

Teachers and academics co-constructing the category of expert through meeting talk

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Abstract

It is not uncommon for education university academics and schoolteachers to create opportunities to collaborate in projects of various kinds - particularly professional development and research activities. While a number of studies have highlighted the advantages of school-university partnerships, there has been little work investigating how these partnerships actually work. This study shows how one such partnership was managed interactionally, focusing on how the participants undertook the delicate and complex work of partnership building. Specifically, the study investigated how a group of teachers and academics developed a project to improve Mathematics teaching in the school. The activity was collaborative, occurring in the context of on-going Professional Development.

This paper focuses on one episode of meeting talk to show how the participants constructed the business of doing partnerships. In so doing, they constructed categories of 'expert' in their meeting talk. The meeting talk was audio-taped and analysed using membership categorization and conversation analysis. Of particular interest was the emergence of expertise as a co-constructed category accomplished by participants. Teachers and academics alike constructed themselves as experts. This paper shows that the practical tasks of the meeting were concerned with connecting expert status to the business of partnerships. Such orientations shape what can be said in meeting talk, who gets to speak, and the types of relationships that can be constructed.

Introduction: the idea of school – university partnerships

For many years, the notion that schools and universities might co-operate in any way was predicated on meeting the needs of the university. In particular, these needs related to two specific kinds of activity. First, university education faculties, as providers of pre-service teacher education programs, needed school sites to provide practical teaching experiences for pre-service teacher education students. Second, university staff needed sites to undertake research activity to meet the requirements of their institutions regarding the quantum of published research. In the context of these scenarios, the benefits of co-operative activity were seen clearly to be directed to the university, its students and its staff. A supply of qualified teachers, familiar with school environments, was a tangential benefit to schools and school systems.

Around the mid-1990s, recognition emerged that there could be mutual benefit - to schools and to universities, to school teachers and to university staff, and to school students as well as to pre-service teacher education students – from the development of new relationships. These new relationships between schools and universities were now being described as partnerships. The new relationships were proposed as having more equal participation by all parties; more clearly defined outcomes, benefiting all parties; and clearly defined roles for all participants.

The idea of partnership between schools and universities came to be promoted as a means to achieving three broad sets of goals:

- development of knowledge about teaching and learning (research);
- professional development of teachers, including prospective teachers (teacher education); and
- development of policy in education (governance) (Holmes Group, 1995).

These goals could be described as representing what an “ideal” partnership might be able to accomplish. However, these do not show how such matters are actually managed in school-university partnerships. This paper does show how one such alliance works by focusing on its everyday meeting talk. In this way, an ‘ideal’ version is not proposed, but one that explicates the situated practices of the members as they assemble the actions and descriptions of partnership.

The Study

While a number of studies have highlighted the advantages of school-university partnerships (eg Goodlad, 1985; Levine, 1992; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Zeichner & Miller, 1997; Brady, 2002; Ginsberg & Rhodes, 2003), there has been little work investigating how these partnerships actually work. This study discussed in this paper shows how one such partnership was managed interactionally, focusing on how the participants undertook the delicate and complex work of partnership building. Specifically, the study investigated how a group of teachers in a primary school and academics from a nearby university developed a project to improve Mathematics teaching in the school. The activity was collaborative, occurring in the context of on-going professional development.

In this study, meeting talk is used to examine the relationships between schoolteachers and academics as they worked together to develop a professional development activity in a school setting. The work of the collaborative activity occurred in a number of face-to-face meetings, generally conducted at the school and usually in the afternoon after the conclusion of classes. There were a core group of two academics and a larger core group of teachers, including the school principal. The number of teachers varied from meeting to meeting, as the teachers’ commitments allowed, and as their interest in the agendas of particular meetings engaged them. In several meetings, additional participants were involved. These additional participants were usually university academics, invited to participate in particular meetings because their particular contributions were sought.

The school and university staff involved in the study had an on-going history of collaborative professional work for some years prior to this project. This collaboration involved the development of practicum and internship opportunities for pre-service teacher education students, mentoring development programs for teachers involved in supporting the pre-service activities, and a number of professional development activities designed and executed by individual or small groups of teachers with academic partners. In the case of the project being studied in this research, the core group of teachers agreed to undertake an investigation of how the school might improve the teaching of Mathematics in its multi-age primary classrooms. The teachers had identified this topic as being an immediate need of theirs in supporting their classroom teaching, and the academic partners agreed to be part of the project. A major objective of the study was to observe and report how the partnership developed, with a specific focus on the development of relationships between the teachers and the academics.

