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Chapter 3 NEGOTIATED ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE AND TEACHER LEARNING: A DETAILED EXPLORATION OF THE NEGOTIATION PROCESSES²

A negotiated assessment procedure was developed aimed at stimulating teacher professional learning. Negotiations during assessments on interpretations of teaching situations and on teachers' learning objectives, learning activities, and outcomes were expected to contribute to teacher professional learning. Knowing more about processes of negotiation in the context of formative teacher assessment may increase our understanding of how assessment and, in particular, negotiated assessment, could support teacher professional learning. We conducted a detailed analysis of nine assessment dialogues from three pairs of teachers and their assessors (three dialogues for each pair), focusing on chains of interactions during the assessment dialogue that could be characterized as negotiations. We also sought teachers' opinions about the negotiations in the procedure. The amount of negotiation in the nine assessment dialogues analysed in this study was very limited: only seven negotiation dialogues occurred. The negotiations typically started with a critical analysis of a situation, which was most frequently expressed in fairly emphatic terms. Although the assessment dialogues offered ample opportunity to negotiate, more than half of the expressed disagreements remained isolated in the assessment dialogue. In these cases, no reasons for or against a certain view were communicated and no negotiations took place.

² This chapter has been submitted in adapted form as:
Verberg, C.P.M., Tigelaar, E.H., & Verloop, N. *Negotiated assessment and teacher learning: a detailed exploration of the negotiation processes*

3.1 *Introduction*

Interaction is seen as an essential ingredient of any learning environment (Woo & Reeves, 2007) and this also holds for teacher professional learning (Thijs & van den Berg, 2002). Interacting with others, such as peers or a more experienced colleague, provides teachers with opportunities to exchange views on teaching, to share experiences and to seek feedback on their functioning. In particular, feedback provided to teachers in the context of formative assessment is seen as beneficial for shaping and improving teachers' learning and functioning (Porter, Youngs, & Odden, 2001), by improving their understanding of their practice, helping them to plan their learning, identify their strengths and weaknesses, formulate target areas for remedial actions and develop skills to improve their practice (Topping, 2009).

A promising example of formative assessment is negotiated assessment (Gosling, 2000), which is characterized by extensive involvement of participants in their own assessment and by exchange of views between the assessee and the assessor. Although several variations of negotiated assessment are known (Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 1999), they have some elements in common. A negotiated assessment procedure normally begins with discussion of the tasks, responsibilities and expectations of the assessor and the assessee (Anderson, Boud, & Sampson, 1996; cf. Sadler, 1998) and a formal learning agreement or learning contract (Gosling, 2000). The learning contract contains the negotiated learning objectives, learning activities and the evidence to be provided during the assessment procedure. The learning contract functions as a guideline for the assessee's learning process and may be renegotiated over time (Gosling, 2000) during assessment meetings characterized by reflective dialogues. In these dialogues the assessor gives feedback on the progress of the assessee's practice and this is negotiated by both parties. An important element is "the collecting of evidence" by the assessee, for example in a portfolio, to demonstrate the assessed skills (cf. McMahon, 2010).

Negotiated assessment can be a useful formative assessment procedure for teacher learning, because of its participative and interactive elements (Boud, 1992; Day, 1999). The negotiations between the assessor and the assessee are

expected to promote the assessee's involvement in their own assessments. This fits in with other literature on formative assessment, which emphasizes participation and control by the assessee on the one hand, and the social, interactive and contextual nature of learning on the other (e.g., Birenbaum, 2003; Gulikers, Bastiaens, & Kirschner, 2004; Tigelaar & Van Tartwijk, 2010; Webb, 2010). Active involvement of participants in their own assessment is an important prerequisite for learning (Day, 1999).

Most literature reports on negotiated assessment in the context of higher education, in which the teacher is the assessor and the student the assessee. Not much is known about negotiated assessment in the context of *teacher assessment*, with the teacher being the assessee. For the purpose of this study, a negotiated assessment procedure was developed aimed at stimulating teacher professional learning. We explored the negotiation processes between the teachers and their assessors during this process.

Knowing more about negotiation processes in the context of formative teacher assessment may further our understanding of how formative assessment and, in particular, negotiated assessment could be used to foster teacher professional learning.

3.2 Theoretical background

Teacher assessment could be a promising tool for promoting professional learning, particularly when feedback is provided on teachers' own teaching practice (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Porter et al., 2001). Formative assessment, in particular, could be used to develop or improve competence (Sadler, 1998). The assessor prompts the teacher to reflect on his or her own learning process (cf. Anderson & Boud, 1996), by using interventions such as asking questions and providing feedback during the assessment meetings. The assessor has a supportive role in this formative process and may be called a tutor, mentor, supervisor or coach (Boud, 1992, Gosling, 2000). In negotiated assessment, the assessor and the assessee negotiate about and agree on the feedback provided, the assessment process and the use of the assessment mechanism and criteria, in the light of learning objectives, activities, evidence provided and outcomes (Anderson et al., 1996).

