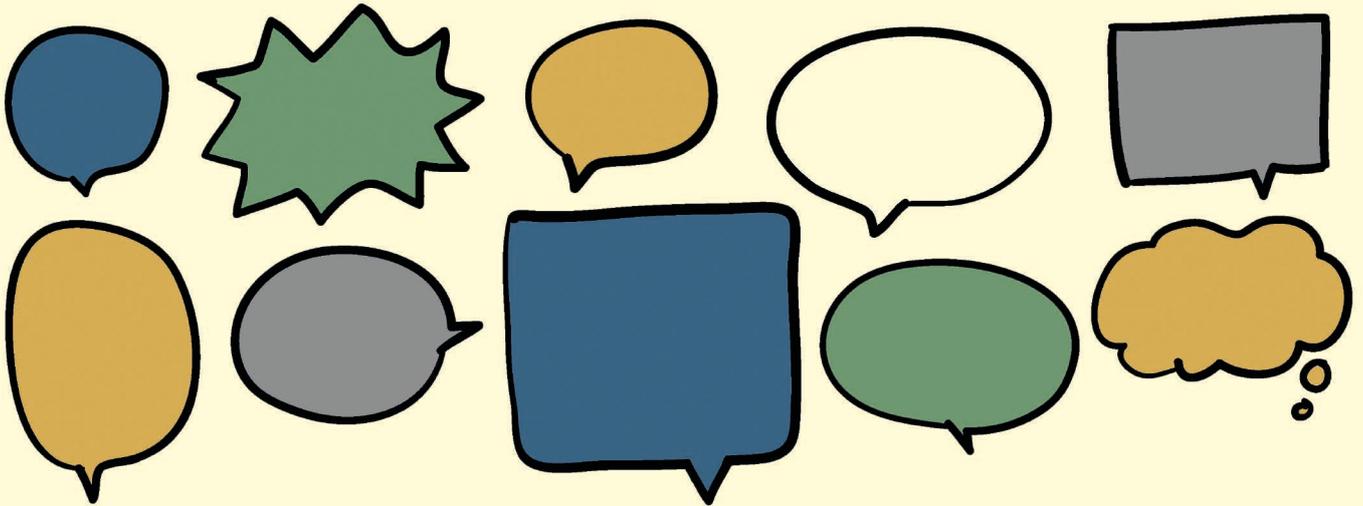


# Fostering Dialogue



## Teaching citizenship through children's literature in a university context

Fourth international online conference

12-14 November 2026

### FOCUS

The reality of living in today's world requires teachers to prepare young people for a life in which large scale socio-political developments will most likely impact them. Themes such as war, forced migration, digitalization, and the climate crisis enter the classroom via students real life encounters with them or their media consumption. At the same time, young people are increasingly claiming active participation in these developments via activism and creative agency through digital platforms. As a result, citizenship education has become increasingly important in classrooms. Educators of all levels – primary, secondary, and tertiary education – are developing strategies for teaching young people resilience, active participation, and democratic values.

Children's and Young Adult literature can be an important site for modeling citizenship (Van den Bossche; Kelen & Sundmark). Through literature, young people can both broaden their worldview and find their own

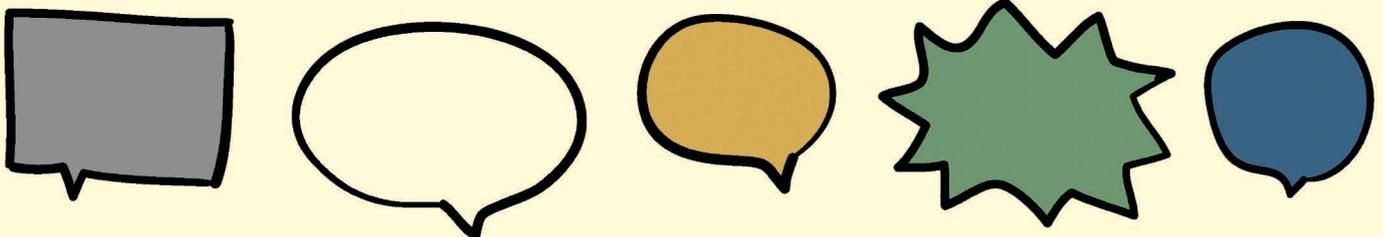
# Fostering Dialogue

place in the world. Reading has also been claimed to enhance important civic qualities such as empathy (Koopman & Hakemulder) and dialogism (d'Hoker). At the same time, children's literature can challenge existing categories of citizenship, for literature is also an opportunity to explore dissonance and conflict. When we include children's literature in our citizenship education, to what extent should these texts (and our teaching styles) reflect dominant values? And when can it also challenge them?

This 4th Fostering Dialogue Conference invites academics, teachers, students, and artists to engage with these topics. We intend this conference to be a space in which we can discuss critically, but also share experiences, frustrations, and best practices, so as to develop strategies for constructive citizenship education through children's literature in a university context.

## Works cited:

- ◆ Van den Bossche, S. 2023. 'Nation and citizenship', in *Routledge Companion to Children's Literature and Culture*, C. Nelson, E. Wesseling, & A. Mei-Ying Wu. (eds.). Routledge, pp. 255-266.
- ◆ Kelen, K., & B. Sundmark. 2012. 'First Things: Introduction', in *The Nation in Children's Literature: Nations of Childhood*, K. Kelen & B. Sundmark (eds.). Routledge, pp. 1-8.
- ◆ D'Hoker, E. 2022. *Leerlingen en literatuur hoe vaardige lezers vormen*. Lannoo.
- ◆ Koopman, E. M. & Hakemulder, F. 2015. 'Effects of literature on empathy and self-reflection: A theoretical-empirical framework', *Journal of Literary Theory*, vol. 9, No.1, pp. 79-111.

