

Mindeord om Kirsten Haastrup

CANADIANS REMEMBER

THERE WAS ALWAYS a sparkle in Kirsten's eyes. The sparkle hinted at her creativity, generosity, insight, and diligence. The brilliance shone not only in Kirsten's own research but included her leading—with determination and impeccable grace—her colleagues and students toward their maximum potential as well. Like many others, the foremost reason I knew Kirsten is because she strove to ensure that language education and applied linguistics in Denmark featured on the world stage, cognizant of its unique circumstances and accomplishments but also in synch with trends in research and pedagogy internationally. I first met Kirsten in the early 1990s when she led a group of Danish educators on a study tour in Toronto. Around the same time, I was impressed by the rigor of Kirsten's research on lexical inferencing—the second reason that I, and many others around the world too, knew Kirsten. She was a first-rate scholar, producing assiduously documented and pedagogically useful research on vocabulary learning and academic literacy. My third reason for knowing Kirsten consolidated the first two, as I consulted during the 2000s on the long-term project that Kirsten organized with Dorte Albrechtsen and Birgit Henriksen on vocabulary and writing in first and second languages. Each stage of the project was as interesting as it was intellectually gratifying, conceived and executed in a remarkably parallel and comprehensive manner. I recall fondly the initial meeting to plan the project proposal over the dining room table at Kirsten's apartment then the two exceptional meetings at the retreat Klitgården at the northern tip of Denmark to deliberate over preliminary results. I can still see Kirsten walking briskly through the streets of Copenhagen toward a meeting or meal, treading pensively over the windy dunes at Klitgården, or hosting a convivial gathering of colleagues at her apartment at Frederiksberg. I expect we will always learn by following her. I imagine that Kirsten's eyes are sparkling still.

Alister Cumming,

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on Languages and Literacies, University of Toronto

SHARING MEMORIES of Kirsten is a sad task, made more so by the abruptness of her departure, but hers was a life to be celebrated. I remember her as an accomplished scholar and fine teacher, but most of all as an outstanding human being and friend. I first became acquainted with Kirsten through her doctoral work on lexical inferencing in the early 1990s. She had a unique way, through her gifted (English) prose, well-chosen examples and clear grasp of theory, of drawing the reader into her research. Thus I first learned about lexical inferencing and began to share her fascination with it. (Only many years later, when co-writing with Kirsten, did I fully appreciate how much energy and thought—on top of lengthy research effort—went into every word she wrote.) Kirsten’s early research informed Sima Paribakht’s and my studies of vocabulary acquisition through reading, ultimately leading us to collaboration with Kirsten. In 1996 I finally met Kirsten at the AILA Congress in Jyväskylä, Finland. I recall her welcoming personality and in our symposium, her conceptual ability to link quite disparate lexical studies. Afterward, she assembled the participants for a joint dinner. For her, nurturing personal ties among researchers seemed as integral to such gatherings as the sharing of findings. Some years later, Kirsten accepted an invitation to the University of Ottawa as a Scholar-in-Residence. Her first bout with cancer in 2005 postponed the plan, but she bravely made the visit in 2006, offering stimulating public lectures and working intensively with us. She came to Canada again in mid-winter 2009 to help refine the draft research review on which we had been working long-distance. Kirsten was a tough, if gentle, taskmaster who made that writing experience disciplined, productive and satisfying. We started early each morning with clear goals for the day then dispersed to our respective computers in different rooms. Mid-morning allowed an exchange of feedback, then we returned to our tasks until lunch. Afternoons were similar and evenings were mainly devoted to editing. Since winter beckoned us outside with new snow and sunshine, we splurged after lunch several days by snowshoeing on the frozen lake near our home before returning to our work. Kirsten’s hopeful note to me in early April 2011 left me ill-prepared for the sad news that would follow later that month. Positive in the face of adversity, she appreciated life’s myriad treasures: friendship; beauty in the natural world; a new insight; a paragraph of text finally wrestled to clarity; an interesting discussion over a cup of tea; the success of a student or colleague; a walk on

a sunny day; happy moments with her siblings and extended family. I will treasure her memory.

Marjorie Wesche,

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University of Ottawa

I “READ” KIRSTEN long before I “met” her. When I began my doctoral studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) in 1990, I frequently heard of (and soon read) the book that Kirsten co-wrote with Claus Færch and Robert Phillipson. In 1993, I had the good fortune of obtaining a *Danish Government/International Council of Canadian Studies* scholarship to conduct thesis research in Denmark. Returning to OISE after Phase I that summer, I discovered that Alister Cumming and Kirsten were arranging a study tour for Danish teacher educators to come to OISE. They hired me to facilitate the lectures and school visits as I had done some of my secondary school in Aars, Denmark. When I returned to Denmark to continue my research in a bilingual/bicultural school that autumn, Kirsten invited me to her home, inquired about my research, and then kindly offered that I could live with her (free of charge) for the subsequent data collection for my research. I had spent a lot of personal time with Kirsten during the Canadian study tour, but it was not until I lived in her home that I fully came to appreciate what an unassuming yet powerful person she was. She was incredibly busy, organizing large-scale projects and frequently hosting her whole research group in the oasis of her apartment, close to a beautiful park. Without Kirsten’s enormous generosity and warm-heartedness, it would have been impossible for me to conduct a longitudinal study overseas. Kirsten was a highly productive, renowned scholar and champion of educational language policy development in Denmark who took the time to host a foreign graduate student not once, but twice. I am enormously grateful to Kirsten who will always remain her poised and graceful self in my mind’s eye.

Shelley Taylor,

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