The relationship between an assessee and an assessor is more equal in negotiated assessment than in many other forms of assessment (Gosling, 2000), although in the context of student learning, power issues between teacher and student are always present (Boud et al., 1999). Characteristics of a more equal relationship in assessments are open communication and mutual respect (Anderson et al., 1996).

In general literature on negotiation, negotiation is defined as an interpersonal communication process in which two or more people engage in discussion in order to reach an agreement with a positive outcome for both parties (Thompson, 2006). However, whilst the literature on negotiated assessment emphasizes the importance of negotiation for stimulating the assessee's learning processes, not much is known about what characterizes the processes of negotiation during dialogues in negotiated assessment meetings.

The literature on negotiated assessment focuses on the *topics* of the negotiations such as learning objectives, activities, evidence provided and outcomes (Anderson et al., 1996; Gosling, 2000). Although these descriptions do provide some insight into what the negotiations might be about, they do not provide insight into the processes of negotiation. The literature on argumentation processes provides additional valuable viewpoints. In the student learning context, this literature describes negotiation of *meaning* as well as negotiation related to *topics*. For example, negotiation of meaning in classrooms during a second language course (Foster & Ohta, 2005), during a mathematics course (Kaisari & Patronis, 2010), in a physics classroom (Baker, 1999), or in an online learning environment (Hull & Saxon, 2009; Pozzi, Manca, Persico & Sarti, 2007). To conceptualize negotiations during negotiated assessment in the context of teacher learning, we may draw on literature on argumentation processes in the student learning context.

When analysing dialogues in the context of teacher learning during a negotiated assessment procedure, negotiation may be found in chains of interactions around topics, as mentioned above, and around different points of view on teaching or different interpretations of teaching situations between the assessor and the assessee.

Both the assessor and the assessee may bring their own prior knowledge and their personal interpretations into the argumentation process (Eraut, 2000). By discussing and reflecting, people may become aware of and understand their own and others' actions (Eraut, 2007). Munneke, Andriessen, Kanselaar, and Kirschner (2007) give five different skills, based on Kuhn (1991), to model argumentation processes: 1) the skill to offer support to a claim or, in other words, to *agree* with a claim; 2) the skill to offer arguments for the support; 3) the skill to generate alternative theories or, in other words, to put a *new perspective* on the claim; 4) the skill to give counterarguments; and 5) the skill to rebut an opposing line of reasoning or, in other words, to *disagree*. The skills involved in making arguments and counter arguments may manifest themselves differently. For example, someone may be more or less convinced about the arguments offered. A person who is convinced will probably be more *definite* in the words used. A person who is less convinced may use more *exploratory* language. These skills may be used in response to a statement, a claim or a question. They could also be used to label interactions during the process.

Negotiations may have different outcomes. Besides an explicit outcome, such as acceptance/agreement or non acceptance/disagreement with regard to a certain topic or viewpoint, an implicit outcome is also possible. In the latter case, conversation partners simply move on to something else without a clear conclusion but leave the closure unspoken or open-ended (Baker, 1999). This implies that an explicit outcome is not an essential characteristic for classifying a chain of interactions as a negotiation. The general literature on negotiation defines negotiation as a communication process in which people discuss something in order to reach an agreement acceptable to all parties (Thompson, 2006). In line with this and making use of what is known about argumentation processes in educational contexts, we defined the chain of interactions in the context of teacher assessment as a negotiation where participants discuss to reach agreement, take opposing positions and give reasons for and against the proposal or view (Baker, 1999).

Research findings on argumentation processes may provide valuable insights for analysing dialogues during a negotiated assessment meeting in the context of

teacher assessment. Negotiated assessment meetings may follow the different phases of a reflective dialogue, though these phases do not necessarily follow each other in chronological order and each phase may occur several times during a meeting. Negotiations may occur in each reflective phase. The different phases in a reflective dialogue are: a) looking back on an action, or *describing* a situation; b) becoming aware of essential aspects, by *analysing* the situation; and c) creating alternative methods of action, also known as *planning* for future actions (Korthagen, 1985, 2001; Oosterbaan, Van der Schaaf, Baartman, & Stokking, 2010). Scrutinizing a situation may involve different types of analysis, such as a) critical analysis (looking at which arguments are more credible than others and why); b) analysis from alternative or multiple perspectives; and c) providing rationales for situations and/or drawing conclusions with regard to functioning (arguing about/explaining why things happened and/or summarizing new insights from the analysis process) (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Mansvelder-Longayroux, Bijaard, & Verloop, 2007).

Each phase of the reflective dialogue may include chains of interactions that can be characterized as negotiations, for instance when the assessor and the assessee take opposing positions and give reasons for and against a certain view during one of the phases in the reflective dialogue. For example, a teacher might analyse the teaching situation critically and the assessor may disagree with the teacher's analysis and offer another perspective on the situation.

