’ different ways of taking on a more facilitating role and inviting students to take the floor for longer periods of time. By scrutinizing the teachers’ conduct during whole-class discussions, identifying the student contributions that precede this conduct and analysing the interactional consequences of the teachers’ actions, we show how teachers facilitate and influence the discussion among students with both verbal and bodily conduct. These insights provide valuable knowledge on how to hold a discussion in the classroom in which students talk and respond to each other, reason together and provide each other with alternative perspectives on a matter.

1.2 Reading and text comprehension
Reading is a very important skill. Through texts, we meet the world, have vicarious experiences and gain all kinds of knowledge. In fact, to be able to function in society, proficiency in reading is a necessity (Taylor & Olson, 1995). Stanovich (2008) notes that reading and cognitive development are reciprocally related and create a “Matthew effect” (the richer get rich) of reading achievement. For example, reading enhances vocabulary growth which in turn enhances text comprehension, causing major differences between individuals (Stanovich, 2008). Besides enhancing language development, reading has other benefits as well. Reading literary texts, for instance, can improve one’s Theory of Mind: the capacity “to identify and understand other’s subjective states” (Kidd & Castano, 2013, p. 377). Furthermore, reading picture books can enhance children’s social-emotional development (Kwant, 2011), their mathematics performance (Van den Heuvel-Panhuizen, Elia, & Robitzsch, 2016) and their literary competence (Van der Pol, 2010).

Apart from these cognitive effects, reading competence is also important for more immediate reasons. For example, in content area subjects at school texts are typically the primary source of information. In order to be able to get acquainted with the material and acquire new knowledge, one needs to be able to read and understand these texts. However, text comprehension is “a complex cognitive activity” (Gernsbacher & Kaschak, 2013, p. 462). Apart from orthographic decoding and recognition of words and syntactic structures, text comprehension requires readers to make sense of the text as a whole by establishing a representation of the text and inferring relations to fill in gaps by relying on their knowledge of the world (Gernsbacher & Kaschak, 2013).
Beck and McKeown and colleagues note that younger and less skilled readers do not take such an active role while reading and that many students “deal with text only superficially” (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 226; Beck, McKeown, Sandora, Kucan, & Worthy, 1996). As a result, they are often only able to answer simple questions and do not comprehend the text (Beck & McKeown, 2001). Therefore, it is important to enhance student engagement by means of meaningful texts and motivating reading goals (Van den Branden, 2019; Vanbuel, Boderé, & Van den Branden, 2017). Instead of strategy-based instruction which risks a focus on surface features, Beck et al. propose the use of a dialogic approach constituting “an active search for meaning” (1996, p. 386). Their approach, called Questioning the Author, treats the author of a text as fallible and invites students to explore the meaning of the text by encouraging them to share their understanding, interpretations and elaborations in a whole-class discussion setting (Beck et al., 1996). In this way, the approach encourages collaboration in meaning construction.

1.3 Classroom discussions around texts
As was already claimed by Vygotsky, dialogue is important to learning, for intermental processes precede and facilitate intramental processes: dialogue not only enables us to jointly create knowledge and understanding, but also provides us with a “psychological tool for organizing our individual thoughts, for reasoning, planning and reviewing our actions.” (Mercer, 2000, p. 10; Vygotsky, 1986). For this reason, discussions in the classroom form an auspicious means for dealing with texts. They offer students the opportunity to collaboratively build understanding of the texts and enhance their individual cognitive processes at the same time.

Indeed, previous research on classroom discussions around texts points to a range of benefits. First and foremost, discussions around texts have shown to enhance all kinds of cognitive processes. Most importantly, they improve students’ text comprehension (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003; Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009), which was ascribed to the students’ internalising of the “knowledge and skills necessary to engage in challenging literacy tasks on their own.” (Applebee et al., 2003, p. 723). Furthermore, discussions around texts also enhance students’ understanding of the world (Sterponi, 2007) and encourage students to predict, to elaborate text propositions, to produce possible explanations, to solve problems, to use evidence and to provide and consider different perspectives (Chinn et al., 2001; Gosen, 2012).

In line with this, Reznitskaya et al. (2001) demonstrate that discussions can lead to better argumentation skills. In their study comparing essays of students who participated in Collaborative Reasoning to those of students who did not, the essays
of the first group contained more arguments and counterarguments and displayed more use of text information. This indicates that through collaborative discussions, students acquire reasoning skills which translate to individual persuasive writing. Hence, participation in joint reasoning around texts promotes students’ individual reasoning (Reznitskaya et al., 2001).

