

CollectivED International Symposium



Mentoring, coaching and collaborative dialogue to support professional learning throughout teachers' career paths; exploring roles, responsibilities, tensions and opportunities.

ICSEI 2019

CHAIR: RACHEL LOFTHOUSE, COLLECTIVED, LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY, UK

MARY BRIGGS, OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, ENGLAND, IN ASSOCIATION WITH
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, KYOTO, JAPAN

RAIJA ERKKILÄ AND SIRPA PERUNKA, OULU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES, SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL
TEACHER EDUCATION, FINLAND

TRISTA HOLLWECK, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA, CANADA

HELEN LEWIS, YR ATHROFA: INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION; UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

JORDANA HUNTER, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Papers and discussion theme

Sharing and developing mentoring practices in Initial Teacher Education (England and Japan)

Mentoring and tutoring to support professional growth of student teachers (Finland)

A pracademic's exploration of mentoring, coaching and induction in the Western Québec School Board (Canada)

Co-constructing a shared understanding of the teaching of thinking using video reflection (Wales)

Exploring the significance of contrasting models of instructional leadership and coaching in contemporary Australian school improvements policies (Australia)

The discussion question;

How can we maximise the potential of mentoring, coaching and other forms of collaborative dialogue to support professional learning throughout teachers' career paths?



The role of mentoring in developing teacher identity in the UK and Japan

Mary Briggs

School of Education
Oxford Brookes University



Teacher training in the UK

- They predominately work as a solo trainee in the classroom.
- Where there are pairs they can vie for attention from the teacher.
- They dislike being introduced as a student or trainee as they want to establish themselves as a teacher from the start.
- They actively seek to take on the role of the class teacher.
- Expectation to ‘hit the ground running’
- Although subject knowledge is important a greater focus on pedagogic knowledge and skills e.g. behaviour management



Teacher training in Japan

- Students are introduced as students to the whole school and their class, they join a community of practice
- Work in groups with one teacher collaboratively
- Different cultural value of teaching and the teacher?
- In the practicum taking on parts of the role of the teacher and not all aspects given the number of students in one class and the length of the placement is quite short
- Focus on subject knowledge greater than pedagogic knowledge?



Mentor session after teaching a year 2 class

An example of one of the Japanese feedback sessions observed.

- Role of the mentor
- Role of student moderator within the group
- Focus on attitudes of the children
- Praise to develop trust
- Style allowing students to make their own decisions
- Use of technology
- Focus on subject knowledge, sentences, penmanship of board writing as well



Mentor session after teaching a year 4 class

An example of one of the UK feedback sessions observed.

- Role of the mentor
- Role of student
- Focus on behaviour management
- Focus on planning
- Focus on differentiation
- Focus on subject knowledge



The development of mentoring trainees and potential implications

- Do the variations in training allow for the development of the student's role as a teacher in different ways?
- Does the group training allow for a greater development of a community of practice?
- How does this translate into full time teaching?
- Does the solo experience push students to become the self-reliant teacher too quickly? Could this explain the drop out from teaching in the first 5 years in the UK?
- Does the solo student gain greater autonomy?

Mentoring and tutoring to support professional growth of student teachers (the research project 2009-)

The aim of the research project (2009-) is to investigate the supervising relationship between a mentor and a mentee *during a teaching practice*.

Research background (2009-)

- *Finland, the School of Professional Teacher Education, a unit of the Oulu University of Applied Sciences.*
- *The unit offers the teacher's pedagogical studies of 60 ECTS [8].*

Entrance Qualifications for vocational teacher education programme:

- **The general entrance requirement for vocational teacher education is a Master's Degree, or the highest vocational degree in the major subject and three years of work experience in the respective field.**

Mentoring and tutoring to support professional growth of student teachers (the research project 2009-)

The research focus: Experiences concerning teaching practice period and especially experiences of guidance

| Informants | Data gathering methods |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 10 vocational student teachers | reflective essays (2009) |
| 21 vocational student teachers | focus group (2012) |
| 17 mentors | personal interviews (2009-2010) |

Mentoring and tutoring to support professional growth of student teachers: **Tensions**

Feedback

- ST: *"Mentoring, what does it mean? Strange word, I feel that I didn't get any."*
- M: *"Should I advice the student teacher beforehand or should I let her/him try first?"*