As negotiating processes have not yet been investigated in a negotiated assessment procedure in the context of teacher professional learning, we decided to carry out a small-scale in-depth analysis of the interactions of three teachers and their assessors during three rounds of assessment meetings. We attempted to answer the following research questions: 1) To what extent do negotiations occur during the assessment meetings and what do these negotiations look like?; and 2) What are the teachers' and assessors' opinions about the negotiations in the negotiated assessment procedure we developed?

3.3 Method

3.3.1 Context

This study, which started in spring 2009 and lasted until spring 2011, was situated in the context of a two-year negotiated assessment trajectory for teachers in senior secondary vocational nursing education. The focus of the assessment procedure developed was on teachers' coaching of reflection skills in nursing students aged 16 years and older. Reflection skills are considered important for becoming self-regulative learners and reflective practitioners (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005; Butler & Winne, 1995). Teachers in senior secondary vocational education do find reflection skills important for their students but find it difficult to help them to develop and use them (De Bruijn & Leeman, 2011).

3.3.2 The negotiated assessment procedure

We developed a procedure for negotiated assessment specifically for this piece of research. Based on the theory on formative and negotiated assessment, the following core elements were considered relevant for the negotiated assessment procedure to be developed: 1) a series of assessment meetings which served as a setting for negotiations between assessor and assessee; 2) a teaching competence framework to be used as a starting point for the negotiations; 3) a learning contract in which the negotiated learning objectives, learning activities, learning outcomes, and evidence could be described; and 4) the collection of evidence of their own learning practice and of the skills to be assessed. The teaching framework (2) provided an overview of the teaching competences necessary for supporting nursing students to reflect and was broadly defined in order to provide space for the negotiation processes.

The competence framework consisted of three competence domains: 1) the primary teaching process of stimulating reflection skills; 2) creating a safe classroom environment; and 3) the teacher as professional. Examples of strategies that teachers could use to foster reflection in the first domain were "asking questions" and "giving feedback". In addition, teachers were expected to listen carefully, be able to estimate their students' needs and vary the support given accordingly, in order to encourage students to perform thinking

activities by themselves. The teachers could use these strategies in class or in one-to-one conversations. In the second competence domain, creating a safe classroom environment supportive of reflection skills development was central. The teachers were also expected to bear student diversity in mind. Examples of strategies that teachers could use were “giving compliments to the student” and “asking, describing and checking the student’s feelings”. These strategies could be applied to a class setting and one-to-one conversations. In the third domain, the “teacher as professional domain”, teachers were supposed to reflect on their own professional learning and teaching with respect to the promotion of reflection skills in nursing students, by recognizing and expressing their own assumptions about reflection skills training and about their own teaching, and by knowing and expressing their own limitations. The “safe environment” domain and the “teacher as professional” domain, were considered conditional for the primary teaching process of stimulating reflection skills.

The negotiations were scheduled during three assessment meetings, which were planned in the two-year trajectory of the negotiated assessment procedure. The first assessment meeting took place at the beginning of the trajectory, the second after approximately one year, and the third after almost two years. Meetings were scheduled in spring 2009, spring 2010 and winter 2010/2011.

Each teacher’s assessor was an experienced colleague. Before the start of the trajectory, we asked teachers if they would be willing to participate in the two-year trajectory and, if so, which colleague they would like to have as assessor. The teachers were free to choose their own personal assessor but, for confidentiality reasons and because the role of assessor and evaluator should not be combined in one person, teachers’ managers were not accepted. The first author linked the assessors and the teachers, based on the teachers’ preferences and overlapping working days.

Before the first assessment meeting, the teachers produced a draft learning contract containing their learning objectives, learning activities, and desirable learning benefits. While determining the learning objectives, they could use the broadly defined teaching competence framework as a source or guideline. The

learning contract was handed out to the assessor beforehand and discussed at the first assessment meeting.

Teachers were asked to prepare themselves and their assessor for the second and third assessment meetings by filling out a learner report about the learning objectives they had been focusing on and the learning activities undertaken to reach the learning objectives. These learner reports were handed out to the assessors before the assessment meetings.

In between the assessment meetings, teachers had time to spend on their learning activities and to collect evidence of their own teaching practice with regard to stimulating students to reflect. Examples of evidence were lessons or teacher-student conversations recorded on DVDs, reflection reports, and teachers' feedback on students' activities. The evidence was handed to the assessor before each assessment meeting, together with the learner report.

The assessor compared the actual learner report with the learning contract and with the evidence provided. Based on these information sources, the assessor was able to provide feedback to the teacher during the meeting. During the assessment meetings, the teacher and the assessor negotiated about the type and the amount of evidence, the learning objectives, activities and benefits, and the teaching perspectives on teachers' coaching of the nursing students' reflection skills.

3.3.3 Training

It was important that the teachers (assesseees) and the assessors understood the idea of the negotiated assessment procedure, so both groups received training before the start of the trajectory.