The meetings were almost all conducted at the school and they were audio recorded. All participants gave their informed consent to the recording of the meetings, and to the analysis and reporting of the data. The recording equipment consisted of a micro cassette recorder, which was placed unobtrusively on the meeting table. The quality of the data was somewhat affected by the simplicity of this collection device, as there were sometimes up to ten or twelve people at a meeting and some were seated at a distance from the microphone. This distance, and the seemingly inevitable side-talk in such gatherings of teachers sometimes resulted in poor quality sound, inaudible talk, difficulty in identifying speakers, and much over-lapping talk. These shortcomings in the data created additional challenges in its subsequent transcription and analysis. The use of video recording to complement the audio data may have ameliorated some of these shortcomings, but it was felt that such intrusiveness would outweigh any possible benefits.

The data were analysed through transcription processes relying on the conventions described by Psathas (1995) and provided in Appendix 1. After careful listening to the tape recordings, passages were selected for transcription on the basis of their contribution to understanding the development of relationships between participants. Given that there were eight recorded meetings altogether, the total corpus of data allowed for selective transcription to occur. The audio recording of the meeting that is the focus of this paper was transcribed in its entirety. The meeting lasted approximately forty minutes, but only two brief extracts are reproduced and discussed here.

An important feature of this treatment of the data is that the act of transcribing talk in this manner is itself analytical. The recording itself constitutes the data, and the transcription is a representation of it – the researcher’s account of the features of the talk. The researcher constantly makes judgements about the talk, the participants, the pauses between talk, the interaction between turns at talk, and how participants obtain and give permission to speak. There is therefore no suggestion of neutrality in the analysis of the data, since from the very beginning of transcribing the researcher makes choices, which both result from and contribute to his or her theorising about the work being accomplished by the talk-in-interaction (Baker, 1998; Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997).

Both membership category analysis (MCA) (Hester & Eglin, 1997; Lepper, 2000) and conversation analysis (CA) (Sacks, 1995) are used as the methodological approach. A broad definition of membership categories assembles descriptions of place or of activities, as well as of person (Baker, 2000, p.101). However, in this paper the emphasis is on membership of categories as persons. Membership categories are defined as “classifications or social types that may be used to describe persons” (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p.3). Thus we can consider any given person as a member of a number of categories, but generally use the economy rule (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p.4) to limit the description to one category in a particular instance. In this paper, the commonly used categories of academics and teachers are identified.

Further categories are also oriented to by the participants. In analysis of the meeting talk, the aim is to identify the categories that the participants constructed for themselves and for one another. One way that they do this is that they name the categories (Vallis, 2001). The transcripts show that the participants name the category ‘partnerships’ in their meeting talk. This is the category to which they are hearably oriented as it is the agenda for the meeting. As part of this naming, there is reference to the types of activities (also known as predicates) that implicate the named category, so that reference is made to needing “some advice” and working “together” and so on. However, there is another category to which the participants orient. This category is unnamed, but the participants orient to the category of ‘expert’ and

participants engage in a number of activities that are associated with this category. Such activities include the participants' use of extended turns, use of educational jargon and knowledgeable talk on the topic of partnerships. The participants co-construct these categories through their talk and, in so doing, show the category-bounded work. The participants engage in a number of category-bounded activities that relate to two categories as expert: the first extract shows that the participants are orienting to being an expert partner, the second extract shows the participants orienting to being an expert classroom practitioner. Thus the analysis of the meeting talk seeks to identify those instances where participants accomplish what might be seen as the attributes of a person belonging to the category of "expert", notwithstanding any other category (such as teacher, academic, principal) to which they might belong.