Finally, discussions around texts have shown to lead to enhanced student engagement (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Chinn et al., 2001). They offer opportunities for development of collaboration as the students build on each other’s ideas (Beck et al., 1996). This activity asks for a more active attitude, as it does not suffice to just understand the text; the students also have to make their own understanding, ideas and perspectives understandable to others (Hayes, Flower, Schriver, Stratman, & Carey, 1987; McKeown, Beck, & Worthy, 1993). In turn, this may of course promote the students’ cognitive and argumentative skills.

### 1.4 Characteristics of meaningful discussions

Despite the benefits listed in the previous section, not every discussion is equally productive. A meta-analysis by Murphy et al. (2009) has demonstrated that many small-group approaches for the discussion of texts result in strong increases in the amount of student talk and improvements in text comprehension, while only few of them effectively promote critical thinking, reasoning and argumentation. Executing a detailed analysis of such approaches, Soter et al. (2008) aimed to reveal the discourse features characterising ‘productive discussions’: discussions that promote high-level thinking and comprehension. They found that productive discussions occur “where students hold the floor for extended periods of time, where students are prompted to discuss texts through open-ended or authentic questions and where discussion incorporates a high degree of uptake” (Soter et al., 2008, p. 389). Furthermore, their findings suggest that discussions should be monitored rather than dominated by the teacher. The teacher’s task is thus to facilitate a discussion in which students produce longer stretches of talk and are provided the opportunity to talk and think together.

For whole-class discussions, less is known about “whether some modes of dialogic organization are more beneficial than others” (Howe & Abedin, 2013, p. 345). As Van der Veen, De Mey, Van Kruistum and Van Oers (2017) rightly state, however, it is important to investigate how the dialogic practices of small groups can be applied to whole-class contexts. Whereas small-group discussions require organisation of group division, accommodation of these groups and parallel guidance by the teacher, whole-class discussions offer teachers the opportunity to more easily organise a discussion among the students and model thinking for the group as a whole (see for example McKeown & Beck, 1999).
Despite the relative absence of quantitative studies investigating the effects of different modes of whole-class discussion, the literature does describe and suggest discourse characteristics similar to those established for small groups: the teacher is to be a facilitator inviting students to take the floor and share their thoughts and experiences (Evans, 2001; Myhill, 2006; Van der Veen, Van Kruistum, & Michaels, 2015). Here again, authentic questions are recommended as a means to this end (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Myhill, 2006; Nystrand, 1997; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). These questions not only elicit longer contributions; they can also create enhanced student engagement which in turn has a strong effect on their learning (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). Furthermore, uptake and the careful design of subsequent questions are mentioned in order to extend and support the students’ learning and understanding (Michaels & O’Connor, 2015; Myhill, 2006; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991).

1.5 Teacher roles in classroom interaction

Whole-class discussions constitute a less prevalent setting in education. Teacher-fronted interaction (also referred to as monologic classroom interaction) is the most common and most researched type of classroom interaction (Cazden, 1988). In teacher-fronted settings, the teachers are typically characterised as the ‘head’ or ‘director’ of the interaction (McHoul, 1978, p. 188). As head of the interaction, teachers often launch IRE-sequences (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979b; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). These sequences consist of a teacher’s initiation (e.g. a question), a student’s response and an evaluation of that response by the teacher. As the evaluation component demonstrates, teachers frequently pose questions to which the answer is already known to them (Cazden, 1988; Lyle, 2008; Margutti & Drew, 2014; Mehan, 1979b; Mehan & Cazden, 2013; Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long, 2003; Shepherd, 2014; Van der Veen, Van der Wilt, Van Kruistum, Van Oers, & Michaels, 2017). In this thesis, we will call these questions known-information questions (or KIQs), in previous work also referred to as exam questions, display questions and known-answer questions (Rusk, Sahlström, & Pörn, 2017). Through the use of these questions and the IRE-sequences that these questions set in motion, teachers take every other turn at talk (McHoul, 1978): they often use the third turn to both evaluate the response just given and produce a next question that launches a new IRE (Lee, 2007). Hence, the teachers function as primary speakers in these interactions as all turns are produced by or directed at them. The pattern of turn-taking typically is Teacher-Student-Teacher-Student etc.