The assessors and teachers received a one-day training course in separate groups. Both received information about the negotiated assessment procedure, the different phases of reflective dialogue, the preparation for each assessment meeting and negotiation. The assessors were trained in helping their teacher to become aware of essential aspects in teaching situations, by asking critical

questions, having teachers provide explanations for situations and rationales for their functioning, and by explicitly bringing in alternative perspectives. They were also trained to challenge the teachers' own ideas about setting objectives, learning activities and outcomes, in relation to the broadly defined teaching competence framework and their ideas for collecting evidence of their learning processes. The course emphasized that, in a negotiated assessment procedure, assessors are expected not only to act as consultants and provide encouragement and specific feedback, but also as supporters of teachers' professional learning processes by challenging teachers to take responsibility for their own learning and assessment. The assessors were encouraged not to concentrate on achieving consensus but rather on taking opposing positions to the teachers in order to stimulate negotiation. This process was practised during the training in subgroups. Because of the important role of the assessor in this procedure, the assessor training was continued before the second and third assessment meetings.

The teachers were trained in how to prepare for each assessment meeting and how to use different kinds of evidence for monitoring their learning processes. Information was provided about the different phases of a reflective dialogue in the assessment meetings, and about negotiation. The teachers were challenged to take responsibility for their own learning processes by actively bringing in their own ideas for setting learning objectives, learning activities and outcomes, by making use of the space provided in the broadly defined teaching competence framework, as well as by making suggestions for collecting evidence of learning. They were also encouraged to not just take their assessor's feedback for granted but to critically consider the assessor's feedback and suggestions, to take opposing positions when relevant and to argue the case for their viewpoints.

3.3.4 Participants

In the larger study (see Chapter 5), twenty-seven teachers (23 female, 4 male) from three different nursing education institutes participated on a voluntary base in the negotiated assessment procedure. Nine teachers (8 female, 1 male) functioned as assessors for the other eighteen teachers. For this smaller detailed analysis of a small number of assessment dialogues, we selected one

teacher-assessor dyad from each school. An important criterion for selection was their availability for all three videotaped assessment meetings. Some of the assessment meetings were not or were only partly videotaped due to technical problems. We also checked whether the teacher-assessor dyad was together throughout the entire trajectory. Two assessors dropped out part way through due to long-term illness or moving jobs. Their teachers were transferred to another assessor to continue their trajectory. These transferred teachers were not included in this study. See Table 3.1 for an overview of the characteristics of the selected participants.

Table 3.1 *Characteristics of selected participants at the start of the trajectory*

School	Name (fictitious)	Gender	Age	Years of teaching experiences	Previous qualifications	Teaching duties
A	Teacher Sarah	F	58	12	RN + TE	Teacher nursing subjects + mentor of a group of students
	Assessor Charles	M	62	15	RN + TE	Teacher nursing subjects + coordinator work placement for nursing students
B	Teacher Howard	M	49	18	RN + TE	Teacher nursing subjects
	Assessor Lizzy	F	48	9	RN + TE + coach training	Teacher nursing subjects + coordinator nursing students peer meetings
C	Teacher Giulia	F	51	20	Master degree medicine + a training course for teachers in adult and vocational education	Teacher anatomy & physiology + participating in projects regarding arithmetic, and digital learning environment
	Assessor Linda	F	57	30	RN + TE + coach training	Teacher nursing subjects

Note. RN= Registered Nurse; TE=Teacher Education qualification

Two of the three selected teachers had been trained as a nurse themselves and were certified teachers. The third teacher had not been trained as a nurse. She studied medicine and afterwards she trained as a teacher for the adult and vocational education sector. All three assessors had been trained as nurses themselves and were certified teachers. Two of the assessors were also skilled coaches.

3.3.5 Data collection

To answer the first research question concerning the occurrence of negotiations and what these negotiations look like, all nine recorded assessment meetings (three from each teacher-assessor dyad) were transcribed. These transcriptions were used as the data source.

To answer the second research question regarding teachers' and assessors' opinions about negotiations in the negotiated assessment procedure, we held an individual semi-structured interview halfway through the program and at the end. Examples of questions were: To what extent have negotiations occurred? About which topics did you negotiate with the assessor teacher during the assessment meetings? What, if anything, did you gain from the negotiations? How did you experience the negotiations? In which meeting did the majority of the negotiations occur? The interviews were audio taped, the answers were summarized and characteristic expressions were transcribed.

3.3.6 Data analysis

For the first research question, the nine dialogues of the three selected dyads were transcribed, producing 147 pages of transcription. After reading the raw protocols several times in order to get a grasp on our data, verbalized utterances during the dialogues were marked as separate on the basis of turn taking.

The transcriptions were analysed qualitatively, making use of both the phases that may occur in reflective dialogues as well as the skills that can be used to model argumentation processes as an interpretive lens. We used the following strategy for analysing the verbalized interactions.