The Meeting

An investigation of aspects of meeting talk makes it possible to examine the institutional nature of the interaction. Meetings can be either formal or informal. The meetings conducted by the participants in this partnership work are informal, in terms of a number of features of their structure and processes (Boden, 1994, p.87). Some of the characteristics that define these informal meetings, including the one reported here, include the lack of a fixed membership (though there is a core group of participants); the absence of a formally designated chair (though the activity of chairing is performed by a participants selected through location and status); absence of a formal agenda (though there is an agreed focus for each meeting); and the informal and flexible nature of turn-taking. In other words, there was no designated chair for this meeting, no-one took minutes, and participants could 'take the floor' without invitation by the chair. However, despite this lack of formal protocols, other protocols did exist. For example, in such meetings, it is often the host who begins the meeting. This happens in this meeting too, where it is the principal who initiates the meeting and gets it underway.

All meetings, formal and informal, are "interactionally bounded" - they take place within the boundaries of a beginning, a middle and an end (Boden, 1994). In the episode of talk discussed here, a number of phases (including a beginning and an end) can be identified. These phases help look at the task orientation of the participants at different times throughout the meeting (Heritage, 1997). Each phase identifies a new topic and the ways in which the topics change, providing transition between phases, which are significant in the analysis of order in the meeting. These phases and the topics of the talk are described in Table 1.

Phase	Topic
1	Orientation to the partnership
2	Academics: How can we help you?
3	Academics: How can you help us?
4	Partnership in developing Mathematics teaching
5	Mutual individual benefits: Academic credit
6	The current project in context of existing partnership
7	Resolution of managerial issues; dissolution

Table 1: The phases of the meeting

Within these phases, participants co-construct the work of accomplishing relationship building while controlling and overseeing the work of the meeting. This relationship building is the real work of these meetings, though it occurs within the project of developing teachers'

professional knowledge and expertise. The meeting was held at the school, during recess, with thirteen people attending (see Table 2 for the list of participants).

Participant	Category	Turns
Graeme	Teacher (principal)	111
Chris	Academic (professor)	43
Mary	Academic (dean)	41
Jenny	Academic	41
Judy	Academic (librarian)	36
Meg	Teacher	19
Tess	Teacher	11
Alec	Academic	8
Mandy	Teacher	5
Jim	Academic	4
Anita	Teacher	1
Joan	Teacher	0
Brie	Student teacher (intern)	0

Table 2: Number of turns at talk

While there were a large number of participants at the meeting, the allocation of turns at talking was by no means evenly distributed. Table 2 provides one quantitative measure of the relationship between the talk of different participants. By comparing the number of turns taken during the meeting, it was evident that there was an asymmetrical balance between who spoke and for how long they spoke. The talk was dominated by a small number of participants, notably the principal, who had more than twice as many turns as anyone else, and the dean and two other academic staff. This shows an asymmetric relationship between the number of turns the participants took and their status, with university staff taking more turns than the school teaching staff. What is not evident in this table is the length of each turn, but a examination of the entire transcript shows that the dean (Mary) and school principal (Graeme) characteristically took long turns, each lasting one or more minutes. This relationship between status in the group and amount of talk can be seen to be reflexive, in that the level of participation in the meeting talk both creates and is created by the relative position or category to which the participants orient. Thus, teachers had less to say than academic university staff. One has to ask about what this means for understanding partnership work.

Two extracts are now analysed in detail to show how the participants constructed categories of 'expert' in their meeting talk. Teachers and academics alike accomplished the emergence of expertise as a co-constructed category. This paper shows that the practical tasks of the meeting were concerned with connecting expert status to the business of partnerships. As analysis shows, such orientations shape what can be said in meeting talk, who gets to speak, and the types of relationships that can be constructed.

Extract 1: Being an expert partner

This extract shows how the university librarian, Judy, and the principal, Graeme, demonstrate and accomplish the category of 'expert'. The specific category of expert oriented to here by the participants relates specifically to the attributes and actions of partners. Both orient to, and name, mutual benefits as an activity associated with partnerships. In this instance, they are demonstrating that they know how partnerships work, and in so doing, they claim expertise.

This extract occurs at the transition to Phase 3 of the meeting. In the previous phase, Judy (the university librarian) had attempted several times to gain the floor. Now, Judy takes the floor to outline her agenda for this meeting. She begins by requesting permission to talk about her agenda (turn 059) and following approvals given by Graeme, the principal (turns 60, 62, 68), proceeds to ask permission once again to speak.

