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Mentor Assisted Learning

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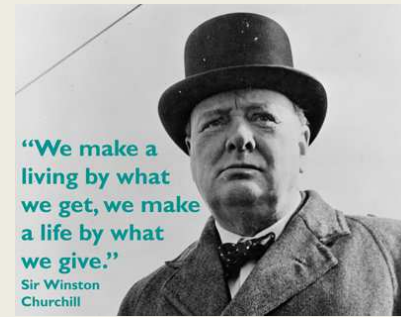
# **M**entor **A**ssisted **L**earning

Dr Michael Snowden



# Aims:

- Explore key concepts associated with mentor assisted learning (MAL)
- Consider advantages and disadvantages of such an approach to learning
- Reflect upon MAL project



# What is a Mentor?



# What is a **M**entor?

- Levinson et al (1978) describes the mentor as a male who is **older, wiser** and of a more **senior** status than the protégé....
- A uni-dimensional character perceived as a wiser, older man who is intellectually, spiritually and emotionally **superior** to his charge (!!)

- NMC (2008) a Registrant who has met the outcomes of stage 2 (i.e. those of a qualified mentor) and who facilitates learning, and supervises and assess students in practice settings
- *a nurturing process in which a more skilled or experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. (Anderson and Shannon, 1995; p178).*

# Mentorship

- Contribute positively to the undergraduate's experience in Higher Education
- Improves knowledge, performance and skills
- Identity and the notion of “community” of practice
- Emphasis upon mentoring “success and retention”

(Andrews, and Clark, 2011; McCary et al, 2011; Sanders and Higham, 2012; Snowden, 2013; Thomas, 2012)

# What is **M**entor **A**ssisted **L**earning?

- A model of learning that applies the principles of mentorship to aid learning development and places the learner at the heart of the learning experience
- Adopts the principles of mentorship and heutological learning and the concept of “learning spaces”



# But...what about the affect upon Learning???

## Small evaluatory case study:

- Third year student acts as a mentor to second year
- Third year “mentored” by staff member
- Matched – age, gender, interests, employment

## Data collection:

- Interview and Journals
- Assessment and student survey data

# Findings

1. The learning experience and assessment:
  - Mentored students mean mark 63% (52%)
  - Mentors mean mark 66% (61%)
  - Mentors achieved a 0.8% higher VA score than those who did not act as a mentor
  - Nil attrition in both groups – (15%/5%)
  - 100% Student Satisfaction 100% (80%/90%)

## 2...the important bit!

- “the best bit about having a mentor was that he really helped me to realise what was important”
- “Simon... “made things real”...he explained what the job was all about much better than you (*lecturers*) did”
- “The sessions were OK, but I really learned stuff that mattered on my work experience”

- “it was great “cos” I learned what I wanted to learn not what you lot (lecturers) wanted us to learn”
- “It made me who I am”
- “my mentor was brilliant, “x” really helped me to understand things at the Centre, she made me feel good about myself”
- “I learn a lot in class, and I enjoy that but what I really like is learning from “N” she really knows her stuff as she’s done the job before”