First, against the background of the comments in the theoretical section of this article, the three reflection phases were used as main categories for coding: a) looking back on an action, *describing* a situation; b) becoming aware of essential aspects, *analysing* the situation; and c) creating alternative methods of action, *planning* for future actions. Besides the three codes for *describing*, *analysing* and *planning*, we added another main code *rest*, as a category for all utterances which did not belong to the three main codes.

Second, in codes related to the main code *analysing*, we further discriminated between different forms of reflective analysis: a) critical analysis (i.e. statement, knowledge or behaviour not taken for granted but questioned); b) analysis from another or multiple perspectives; and c) accounting for situations and/or explaining situations and drawing conclusions for future situations (i.e., a statement or question about what the specific situation adds to the teacher's learning).

Third, we used categories obtained from the literature on argumentation skills as codes. We used the codes (1) agree and (2) disagree for categorizing arguments for and against a view within the dialogue. Besides the distinction between agreement and disagreement, a new category emerged from our analyses which could be used to take into account the strength of expression of an argument in terms of how it was verbalized. For this category of expression, we added three more codes: (3) definite use of arguments/counter arguments (strongly expressed); (4) explorative use of arguments/counter arguments (tentatively/cautiously expressed, open for further exploration); and (5) "asking". See Appendix B for a description of the various coding categories.

The first and second author developed the coding system and an independent researcher checked a test sample. Although the codes did not need to be adapted, some decision rules were sharpened up as a result of this check. Subsequently, the first author and the independent researcher coded the same 10% of the data independently and discussed their coding. Again some decision rules were sharpened up. Next, another 10% of the data was coded independently by both the first author and the independent researcher and Cohen's kappa (1968) was

calculated for these results. Regarding the four codes “describing”, “analysing”, “planning”, and “rest”, Cohen’s kappa was 0.81. Cohen’s kappa regarding the codes “agreement”, “disagreement”, “asking”, “explorative” and “definitive” was 0.79.

As mentioned in the theoretical section, defining a chain of interactions as a negotiation requires participants to discuss to try to reach agreement, take opposing positions and give reasons for and against the proposal or view (Baker, 1999). After our coding was finished, therefore, in order to investigate the extent to which negotiations, in terms of arguments for and against a view, could be traced in our data from the assessment meetings, we first marked the utterances that were coded as “disagreement”. We calculated the percentage of utterances with a disagreement code compared to the total number of utterances. In addition, in order to explore what the negotiations in terms of arguments for and against a view looked like, we analysed the utterances before and after each disagreement. As a rule for deciding on the number of utterances to be analysed before and after each disagreement, we selected all the utterances related to the topic of a particular disagreement. We then explored the principal types of interactions in the utterances before and after a disagreement and classified the outcomes of the chain of interactions as either explicit or implicit.

The data pertaining to our research question concerning teachers’ and assessors’ opinions about negotiations was analysed as follows. The transcriptions of teachers’ answers were analysed qualitatively (Strauss, 1987). First, the three themes of the interview questions (topics, profits and experience) were used as main categories for coding. We added another code called “rest” to code the remaining opinions. Second, preliminary sub codes were adopted under the main codes “topics” and “rest”, by staying as close as possible to the language used by the teachers and their assessors, by using open-coding. Sub codes related to the main code “topics” were “learning objectives”, “learning activities” and “teaching practice”. Sub codes related to the main code “rest” were “doubts” and “dilemmas”. The first and second authors discussed these codes. On all matters related to deviations in coding, agreement was easily reached by checking interpretations or by going back to the raw data. This happened no more than twice during the analysis of the whole data set.

3.4 *Results*

We first give an example of a chain of interactions that was characterized as a negotiation. Second, we describe to what extent negotiation dialogues occurred during the assessment meetings that were analysed in this study and what these negotiations looked like. After that, we describe the teachers' and assessors' opinions about the negotiations.

3.4.1 *Negotiation dialogues*

An example of a negotiation dialogue is provided in Table 3.2. This negotiation dialogue is part of the last meeting of teacher Giulia and assessor Lizzy. They talked about the teacher's interactions as seen on a DVD as part of the provided evidence. First, the assessor gave her view on the teacher's interactions. "*I, eh, eh, noticed that you tried to have plenty of contact. You did that very well. You did it in an, an, inviting manner*" (utterance 15). After some words about the position of the video camera, the assessor connected the teacher's interactions with her learning objective while complimenting her (utterance 23).

The teacher expresses her disagreement by saying that she should have asked more questions (utterance 24). The assessor did not agree or disagree, but simply asked her to explain her view (utterance 25) and to provide some proof for it (utterance 27). After the teacher had given her own view, the assessor expressed her disagreement, while giving her own perspective on the situation. At the end, the assessor expressed her opinion that the student was actually able to articulate her problem, because of the teacher's interventions (utterances 35 +37). The teacher agreed with the assessor (utterances 36 +38). This is an explicit outcome of the negotiation dialogue. Subsequently, they moved on to the importance of a safe environment during a teacher-student conversation.