059 Judy If (.) if (.) if I (.) do you want me to go on and talk about what I wanted to get out of the day?
 060 Graeme Absolutely, yes
 061 Judy Um and I'll be (.) can I be really frank? About (.) about [this
 062 Graeme [Oh .. OK
 063 Judy <Mary can come and do whatever she likes for you> with her staff (1.0) and (.) and she can get into that
 064 Mary ((Inaud))
 065 Judy <You may never speak to me again after this> (.) and that will meet her (0.5) she will do that within the framework of her budget and with the requirements in terms of what she's required to do to meet her obligations, performance targets
 066 Graeme Mm
 067 Judy The library is sep (.) quite separately funded from the faculty, so if I'm going to do something for you:u (0.5) um I'll need to get something back in return.
 068 Graeme Mm hmm. [That's what partnerships are about.

This particular strategy used by Judy ensures that her entire message, when she delivers it, is to be heard. Suggesting that she will be “really frank” is designed to encourage the other participants to listen for potentially sensitive or risky business. She takes this even further when she suggests to the dean, “You may never speak to me again after this”. This permission-seeking is the behaviour of someone who is not leading the meeting. For instance, neither the principal nor the dean requests permission when they wish to contribute to the meeting talk.

Judy points out that her interests are not directly aligned with those of the Faculty of Education and she is seeking her own collaborative action (turn 67). The principal responds by saying that partnerships are about doing things for each other. In other words, he is orienting to university / school partnerships as places where there is benefit to both parties. Judy, in talking about her needs “to get something back in turn” (turn 67) is demonstrating that she understands how partnerships work. Graeme picks up on this, naming this action as an attribute of partnerships. In this brief exchange, both Judy and Graeme understand and name the activity of being an expert. That is, partners are people who work together to achieve mutual benefit. In this way, both Judy and Graeme are accomplishing the category of being an expert partner through their actions and naming of partnership building and partnership maintenance.

Judy then launches into a long description (turn 069) of how the curriculum collection has grown and has been managed.

068 Graeme Mm hmm. [That's what partnerships are about.
 069 Judy [and (0.5) Precisely. The thing that I need help with, quite desperately and Chris would know this as Chair of the Faculty's Library Advisory Committee is that with ((inaud)) we've been pouring in endless amounts of money into it (0.5) and we think we've improved it a lot (1.0) but we still having selection policies and where they're really gearing up, cos be don't realise what's happening in the schools, and that's really important. Our kids are going out into the schools. Years ago when life was a lot slower and we had more staff, we actually had (.) librarians who were assigned only to the curriculum collection and they joined

teacher networks and all sorts of um and spent time in schools. ((Inaud)) can't do that any more. I've got two librarians who work ((inaud)) have as a very large part of their job looking after the curriculum collection. So it's (0.5) getting advice from a school about what we might buy to put into the collection is really helpful. And I have had some advice through Education Queensland in which we've been using the lists that um they use to set up new school libraries ((inaud)) but (0.5) we need to go into a bit more depth in areas ((inaud)). And the other thing that you mentioned jokingly about, you know, what I've thrown out and what I haven't. This is a real concern to us. We know that that collection is probably the best classroom collection in Australia because a lot of money's been spent on it over a very long period of time. Our concern is that we've got a lot of old material, and a lot of new material, and we don't want the students to be necessarily taking the old materials and working with them. But we need to know which of the old materials are good old materials with historic value and we want to be able to put those into store where they're still on the catalogue and accessible for research purposes. So if you'd come along and say, Those Nuffield things from the 70s were really good, they may not be there on the shelves but they're still accessible.

070 Graeme Mm

This leads to the problem to be addressed by the partnership: these methods previously used by the library are no longer viable because of staff reduction. She describes how the school can support the university library She explicitly outlines her request, that she needs “some advice” (turn 071) regarding what to buy, retain and cull from the collection.

In this extended turn, she provides evidence to show her work as an effective librarian in managing the university library by outlining the activities that they undertake routinely. In a sense, she is showing that her expertise in her work as a university librarian. In the next section, she goes on to display her expert knowledge of partnerships.