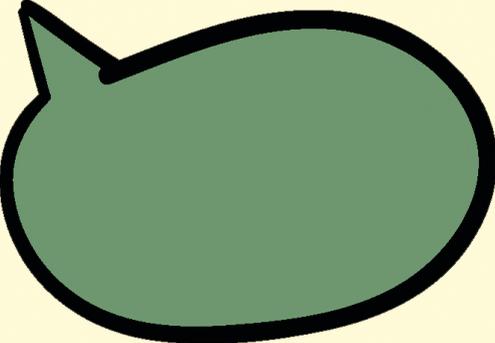
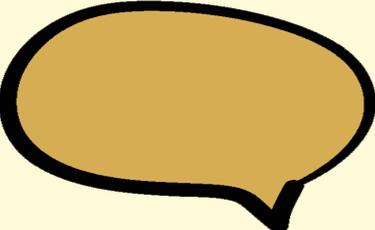
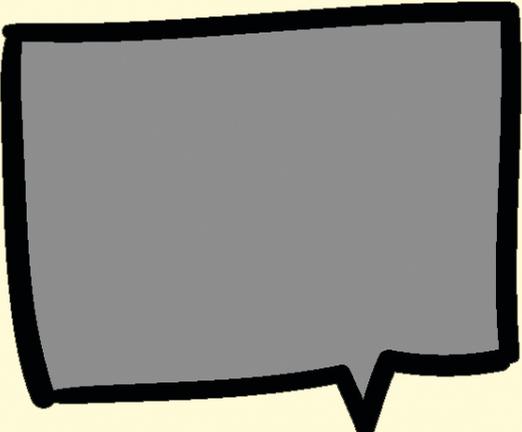


# Fostering Dialogue



Relevant topics include

- ✦ Modeling citizenship through literature
- ✦ Teaching strategies for citizenship education through children's literature
- ✦ The potentials and pitfalls of citizenship education
- ✦ Complications around the formal structuring and assessment of citizenship education
- ✦ Tensions between local, national, and global citizenship
- ✦ International and intercultural citizenship education
- ✦ Ecological citizenship and more-than-human teachers
- ✦ Strategies in foregrounding socio-political issues in teaching children's literature
- ✦ Teaching children's literature as activism
- ✦ Reflections on the emotional burden of citizenship education on teachers and students
- ✦ The impact of digital media and algorithms in constructing and challenging civic values



This conference welcomes students' voices and experiences. Therefore, we intend to provide room in the programme for student sessions or panels. We would appreciate it if you could disseminate this call for papers among your students and contact us for further details if they would like to share and contribute.



**Students' voices**

# Fostering Dialogue



An online,  
bilingual  
conference

This conference seeks to create a space for open exchange across borders, for all interested in teaching children's literature in a university context. Therefore, it takes the shape of an online, international conference that accepts submissions in both English and Dutch.

## Conference fee:

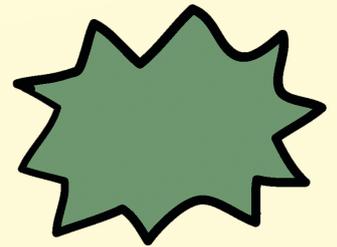
- Early bird rate: €50 (registration before 22 September 2026)
- Regular Fee: €75 (registration before 6 November 2024)
- Student presenters: no fee (registration before 22 September 2026)
- Student participants: €25 (registration before 6 November 2026)

## Submission

Please submit an abstract for a 20 minute presentation via [this form](#).

Submissions should include the following information:

1. Name of author(s)
2. Affiliation as you would like to appear in the program
3. E-mail address
4. Title of proposal in English (in English and Dutch for papers delivered in Dutch)
5. Text of proposal (including research question, methodology, research context), no longer than 300 words
6. Language used to deliver the paper: English/Dutch

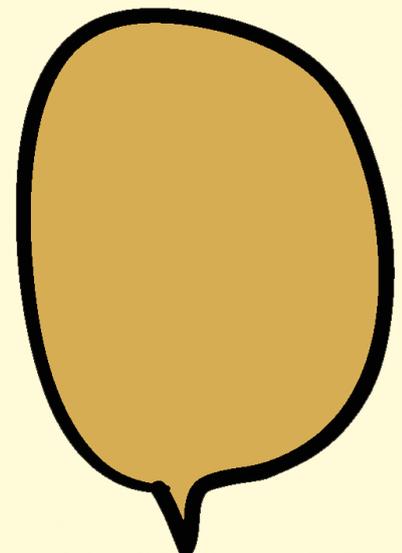


**Deadline for abstract submission:** 15 May 2026

**Notification of acceptance:** 15 July 2026

**Information:** [conference website](#)

**Contact:** [fosteringdialogue@tilburguniversity.edu](mailto:fosteringdialogue@tilburguniversity.edu)



# Fostering Dialogue

## Organizing committee

- ◆ Suzanne van der Beek (Tilburg University)
- ◆ Siebe Bluijs (Tilburg University)
- ◆ Semmy Claassen (Utrecht University)
- ◆ Roos Joosten (Tilburg University)



## Scientific committee

- ◆ Nina Goga (Western Norway University of Applied Science)
- ◆ Maria Pujol Valls (UIC Barcelona)
- ◆ Marnie Campagnaro (University of Padova)
- ◆ Lea Ferrari (University of Padova)
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