Table 3.2 *Example of a negotiation dialogue*

Utterance number	Person	Interaction	Codes
15	As	Okay, I did see a DVD, in which I saw you I, eh, eh, noticed that you were approaching the student. You did this in an, an, an, an inviting manner. The student did feel - I thought-invited. It is a pity that we could not see her face.	ana_crit_def
16	Tea	No	rest
17	As	But that was to protect this student	descr_def
18	Tea	True, she did not want to be seen on the video, so.	descr_agree
19	As	Yeah	rest
20	Tea	So I got her from the back...	descr_def
21	As	On the video	rest
22	Tea	Yeah	rest
23	As	And what struck me was that your learning objective, asking appropriate questions, uh.., and in particular continuing to ask questions, made the learning problem clear.	ana_crit_def
24	Tea	I didn't think so. Afterwards, I thought that I should have asked much more probing questions	ana_crit_disagree
25	As	And how would you like to have done it?	ana_crit_ask
26	Tea	Yeah, I know myself that I am quite quick to think that I have understood it.	ana_crit_def
27	As	Yeah, and what is your evidence for this, do you think?	ana_crit_ask
28	Tea	Yeah, it is about thinking afterwards, gee, what appointments did she have exactly? How often did she actually go to the language and maths centre? When did she go? How long had she been letting things slide? So I didn't ask all those questions. In retrospect I think, gosh, I should have asked more.	ana_crit_def
29	As	But then you are working with a plan of where are you going now, huh. Actually, in my view,it was that the student would get it clear herself that she needed support	ana_persp_disagree
30	Tea	Yeah, yeah	rest
31	As	In understanding and reading a text	rest

32	Tea	Yes, that was certainly clear to her. She admitted it herself at some point. For she started by saying that she didn't need any support and eventually she said that the problem was not a matter of the details but that she didn't understand the text. So, she understood her problem well but she felt that she did not get the right support, so she just left it.	ana_crit_def
33	As	Yeah, yeah	rest_agree
34	Tea	And I have tendency to think, now that I understand it, so let's make an agreement right away.	ana_crit_def
35	As	Yeah, but on the other hand, I think that the student did not formulate her problem clearly at first in the first few sentences, but afterwards she finally did describe her problem very clearly	ana_crit_disagree
36	Tea	Yes, indeed, and she got there by herself, so I thought that I did a great job	ana_crit_agree
37	As	Yes, yeah. Well, I think you gave her the opportunity to formulate what it was really about.	ana_crit_def
38	Tea	Yeah, yeah. Yes, I really tried to do that, yes.	rest_agree
39	As	Yes, by continuing to ask questions. But what struck me even more was the amount of contact. You had contact with her in a safe way, at a safe distance.	ana_crit_def
40	Tea	I do always think that is very important.	ana_crit_def
41	As	Yes.	rest_agree

Note. Explanation abbreviations: As= assessor; Tea= teacher; Codes: Descr=Describing; Ana= Analysing; Crit= Critical; Persp= Perspective ; Def= Definite ; Ask= Asking ; Agree= Agreement; Disagree= Disagreement; See section 3.3.6 and Appendix B for more detailed information about the codes.

3.4.2 Occurrence of negotiations

As explained in the theoretical section, chains of interactions can be characterized as negotiations when the assessor and the assessee take opposing positions and give reasons for and against a certain view. For this reason, we first looked at the utterances coded with *disagreement* as a manifestation of an exchange of arguments for and against a proposal or view. Table 3.3 presents the number of disagreements compared to the total number of utterances for each teacher and each meeting, as a first indicator for the occurrence of negotiations.

Table 3.3 Disagreements as a percentage of total number of utterances during each meeting. In brackets the number of disagreement utterances / the total number of utterances during the meeting

Teacher/assessor dyad	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Average
Teacher Sarah Assessor Charles	0.95 (4 / 419)	1.67 (4 / 239)	2.12 (5 / 236)	1.45 (4.33 / 298)
Teacher Howard Assessor Lizzy	2.47 (9 / 365)	0.68 (3 / 441)	1.39 (9 / 648)	1.51 (7 / 484.6)
Teacher Giulia Assessor Linda	1.75 (7 / 401)	2.06 (6 / 291)	2.24 (5 / 223)	2.02 (6 / 305)

From our exploration of the chains of utterances around disagreements, it appeared that many disagreements remained isolated in the dialogue. The content of the dialogue immediately moves to another topic or no further utterances related to the content of the disagreement are made. This was the case in 32 of the 52 utterances coded as disagreement. No reasons for and against the view were communicated in these cases, and so no negotiations took place. Table 3.4, gives an example of a disagreement without negotiation. Neither the teachers nor the assessors took the opportunity to react to disagreements uttered by their conversation partners but the assessors neglected these opportunities more often than the teachers.