Being the head of the interaction also involves allocating the turns. Uncovering the basic rules for turn-taking in the classroom, McHoul (1978) characterised teacher-fronted interactions as heavily pre-allocated: the teacher is virtually always the first
speaker and deviations from the Teacher-Student-Teacher-Student (T-S-T-S) turn-taking pattern are treated as needing repair. McHoul furthermore showed that while students can only choose between continuing speaking and selecting the teacher as the next speaker, the teacher can allocate turns creatively (1978). Hence, teacher-fronted classroom interaction is hierarchical and furthermore organised as a ‘two-party speech exchange system’ in which the students together form one (multi person) party and the teacher the other (Schegloff, 1987).

While there is a general agreement on the teacher as the turn-allocator, several scholars have nuanced McHoul’s model of turn-taking in the classroom. They have demonstrated that teachers do sometimes address the whole class of students and give them an opportunity to self-select (Mazeland, 1983; ‘general solicit’, Van Lier, 1988) or elicit choral responses to Designedly Incomplete Utterances (Koshik, 2002; Margutti, 2010). Students sometimes even select themselves as the next speaker (Mazeland, 1983) and have demonstrated to influence the teacher’s turn-allocation by means of gaze and hand raising (Fasel Lauzon & Berger, 2015; Mortensen, 2008; Sahlström, 2001). Koole and Berenst (2008) furthermore showed that different activities in the classroom involve different participation frameworks. Indeed, whole-class or small-group discussions entail a very different participation framework than teacher-fronted interaction and, hence, call for another role for the teacher.

In previous sections, we have established that productive discussions consist of longer stretches of student talk and that the teacher should mainly act as a facilitator offering the students the space to talk and think together. This facilitating role is something entirely different than the function of primary speaker and turn allocator usually held by teachers. It has been observed that this new role can be quite difficult for teachers: in order to provide the students the opportunity to express their points of view, the teachers have to partly hand over control to them, while simultaneously ensuring the quality of the discussion (Hargreaves et al., 2003; Schuitema, Radstake, Van de Pol, & Veugelers, 2018). The difficulty of this task is illustrated in Myhill (2006): the teachers in this study prioritise ‘teaching over learning’ and ask many factual questions rather than realising a discussion framework, as they experience pressure to cover their teaching objectives (Myhill, 2006, pp. 28–29). Furthermore, Cazden (1988) notes that a change of intent in the teacher is not enough. Both teachers and students are so accustomed to their regular way of interacting that another way of interacting is not easily installed.

In order to realise productive discussions in which the students are actually provided the opportunity to produce longer stretches of talk and to talk and think together, it is important to unpack the teachers’ role of facilitator and translate it into more specific conduct. Previous studies have already made important observations.
First of all, it has been established that teachers’ known-information questions launch IRE-sequences that maintain the pattern of the teachers taking every other turn and functioning as head of the interaction (McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979b). A substantial amount of literature has therefore suggested the use of questions without pre-specified answers, often called information-seeking questions, open-ended questions or authentic questions (e.g. Evans, 2001; Myhill, 2006; Nystrand, 1997; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). With these questions the teachers convey their interest in the students’ thoughts and opinions and place priority on thinking (Nystrand, 1997). As these questions invite all kinds of contributions consisting of ideas, thoughts, opinions and personal experiences (Evans, 2001; Myhill, 2006; Nystrand, 1997; Soter et al., 2008), the responses are not objectively right or wrong, thereby also removing the need for evaluation in third position. Hence, information-seeking questions do not only provide students with a larger repertoire of responses (Chinn et al., 2001); they also take the teacher out of the position of necessarily taking every other turn. The study by Soter et al. (2008) supports this suggested shift to information-seeking questions with evidence: their presence co-occurs with productive discussions.

As information-seeking questions do not require third position evaluations, these questions may result in a shift from a T-S-T-S turn-taking pattern to a T-S-S-S pattern, which is important for establishing a multiparty discussion framework in which students talk and think together while the teacher mainly facilitates the discussion (Cazden, 1988; Chinn et al., 2001; Myhill, 2006). Besides information-seeking questions, the T-S-S-S pattern can also be realised through other means. Citing Dillon (1985), Cazden (1988) suggests the use of (longer) silences. In line with this, Chinn et al. (2001) suggest asking fewer questions, making fewer comments and letting students respond directly to each other. This last suggestion is, of course, very important as it brings us closer to a type of interaction in which students interact among themselves without the teacher intervening.

