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Early readers and demotivation

In all schools in Denmark we find young students who are good readers in terms of both decoding and comprehension at the beginning of primary school. In Denmark, these children are five or six years of age. We do not know exactly how many there are, but earlier studies suggest figures ranging from 4 to 15-20%. These students are good readers but are often met with demotivating training tasks in textbooks that are at beginner's level. In fear of standing out from the average norm many of these precocious readers hide their abilities while in school, and as a consequence are in danger of demotivation and of developing general strategies for under achievement.

This presentation shows the main findings from a literature review about precocious reading and presents the results from a developmental project published by the National Centre for Reading in Denmark in cooperation with a public school in Copenhagen. This project focuses on:

- a) the identification of precocious readers,
- b) differentiated literacy instruction in early years of primary school.

The results are a didactic tool for identification of and principles for an inquiry-based literacy instruction model.

Keywords: early readers, differentiation