Table 3.4 Example of an utterance coded as “disagreement” without a negotiation

Utterance number	Person	Interaction	Codes
75	As	Eh, do you think that the student does learn something from this, besides the assurance you indicated?	ana_crit_ask
76	Tea	Yes, they do learn from it. They learn how to do certain things guided by me, and next time they can do them more easily. Yes, I really think they learn from it.	ana_crit_def
77	As	It really is easy for those students	ana_crit_def
78	Tea	Yes, yes, it's easy for them, that's right, but they do learn something from it, I can see that. I can see that result.	ana_crit_disagree
79	As	If I summarize, you've brought it up, it is very result-oriented, you say, because you tell the students, okay, you are guiding them. And then you also say it is result-oriented.	ana_crit_def
80	Tea	Yes, it is result-oriented	rest
81	As	Yes	rest
82	Tea	And I say, maybe, that is, that it is due to my background, to get on with things, work efficiently, and eh yes.	ana_crit_expl
83	As	You notice that often in conversations that you come up with something, lead, uh that it's your nature?	ana_crit_ask

The remaining 20 utterances coded as *disagreement* (less than 0.7% of the total number of utterances) resulted in seven chains of interactions that can be characterized as negotiation dialogues. According to our definition of negotiation, we looked for chains of interactions in which participants take opposing positions and give reasons for and against the view (Baker, 1999). In total, seven negotiation dialogues were found in the data. Table 3.5 presents the occurrence of the negotiation dialogues related to the different assessment meetings of each teacher.

Our exploration of the principle interactions in the seven chains of interactions characterized as negotiation dialogues revealed that the interaction usually starts with a critical analysis of a teaching situation, either given by the teacher or the assessor, and usually expressed in a definite way (code: analyzing_

critical_definitive). The disagreement expressed was usually supported with an argument and the interactions afterwards continued with arguments (code: analyzing_critical_definitive or code: analyzing_perspective_definitive).

Table 3.5 presents an overview of the number of chains of interactions that were characterized as negotiation.

Table 3.5 *Number of negotiation dialogues for each teacher-assessor dyad*

Teacher - Assessor	Number of chains of interactions characterized as negotiation
Sarah - Charles	
Meeting 1	-
Meeting 2	1
Meeting 3	-
Howard - Lizzy	
Meeting 1	2
Meeting 2	-
Meeting 3	2
Giulia - Linda	
Meeting 1	1
Meeting 2	-
Meeting 3	1
Total	7

3.4.3 Teachers' and assessors' opinions about negotiations

The second research question concerned the teachers' and assessors' opinions about negotiations in the negotiated assessment procedure.

The teachers' opinions about the occurrence of negotiation varied. Both teacher Giulia and teacher Howard were of the opinion that negotiation occurred mainly during their first assessment meeting. Howard also experienced negotiation during his second meeting. According to him, the negotiations during the first meeting focused on his learning objectives and during the second meeting on the different points of view on his teaching practice based on the evidence. In contrast, teacher Sarah was not able to express any experiences or topics of negotiation at all. Although teacher Giulia acknowledged the existence of negotiations during her first meeting, she also expressed some doubt about

them: *"I did not experience it as a negotiation. More as a confirmation of being on the right track"*.

The assessors also had different opinions. Assessor Lizzy (teacher Howard) found it difficult to say whether there were any negotiations at all. She felt that negotiation presumed a certain agenda and that is quite awkward, especially if the teacher is a colleague and is competent. They sort out a lot for themselves.

Assessor Linda, in contrast, said that in general she experienced no difficulties while negotiating. On the other hand, she mentioned there was not much to negotiate about. According to Linda, teacher Giulia was very clear about her learning objectives: *"If she indicates this so clearly, then who am I to do it in a different way. This is what she likes to focus on, this is how she wants to take it further"*.

All three assessors mentioned the effect of being a colleague of their assessee. Linda mentioned having reservations about bringing something up, just because of the fact that teacher Giulia was a colleague. Charles mentioned his reservations during the meetings with teacher Sarah. He did not want to confront the teacher too often *"because it is not clear how this will affect our regular working relationship"*. Lizzy said: *"It is completely on a voluntary basis, so you are not going to put pressure on someone"*.

3.5 Conclusion and discussion

The aim of the study was to increase our understanding of what negotiation processes might look like during dialogues in the context of negotiated teacher assessment.

Our results reveal that negotiation during the dialogues was very limited. Our analysis showed that only seven negotiation dialogues occurred within the nine assessment meetings. These seven dialogues contained 20 utterances coded as disagreements. That is less than 0.7% of the total number of utterances. The negotiation dialogues usually started with a critical analysis of a situation. Most frequently, this was expressed in definite terms.

The lack of negotiations is striking, particularly because in our training we made a great effort to encourage the teachers and assessors to engage in negotiations. More than half of the expressed disagreements remained isolated in the dialogue. In these cases, no reasons for and against a view were communicated and no negotiations took place. This raises the question: what caused the lack of negotiation?