Pedagogical ideas and practices

- ST: *"I felt that my mentor implied that group work methods are nice, but they steal the time from real teaching."*
- M: *"I have always taught the lesson in my own way and that's why I wonder; what an earth the student teacher is doing. It is difficult not to interfere."*

Communal support

- ST: *"I felt that the organisation resisted my teaching practice".*
- M: *"Organisation benefits, because student teachers always brings with them new ideas."*

Mentoring and tutoring to support professional growth of student teachers: **Opportunities**

Benefits for mentors and mentees

- ST: *"Mentoring meant great importance for my own professional development. I got more confidence and believe in the choices I made."*
- M: *"Guiding the teaching practice is important for developing your own work. You have to conceptualize your own ideas."*

Dialogical mentoring

- ST: *"It was significant that my mentor treated me equally. I was like a colleague to him right from the start."*
- M: *"Together we can create something new and I also can develop myself."*

Empowerment

- ST: *"I felt that I am one of the teachers in this social culture. It felt great".*
- M: *"It's nice to see the enthusiasm of student teachers. That gives so much power for me also."*

How can we promote the potential of mentoring to support student teachers' professional learning?

According to our research supportive and rewarding mentoring includes:

the equal encounter,

the mutual appreciation of competence,

the possibility for the mutual learning and growth of competence.

At its best mentoring benefits both mentee and mentor.

References:

Erkkilä, R. & Perunka, S. 2014. Mentor and working environment in support of vocational student teachers' professional development. In: [*Literacy information and computer education journal* 5 \(2014\) : 1, s. 1385 – 1391.](#)

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Perunka, S. & Erkkilä, R. 2012. Dialogical Mentoring in the Supervising of Student Teachers' Practice. In: [International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education \(IJCSE\), Volume 3, Issue 1, March 2012.](#)

Perunka, S. 2015. ["Tässä on hyvä syy ammatillisesti keskustella". Ohjaavien opettajien käsityksiä opetusharjoittelun ohjauksesta ammatillisessa opettajankoulutuksessa.](#) [This offers a good reason for professional discussion". Supervising teachers' conceptions of teaching practice supervision in vocational teacher education]. (Academic dissertation). Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis 310. Rovaniemi: Lapin yliopisto.

A pracademic's exploration of mentoring, coaching and induction in the Western Québec School Board (Canada)

Trista Hollweck

www.teachingwithteachers.com

@tristateach



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university



2018-2019

6600 Students

450 Teachers

55 New Year 1's

55 Year 2's

50 Mentor- Coaches

A mentoring, coaching and induction program was introduced in 2009 to:

- 1) Retain highly effective teachers
- 2) Provide professional growth opportunities for veteran teachers
- 3) Improve teaching and learning across district

Composition:

- » 2 years
- » High-stake context
- » mandatory
- » Supported by TIP team
- » 3 Pillars: PL, MCF, Evaluation



TEACHER INDUCTION

MENTORING and COACHING

are anchored in a collaborative and reflective relationship.

Both are focused on personal and professional growth based on trust, empathic listening, safety, mutual respect, curiosity and confidentiality.



MENTORING

- Specialist / Master teacher
- Mentor as expert
- Advocacy approach
- Sharing and telling
- Advising & advocating
- Informal / more responsive
- Long term / ongoing

COACHING

- Generalist / Trained coach
- Coachee as expert
- Inquiry approach
- Asking and goal-setting
- Facilitating thinking
- Formal / more structured
- Short term / time-bound

More directive

Less directive



A Patchwork Quilt

Tensions within:

Clarity, Transparency & Understanding

Mentor-coach selection & Training

Evaluation & Growth

System & School



Co-constructing a shared understanding of the teaching of thinking using video reflection

Where in the world?

Yr Athrofa: Institute of Education
University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Dr Helen Lewis
helen.lewis01@gmail.com

@CollectivED1



Co-constructing a shared understanding of the teaching of thinking using video reflection

Project Research Aims

To explore the nature and extent of metacognition in young learners, and to **better understand the pedagogical practices teachers use** to effectively support the teaching of thinking.

6 teachers, varied roles, experience and expectations.

RQ2: How did teachers develop their teaching of thinking through the course of the study?