070 Graeme Mm
 071 Judy So I need some advice on how we're (0.5) what (.) what (1.0) all I'm not sure is is what needs to be tossed out.
 072 Graeme Mm hmm
 073 Judy What is good and needs to go into store. So, if we could work some things like that=
 074 Graeme I'm sure (0.5) we've certainly got the people who (.) have the knowledge that you need to help you do that=
 075 Judy =Those are the sorts of things that where I'm coming from where if we can work together (0.5) to (0.5) to give you access to materials and whatever expertise we've got. And it may be wider than just access to the collection. We've got we've got someone who's very big on, you know, ((inaud)) we can do some things in that area.

Here, Judy provides evidence of her accomplishment of the category of “expert” in the doing of partnership. She describes activities that are bound to the category of partnership, for instance, she needs “some advice” (071), “if we could work on some things” (073), “work together” (075), and “we could do some things in that area” (075). Each activity can be described as category-bound, as the activities make relevant a particular type of category (Lepper, 2000). In this instance, the membership category made relevant is that of partnerships.

Extract 2: Being an expert classroom practitioner

Teachers are often cast as practitioners, whose expertise lies solely in the management of classrooms, demonstrating knowledge that is functional and technical. In the talk of this extract from the meeting, the participants co-construct the expertise of the teachers not only as technicians but as theorists who, given time and space to do so, can make theoretical linkages within their work and use these to provide themselves with academic status.

This extract occurs in Phase 5 of the meeting, where participants canvas the topic of the individual benefits to be derived from partnership. The key participants in this extract are: Mary (the dean), Graeme (the principal), Mandy (a senior teacher), and Chris (university academic). The talk focuses particularly on the teachers and possible academic credit for their work.

- 151 Mary To get back to the Maths (0.5) the Maths learning that you're interested [in
152 Graeme [Yes
153 Mary um, I know the Learning and Development Foundation in Ed Queensland is quite keen to see localised groups (1.0) um (0.5) up and running around areas of [self-identified need
154 Chris [Mm, and they've got some money.

In turn 155, Mary, the dean, raises the possibility that achieving academic credit might be a goal of the teachers, and that the university might be able to build the collaborative work into a means for teachers to achieve this. This suggestion is welcomed by Mandy (a senior teacher), whose supportive utterance (turn 160) encourages Mary to develop the idea further (turns 162, 164).

- 155 Mary um, and they've got, I think, an interesting concept around doing some of it ah some of it with local facilitators but but using university people as resource people within that (1.0) um (1.5) That's a model we're very interested in (0.5) in flying too (1.0) um, (1.5) and I'm wondering if (.) if the interest in the Maths syllabus development is such that we might work up some way to (0.5) perhaps build that into academic credit. (1.0) Is that an issue for teachers here? Would you like to be getting (1.0) is that one of your goals, to be getting academic credit through that sort of=
156 Mandy =It might be the only way I'll ever get my Masters'.
157 Jenny Mm. Yes.
158 Graeme If there was a small group of a few people who wanted to start working in a project like that for credit towards a say a Masters' degree, that'd be a really they could then provide the leadership for the whole activity in the school, (0.5) work with Chris and his people (1.0) on the program of (0.5) um activity that would lead towards that↑ [in both ways
159 Jenny [Mm
160 Mandy I don't say that frivolously, because (1.0) my aim to (1.0) how I'm working at the moment (0.5) the theory and the practice (0.5) ↑must (.) continuously be merging (1.0) otherwise (1.0) I'll just ((inaud)). But, ah, looking at the outcomes the problem solving areas, I want to work on that, but I must see that the outcomes are being met, I must know that I am tracking the kids as well. My whole lot must be with them. So (0.5) I'd be interested in working with something (0.5) more practical like that, that might at the end get me some (1.0) academic credit.
161 (3.0)
162 Mary You know, if we start adopting problem-based learning, though in terms of our own pedagogy as teacher educators, then it

should be entirely possible for you to be working on a problem of practice in your own classroom

163 Jenny Mm, hmm.

164 Mary but also developing your own learning through that and [getting academic credit.

Graeme confirms his expertise in developing links between academic and school work. He proposes (turn 158) that a group of teachers using this project to provide a ‘laboratory’ for their Masters degree studies could also provide leadership to the school staff in the implementation at the school level. In this, he constructs the categories of partnership expert and also as “gatekeeper” of the partnership project.