First, based on our findings, we need to reconsider the concept of “negotiation”. We defined negotiation as a chain of interactions in which participants discuss to try to reach agreement, take opposing positions, and give reasons for and against a proposal or view (Baker, 1999). This definition was operationalized in our analysis by, as a first step, tracing the arguments for and against a view, focusing on uttered disagreements. Putting more emphasis on agreements instead of disagreements could have yielded different results, including situations in which the teacher and the assessor give reasons for and against a proposal or view without disagreement being explicitly expressed first. However, since our definition of negotiations was also inspired by Baker’s (1999) research, explicating disagreement was considered an essential component in the chain of interaction.

Second, we only looked at the negotiations during the assessment meetings. It may be possible that negotiations also took place in other situations. For example, between assessor and teacher while planning the assessment meeting.

Another reason for the lack of negotiations during the assessment meetings may be found in the teachers’ and assessors’ attitudes toward negotiation in general. During the interviews, they were both asked to express their opinions about negotiation. The teachers’ answers mainly focused on the presence or absence of negotiation without being able to indicate what the negotiations looked like. This gives us the impression that the teachers did not think about the occurrence of negotiations before the interviews took place and nor were they thinking about it during the assessment procedure itself. Although in our training we did emphasise skills for negotiation during assessment meetings, the relationship between the teacher and the assessor, and so on, apparently this did not manifest itself clearly during the assessment meetings and the interviews.

The lack of manifest negotiation skills in the assessment meetings may have had to do with the assessors' mind-sets, since they had reservations about assessing their own colleagues. The expressed opinions about negotiation show that the assessors did find it difficult to confront and to assess their own colleagues. This may have influenced the outcomes of our study with regard to negotiations. If one conversation partner is not willing to confront the other conversation partner, it is hard to negotiate and it is even harder to reach an explicit outcome, especially when the outcome is characterized by explicit non-acceptance of viewpoints and/or proposals. One reason for reluctance to confront a colleague may be found in the fact that the participating teachers were volunteers. As assessor Lizzy (teacher Howard) said: *"It is completely on a voluntary base, so you are not going to put pressure on someone"*. Another reason may be found in the professional relationship between the assessor and the teacher. Both assessor Charles (teacher Sarah) and assessor Linda (teacher Giulia) explained that they were not always willing to confront, because this might have had a negative effect on their professional relationship outside the assessment meetings. These findings are in line with research findings in the context of teacher collaboration. McCotter (2001), among others, indicates that teacher collaboration is often restricted to safe styles of encouragement. Being critical of each other's work is still a challenge for most teachers (Levine & Marcus, 2010). Although it is known that positive critical dialogue supports cooperation, it must be learned and practised (Platteel, 2009).

It might be that feelings of uneasiness, not daring or being willing to confront their own colleagues, are part of a control shift between the teacher and the assessor (cf. Bergström, 2010), although the relationship between an assessee and an assessor was more equal in our study than in many other forms of assessment (Gosling, 2000).

Whatever the reason, not being willing or able to confront a colleague is a missed opportunity for teacher learning. The ability to be critical towards colleagues and to have constructive controversy (one in which differences in opinion and beliefs can and are allowed to arise) is necessary for professional learning (Kelchtermans, 2006). However, teachers often do regard conflict as a problem,

rather than as an opportunity for learning (Hargreaves, 2001). In Hargreaves' research, the conflicts were about curriculum change or student learning. In our study the focus was on teacher's learning process and teacher assessment. It could be that these kind of subjects are even harder to challenge colleagues about.

As explained in the theoretical section, negotiations between assessor and assessee are expected to promote the latter's involvement in their own assessment (e.g., Birenbaum, 2003) and active involvement of participants is an important prerequisite for learning (Day, 1999). Our conclusions might help to stimulate negotiations in future procedures. More negotiations might occur if both the teachers and the assessors were more aware of the contribution of negotiations to the teachers' learning process. This could be done by putting even more emphasis on this contribution during the training and by repeating the training in condensed form before *each* assessment meeting, not only for the assessors, as we did, but for the teachers too. The training could use DVD material from previous assessment meetings to bring the assessment practice to the training (cf. Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010). Such records of assessment practice could enable assessors and teachers to examine each other's strategies and to discuss ideas for improvement. (Little, Gearhart, Curry, & Kafka, 2003).

Confronting and negotiating with a colleague aimed at the teacher's learning process does not mean that they cannot have a good professional relationship outside the meetings. Both the assessors and the teachers must be aware of this. The fear of negative effects on the professional relationship might be overcome by using an assessor from another school or team. A disadvantage of an assessor who is not a colleague is that he or she would not be familiar with the specific context the teacher is working in.

This study was intended as a first step in describing and understanding the negotiation process in a negotiated assessment procedure in the context of teacher professional learning. Although we found that hardly any negotiations took place, the participating teachers may have been actively involved in their own learning and assessment processes. Since this active involvement of

participants in their own assessment is an important prerequisite for learning, as was outlined in the introduction to this chapter, in future research, we will explore other ways to find out whether the teachers who participated our procedure did take an active role during their assessment and felt able to pursue their learning objectives.