Finally, a suggestion often put forward for realising high quality discussions constitutes the use of invitations to elaborate (Cazden, 1988; Dillon, 1985). In this way, the teachers can invite longer stretches of talk by a single student. Giving elaborated explanations generates reasoning and high-level thinking (Soter et al., 2008); it challenges students to verbalise and explain their thinking and thereby increases their understanding and helps them developing new perspectives (Bargh & Schul, 1980; Chinn, O’donnell, & Jinks, 2000; Webb, 1992; Webb, Farivar, & Mastergeorge, 2002). Moreover, receiving explanations may also benefit students’ understanding (O’Donnell, 2006; Webb, 1992; Webb & Palincsar, 1996). Teachers have an important role in prompting elaborated explanations, as students do not frequently request or provide explanations themselves (Ross, 2008; Ross & Cousins, 1995; Webb, 2009).
Hence, while it is often advised that teachers take the floor less during discussions, some degree of teacher regulation is still important to ensure the content quality of the discussion (Schuitema et al., 2018; Webb, 2009). This is what makes the teachers’ facilitating role so complex. As the teachers’ conduct determines the type of interaction in the classroom, insight into their role is crucial. However, the exact ways in which teachers behave in such discussions are yet to be uncovered (Parker & Hess, 2001; Schuitema, Radstake, & Veugelers, 2011): the abovementioned findings and suggestions leave much room for further scrutiny of what the facilitating role entails exactly.

1.6 The topic of this thesis

As whole-class discussions constitute a less prevalent setting in education than teacher-fronted interaction with its omnipresent T-St-S turn-taking pattern, the setting has received relatively little scholarly attention (Van der Veen, De Mey, et al., 2017). Nonetheless, it deserves our focus as it is a promising environment for learning (e.g. Myhill, 2006; Van der Veen, De Mey, et al., 2017). Insight into the teachers’ conduct during these discussions is necessary to establish the ways in which they shape their facilitating role and realise longer stretches of subsequent student talk in which the students share their thinking and reason together.

In the previous section, we have described the findings and suggestions regarding the teacher’s facilitating role thus far. These are often based on coding schemes (e.g. Myhill, 2006; Nystrand et al., 2003; Soter et al., 2008) which tend to rely on the researcher’s interpretation of utterances, instead of participants’ displayed interpretations in subsequent turns (Gosen & Koole, 2017). Hence, coding schemes do not do justice to the intersubjectivity (Schegloff, 1992) involved in interaction, while it is in fact important to regard how the students understand their teachers’ conduct and act upon it.

In previous literature, open-ended or authentic questions have been suggested as a means to convey the teacher’s interest in students’ thoughts and opinions (Nystrand, 1997) and invite contributions consisting of ideas, thoughts, opinions and personal experiences (Evans, 2001; Myhill, 2006; Nystrand, 1997; Soter et al., 2008). However, the literature does not provide us with specific characterisations of how exactly these open-ended questions are formatted and what kind of student responses they elicit.

Similarly, teachers are encouraged to leave the floor to the students and deviate from the T-S-T-S turn-taking pattern (Cazden, 1988). In order to realise longer stretches of student talk (S-S-S), teachers are advised to let their students respond to each other’s contributions and elaborate on their own contributions (Cazden, 1988;
Chinn et al., 2000; Dillon, 1985; Soter et al., 2008). Again, however, there are no clear descriptions of how teachers shape these encouragements and what types of student contributions they result in.

Furthermore, the literature on teachers as facilitators of discussions focuses on verbal teacher behaviour. Apart from the recommendation to teachers to sometimes keep silent and use gaze to invite student contributions (Cazden, 1988; Damhuis, De Blauw, & Brandenbarg, 2004; Dillon, 1985) and the observation that teachers sometimes display unavailability (Haldimann, Hauser, & Nell-Tuor, 2017), teachers’ bodily conduct during whole-class discussions has not received much attention thus far. However, in whole-class discussion settings, bodily conduct may be equally important as verbal conduct, as teachers are encouraged to take on a more facilitating role and to be less verbally present.

Finally, much research focuses on establishing a discussion situation, while not much is known about the endings of discussions. However, it is important to identify what brings the discussions to a close, as this may reveal the participants’ stance towards the discussion. For example, Gosen et al. (2015) have demonstrated that teachers sometimes end a discussion by asking a KIQ and thereby reinstall the teacher-fronted type of interaction. This may demonstrate the teachers’ perceived need for knowledge transfer. Undoubtedly, there are also other reasons and possibilities for discussions to end, such as a natural end when new contributions are no longer forthcoming. To our knowledge, however, these possibilities have not yet been explored.