Video Stimulated Reflective Dialogue – the process

Step 1

- Select focus

Step 2

- Record session

Step 3

- Watch video alone
- Select an extract to share

Step 4

- **Watch extract with your trusted peer**
- **Reflect, re-examine and discuss**

Step 5

- Adapt practice

Moyles et al, 2003; Morgan, 2007 etc

What did the teachers say about VSRD?

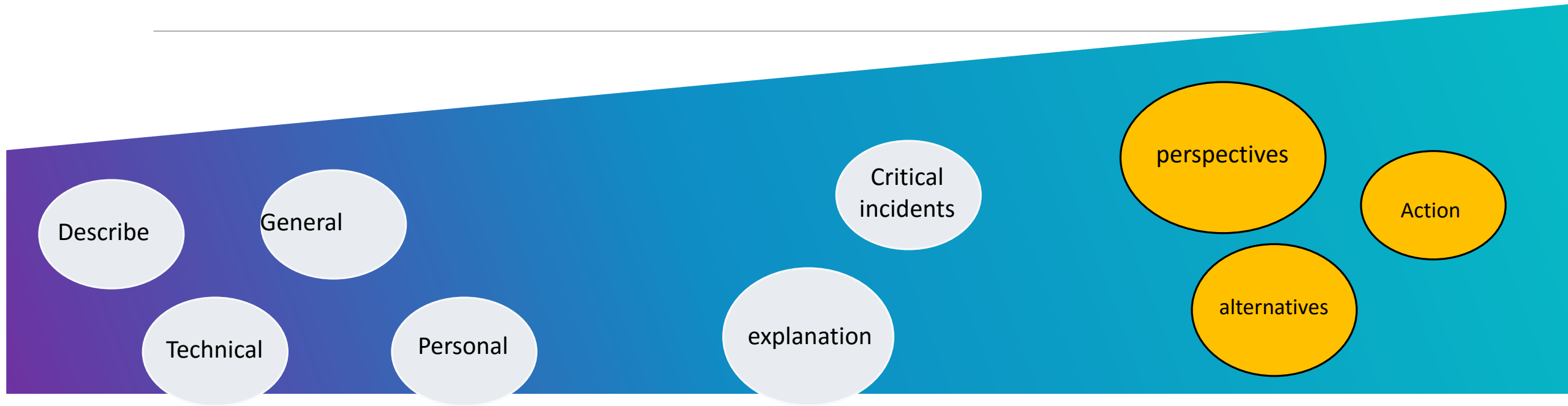
'Using video has been mentioned before but I was reluctant to try it. Now I have I see it's enabled me to look at my teaching many times and observe and evaluate different aspects each time. It helped keeping ownership of the video – I chose what to look at – that was great.'

The use of video has enabled me to develop my questioning skills.. Initially I felt self-conscious and did not fully understand what I was looking for, but by talking through I found targets to look at developing.'

As a profession I feel we look for the negatives in our teaching, but knowing the objective of my viewing and talking about it with someone else helped me to focus on thinking and how I can move it on.'

'I realised I used the word 'think' a lot. I am really aware of it now. I try to focus on better key words or phrases like 'make a connection'. When I hear myself say think I try to add the actual word as well – like 'connect' or 'compare' or 'justify'. I spotted this when I started to discuss the clip – it was a eureka moment'

Levels of reflection



The lesson went well'

'My bum looks huge'

John was off task, the question was too hard'

'I shouldn't have put him on the spot and asked him to explain. He was uncomfortable. Maybe I will put in some think-pair-share tasks

Instructional leadership and coaching: two Australian examples

Jordana Hunter, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne, Australia

Research questions

- How have Australian education departments designed and embedded instructional leader/coach roles in school improvement policies intended to improve teaching quality at scale across systems?
- How have these instructional leader/coach roles been enacted in schools?