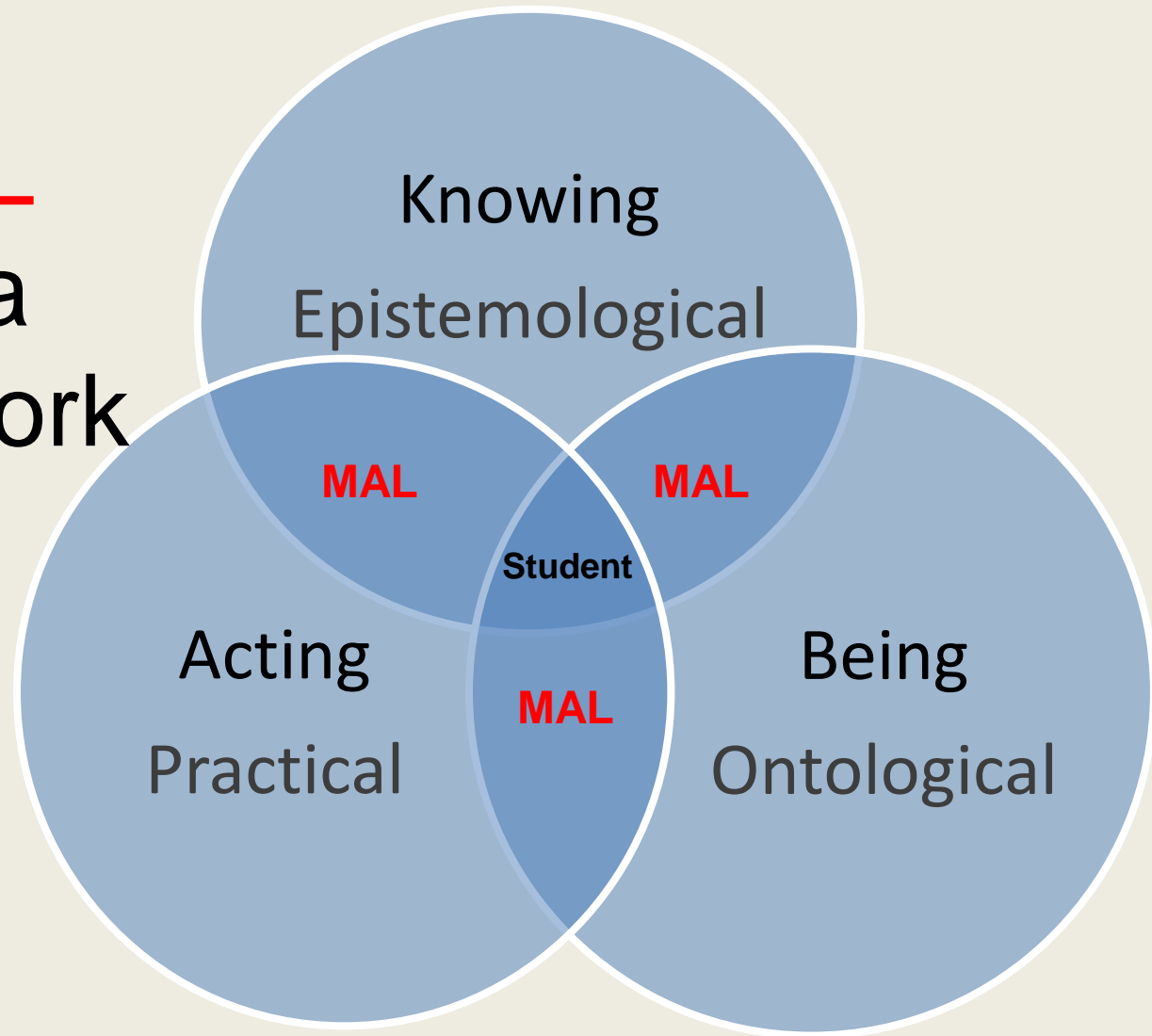
# So???

- Promotes reality
- Engaged community focussed learning
- Multi and inter-disciplinary.....
- Provides the opportunity to utilise “space” – draw upon the experience and engage within it...harnessing the energy/experience to develop self learning

# But?

- Mentor selection
- Mentor/mentee matching
- Academic “loss of control”
- Labour intensive
- Recognition