The aim of this PhD-project was to uncover teachers’ facilitating conduct in whole-class discussion settings. The focus of the studies within this thesis lies on a number of important characteristics of meaningful discussions as put forth by the literature: posing open-ended or authentic questions and allowing students to develop their own line of thinking by encouraging students to elaborate their contributions, share their thinking and respond to each other. The first three studies correspond to these recommended characteristics and constitute analyses of teachers’ open-ended questions after reading a piece of text, their practices for inviting students to elaborate their own previous turns and the teachers’ ways of passing on the turns to the other students to let them respond to the preceding student contribution.

As the literature on (whole-class) discussions consistently states that the teacher has to take on a facilitating role and encourage students to produce longer stretches of talk, the fourth study within this thesis scrutinises exactly such episodes in which students produce several subsequent turns without the teacher intervening. It does not focus on one specific type of teacher conduct, but synthesises the research within
this project and investigates the entire repertoire of facilitating teacher conduct around these episodes.

1.7 Data

In order to analyse the teachers’ conduct facilitating whole-class discussions, a total of 39 history and geography whole-class discussion lessons were analysed. These lessons were given in four different fourth grade classrooms in the north of the Netherlands. Two of the classrooms participated in a pilot study consisting of three lessons per classroom. The other two classrooms participated in the study for half a year, resulting in 15 and 18 history lessons per classroom. Contrary to our expectations, the pilot lessons were highly similar to the other lessons in the data set and could therefore be included in the analyses. In 36 of the 39 lessons, the students and teacher were seated in a circle. All 39 lessons were video-recorded. Ensuring the continuous and simultaneous visibility of all students and the teacher on the videos, three cameras were used and placed in different locations in the classroom, resulting in synchronised videos (see Figure 1.1). The total duration of the videos is 30 hours and 35 minutes, with an average of 47 minutes per lesson. The students (around 28 per classroom) were 9 to 10 years old. The transcripts and images in this thesis have been anonymised to ensure their privacy and that of their teachers.

Figure 1.1 Video still from 2016S1.L3
As whole-class discussions are not commonly practiced in Dutch primary schools, the teachers participating in this project were asked to depart from their ‘normal’ practice and implement such discussions during history and/or geography lessons. Typically, lessons in these two subjects consist of reading texts in a textbook and subsequently completing exercises in an exercise book, while these subjects lend themselves particularly well for holding discussions in the classroom (Damhuis & Tammes, 2018; Damhuis, Vonk, Tammes, & Postma, 2013; Tammes, Vonk, Van der Zalm, & Damhuis, 2015). They ask for more than a transfer of facts; they also call for insight in historical and geographical phenomena (Tammes et al., 2015), which in turn asks for an approach to learning in which reasoning takes a prominent position.

In the whole-class discussions during history and geography lessons in our data, the teachers still made use of the texts in the curricular books. However, instead of letting the students complete the exercises in their exercise books, the teachers discussed the texts with their students. In order to prevent these interactions from becoming question-answer series, the teachers employed discussable questions: questions that do not have an immediate answer but rather challenge the students to take multiple perspectives and come up with arguments and solutions over the course of a lesson (Tammes et al., 2015; cf. ‘big questions’ Reznitskaya et al., 2001). Examples of such questions are “what was it like for the Dutch people to live under German occupation in World War II?” and “how do you think parents felt about their children going to school instead of working in factories?”. These questions create space for students to contribute to the discussion, to verbalise their reasoning and to collaboratively build knowledge while coming to a nuanced answer together.

Based on the findings in previous research, the teachers were instructed to avoid teacher-fronted interaction in which teachers typically dominate the interaction as the primary respondent (McHoul, 1978). Instead, the teachers were instructed to offer their students the floor for extended periods of time to let them talk and reason together (Chinn et al., 2000; Myhill, 2006; Soter et al., 2008). These instructions were general and did not prescribe any specific practices. Among others, they encouraged teachers to open the floor to the students, let them respond to each other and provide them the opportunity to produce elaborations. The teachers were free to implement these instructions as they saw fit.