Method

- Comparative, qualitative case study approach
 - New South Wales *Early Action for Success* policy (est. 2012); 530 primary schools (early years, F-2)
 - Victorian *Professional Learning Communities* policy (est. 2016); 500+ primary & secondary schools.
- Focus on a 'slice' of each system:
 - Ed. Dept. → 'middle layer' → 3 x schools (Principal, Instructional Leader, sample of teachers)
- 2018 fieldwork: ~ 125+ interviews, + 65 observations of Instructional Leaders working with teachers
- Thematic analysis ongoing – preliminary findings only at this stage

Instructional leadership and coaching: two Australian examples

Two policies: common objectives, similar features, different mechanisms at play

- **Similar policy objective:**

Embed high quality, school-based professional learning → *improve teaching quality*

→ *improve student learning*

↑
New school-based 'Instructional Leader' role

↑
Focus on using high quality student learning data to inform professional learning and teaching

- **But very different change mechanism intended:**

Victorian Professional Learning Communities

PLC Instructional Leaders lead teams of teachers who collaborate in 'professional learning communities' to improve practice using cycles of inquiry linked to student learning data

NSW Early Action for Success

EaFS Instructional Leaders predominately work one-on-one to provide differentiated professional learning and direct support to teachers to develop their teaching and assessment practices

Instructional leadership and coaching: two Australian examples

“Instructional Leader” role as envisaged by both the NSW and Victorian Education Departments generally closely aligned with Desimone and Pak (2017)’s conceptual framework for instructional coaching as high quality teacher professional learning...

| | Early Action for Success (NSW) | Professional Learning Communities (Vic) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Content focus | High alignment | High alignment |
| Active learning | High alignment | High alignment |
| Sustained | Exceeded | Exceeded |
| Coherence | Moderate alignment | High alignment |
| Collective participation | Low alignment | High alignment |

Instructional leadership and coaching: two Australian examples

Preliminary findings #1

- Despite similarities in design, 'enacted' Instructional Leader role differed significantly between NSW and Victoria. Enactment between schools also varied more among Victorian schools than NSW schools.

PLC Instructional Leader enacted role (Vic)

Facilitator – expert in PLC process, variable re teaching

On class, variable time release; work with 2-5 teachers

Low (variable) levels of observation, feedback, demos

EAFS Instructional Leader enacted role (NSW)

Mentor/coach – expert teacher

Off class; work with 5 – 12 teachers

Frequent (weekly) observation, feedback, demos

Instructional leadership and coaching: two Australian examples

Preliminary findings #2

Nature of observed interactions between Instructional Leaders and teachers differed significantly between NSW and Victoria. Also greater variation among Victorian schools than NSW schools.

PLC Instructional Leader-teacher interactions (Vic)

IL facilitated teams: turn-taking, sharing

Individual goal setting and reflection; reciprocated encouragement; limited actionable or 'cool' feedback
Focus on student cohort data; limited engagement with curriculum docs

EAfS Instructional Leader-teacher interactions (NSW)

IL-led dyad: dialogic

Guided reflection (past) and 'rehearsals' (future); frequent actionable feedback, including 'cool' feedback
Focus on individual student data; frequent, deep engagement with curriculum docs

Instructional leadership and coaching: two Australian examples

Preliminary findings #3

- Purpose, design and broader policy context of school-based instructional leader/coach roles appears to be closely related to the types of professional interactions that result.
- Potential drivers of difference between NSW and Victoria
 - Positional authority of IL within their school
 - Deep curriculum, assessment and pedagogical knowledge
 - Knowledge of teachers' classroom practices
 - Knowledge of teachers' students and their learning
 - Adequate time for dialogic engagement supporting reflection, sense-making and skill development
 - Role of supporting frameworks (e.g. assessment frameworks)

Instructional leadership and coaching: two Australian examples

Discussion and conclusions

- IL role in EAfS vs Vic policies diverge around: content vs process ‘expertise’, leadership vs collaborative facilitation, individual vs team-based professional learning, among others.
- Coherence (*Desimone and Pak, 2017*): Lower levels of coherence with local context in NSW policy may account for smaller variation in observed IL role enactment between case study schools of Victoria.
- Collective participation (*Desimone and Pak, 2017*): Strong social norms in Australian primary schools act as guardrails around types of ‘safe’ professional conversations. Norms may limit professional learning in the collaborative PLC team setting; norms side-stepped somewhat by the NSW policy design.

The CollectivED discussion question;

How can we maximise the potential of mentoring, coaching and other forms of collaborative dialogue to support professional learning throughout teachers' career paths?

r.m.lofthouse@leedsbeckett.ac.uk @DrRLofthouse @CollectivED1 Google search CollectivED Leeds