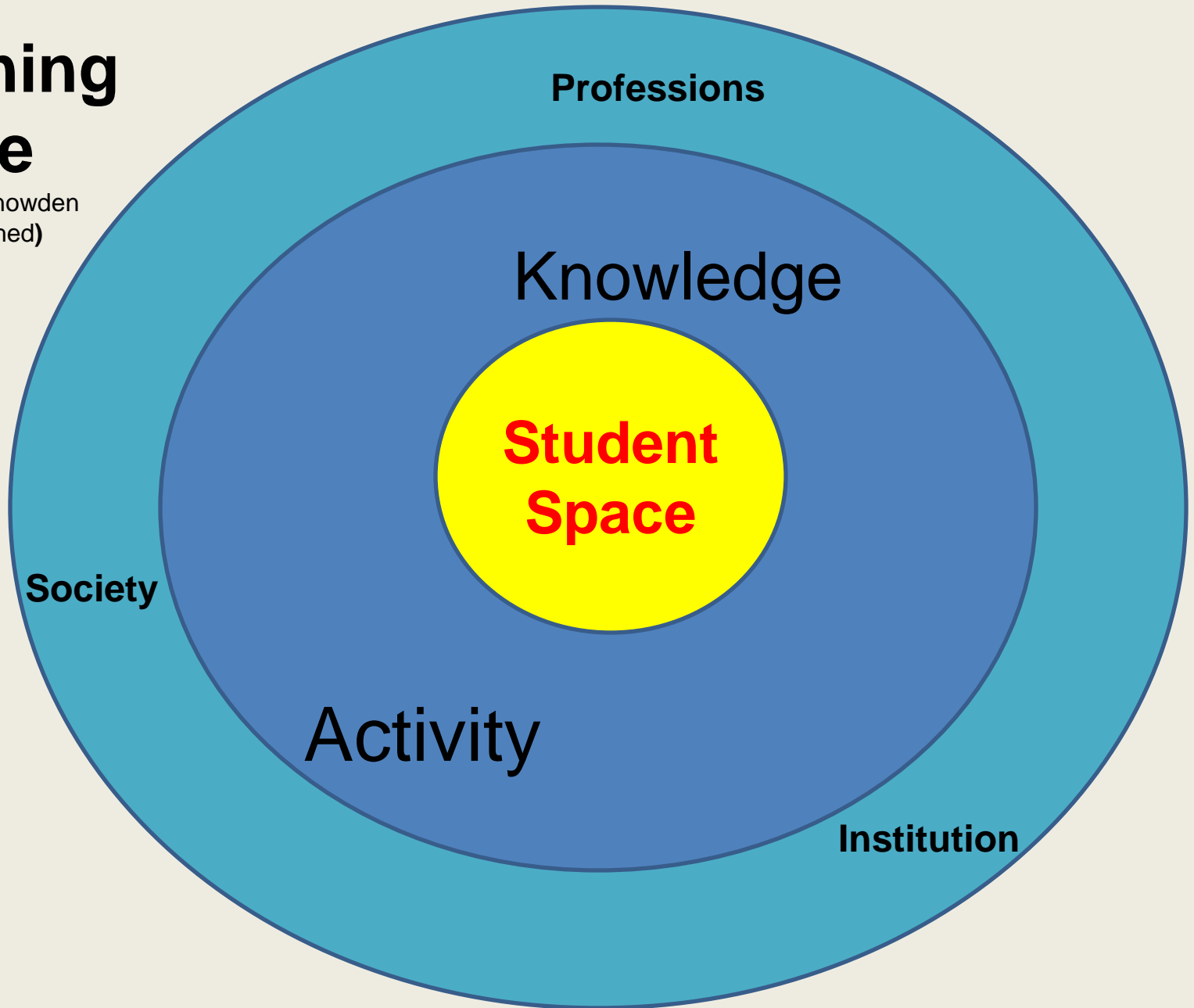
# The **MAL** Curricula Framework



Based upon Barnett and Coate  
2005

# Learning Space

(Barnet and Snowden  
2014 unpublished)





# Successful **M**entor **A**ssisted **L**earning:

- Helps the student inhabit and navigate the various systems and structures of HEI and the community
- Helps the student inhabit their own internalised patterns of reasoning

# The notion of learning

- We learn through the various systems and structures...these systems promote or inhibit choice and
- We learn in ourselves... When something new is learned, “something” is changed... a new space, a new mode of being, a space of learning ...is entered

Barnet (2012)

# The “architect”

MAL promotes the student to become an **architect** of learning:

Where learning is arranged around activities rather than content – allows content to be context specific...

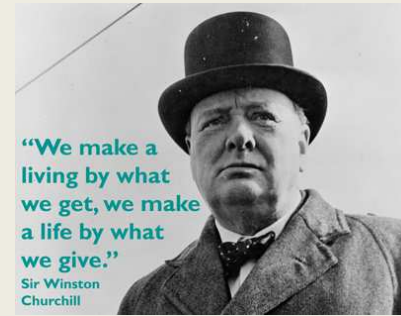
An arranger, of exploiter of external spaces. An individual pattern of spaces is created...

Creates their own pattern of ideas and experiences relevant to their own mind and being...promoting “knowing” and “acting”

# Heautogogical Approach...

Self determined learning approach that involves an expansion and re interpretation of androgogical principles...

A shift in thinking towards a heautogogy will enable the learner with the support of the mentor to develop space - promoting the learner as an **architect** of learning.



# Who Translates this?



# Finally....

- “Through the everyday, mundane process of mentorship, what is good can be determined and that good practice can then become routine and this then leads on to excellence”  
Fulton, 2013, p.145

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