1.8 Method
In this thesis, the method of Conversation Analysis (CA) was used to study the teachers’ conduct facilitating whole-class discussions. CA was developed in the 1960s and 1970s by Harvey Sacks (1992) in collaboration with Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. This method provides an ‘emic’ perspective on interaction: it focuses on the
things that participants in conversation make observable to each other in interaction (Koole, 2015). Hence, CA researchers base their analyses and categorisations on the observable conduct as it occurs in the interaction. To be able to carry out detailed analyses of the interaction, conversation analysts make use of audio- or video-recordings and exhaustive written transcripts of these recordings.

As CA studies how participants themselves “make sense of their interaction with others” (Gosen & Koole, 2017, p. 792), it tries to uncover the ways in which they collaboratively establish their own reality. An important procedure in CA research is the next-turn proof procedure (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Sidnell, 2013): the way in which the recipient of a preceding turn responds to that turn provides us with evidence for its interpretation. For example, if someone asks “is there any tea left?” a response such as “I will put the kettle on” evidences an orientation to the interrogative question as a request for more tea, whereas a response such as “no, there isn’t” treats it as a request for information. In this way, recipients thus not only answer the question, but by virtue of this answer also demonstrate their understanding of the question (see Schegloff, 1992 on intersubjectivity). For classroom interaction research, this next-turn proof procedure allows us to do more than describing or categorising teacher conduct: it enables us to uncover how this conduct functions in the interaction by analysing the ensuing student turns.

A common way of shaping conversation analytic research is to focus on a specific phenomenon and search the data for instances of this phenomenon. This phenomenon can constitute a certain action (e.g. requesting information) as well as a certain form or ‘practice’ (e.g. an utterance shaped as an interrogative). As we saw in the example above, a practice can perform different actions. Vice versa, an action can also be carried out through different practices. Once all the instances of a target phenomenon have been gathered from the data, we speak of a collection (Sidnell, 2013). This collection then is the starting point of a more detailed analysis in which different varieties of the same phenomenon are identified and formed into bottom-up subcategories.

All four studies within this project constitute collection studies. For every study, a subset of lessons was composed from the data and subsequently searched for instances of the target phenomenon. The resulting collections were further analysed and gave rise to subcategories denoting different practices, actions or projections of the teacher turns. Whereas the collections in the first three studies (chapter 2-4) concern specific types of teacher turns, the fourth study (chapter 5) is based on a collection of episodes in which students are taking several subsequent turns. In all four studies, however, our main interest lies in the conduct displayed by the teacher and the consequences of this conduct for the ensuing student contributions. After all,
as we have established in previous sections of this introduction, the teacher has a key role in realising another type of classroom interaction in which students are actually provided the opportunity to reason together.

All collection items were transcribed following the Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 1986). Apart from verbal conduct, multimodal information was also transcribed at moments relevant for our analysis (adapted from Mondada, 2016). The Transcription conventions section provides explanations of the symbols used in the transcripts.

1.9 Outline of this thesis

Apart from this chapter and the concluding chapter (chapter 6), all chapters constitute papers that have been published in, accepted for publication in or submitted to international peer-reviewed journals. These chapters can therefore be read separately. For the papers that have already been published, the chapters concern slightly modified versions of these papers: spelling conventions and transcript titles have been made consistent throughout the dissertation and small (spelling) errors have been removed.

Chapter 2 reports on the different ways in which teachers open the floor for discussion and invite student contributions after reading a piece of text. The study shows that these invitations display different degrees of openness as they differ quite much with regard to their projection and referent. Accordingly, the invitations also have different consequences for the students’ responses.

In Chapter 3 and 4, the focus is on teacher conduct after a student contribution. While Chapter 3 covers the teachers’ ways of inviting a student to provide an elaboration of his/her previous turn, Chapter 4 demonstrates how teachers pass on the preceding turn to the other students and invite them to respond. The chapters demonstrate that the practices used for these actions influence the ensuing responses.

Where Chapters 2, 3 and 4 start out with a collection of a specific teacher action, Chapter 5 takes another perspective. It starts out with a collection of episodes of several subsequent student contributions. The focus of this chapter is the teacher’s conduct around these episodes of discussion among the students. By taking another starting point, this study thus binds together all the studies within this dissertation: the observed conduct includes and complements the actions described in the three previous studies. Furthermore, it offers meaningful insights with regard to bodily conduct as a means to facilitate a discussion framework.

The final chapter presents a summary of the four studies. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn on the basis of the findings. Finally, implications and directions for future research as well as practical recommendations are discussed.