Mandy makes explicit in this turn (160) the importance for her of theory being closely linked to and supportive of her practice as a classroom teacher. She reiterates that she might be interested in pursuing academic credit through working with an activity that allows her to “see that the outcomes are being met”; to be “tracking the kids as well”; since for her, “My whole lot must be with them”. She stresses that this “might” get her some academic credit. By listing the aspects of her work as a teacher that have priority for her, she shows that what matters for her is her expertise as a classroom practitioner, and names activities to illustrate these. Her contribution orients to the work of the partnership, allowing the possibility that a subsidiary outcome of being an expert teacher may achieve some academic expertise as well.

Both Mandy and the principal construct the category of expert teacher. Graeme proposes:

158 Graeme If there was a small group of a few people who wanted to start working in a project like that for credit towards a say a Masters' degree, that'd be a really they could then provide the leadership for the whole activity in the school,(0.5) work with Chris and his people (1.0) on the program of (0.5) um activity that would lead towards that↑ [in both ways

By proposing for the “expert group” of teachers the activity of providing leadership to the other teachers in the school, the principal constructs the category of “expert partner plus leader”. Mandy, on the other hand, proposes for herself a different category. Mandy proposes:

160 Mandy I don't say that frivolously, because (1.0) my aim to (1.0) how I'm working at the moment (0.5) the theory and the practice (0.5) ↑must (.) continuously be merging (1.0) otherwise (1.0) I'll just ((inaud)). But, ah, looking at the outcomes the problem solving areas, I want to work on that, but I must see that the outcomes are being met, I must know that I am tracking the kids as well. My whole lot must be with them. So (0.5) I'd be interested in working with something (0.5) more practical like that, that might at the end get me some (1.0) academic credit.

Here, Mandy constructs the category of “expert partner as effective teacher”. In accounting for being an effective teacher, she names the category-bound activity of achieving the desired educational outcomes for her students. She completes her utterance by saying, “So (indicating logical consequence) I’d be interested in working with something more practical like that..” (turn 160). Graeme and Mandy demonstrate what Lepper (2000) would term disjunctive categorisations. The disjunctive categories here are principal/teacher. This particular type of pairing implicates particular understandings of the particular work of principal and teacher. Graeme’s preference is for an account that emphasises leadership, which by implication, suggests that it is the school and the partnership who benefits. One might also suggest that it is the principal also who benefits from such an arrangement. Mandy, on the other hand, has a

preference for advancing her own knowledge and accomplishments so that a partnership becomes an avenue in which to formalise her self-nominated status of expert teacher within an academic program.

These differing constructions of “expert teacher” by Graeme and Mandy have consequences for how partnership is enacted. As shown here, their differing expectations with regard to what counts as appropriate activities for “expert teachers” to engage in differs. This brief extract highlights difficulties associated with partnership work. Operating here is “a hierarchical system of relations ... grounded in the everyday practical activities of individuals contesting and defending disjunctive versions “ (Lepper, 2000, p. 39). Specifically, this shows how participants, through their talk, lodge particular versions of how they understand partnerships, and how they should be enacted. In other words, this situated example reveals not only how participants construct differing versions and activities of partnerships, but also how everyday interaction makes visible such reasoning and knowledge.

Conclusion

These two extracts taken from a meeting of university academics and school teachers show how the participants produce descriptions of themselves as academics, teachers, partners and experts. Focusing on some talk taken from one meeting between academics and teachers, this paper shows what one partnership looked like in an everyday and mundane setting. This paper seeks not to describe an ideal partnership but rather show how the participants enacted their everyday business through the meetings. What became evident here is how certain participants in the meeting, specifically the principal and academic staff, oriented to the categories of “being a partner” and “being an expert”. Of the teachers present at this meeting, it is only Mandy who has something to say publicly. Her entire five turns of talk are shown in Extract 2. There is almost no talk by the teachers at this partnership meeting and examination of other meetings shows a similar pattern. This raises questions about who gets to talk, and when, and on what topic. In this instance, the topic of Mandy’s talk centred around her knowledge and enactment of being an expert teacher. It is at this moment that we see a disjunction between the principal’s and the teacher’s categorisation of what it means to be an expert teacher.

By attending to how the participants of the meeting account for their practices, we are able to see how certain participants talked themselves into being professionally expert in the social worlds of education and also of partnerships. Each participant does not claim to be an expert in the same way. For example, being an expert teacher might mean “being an effective teacher” (as in Mandy’s case) or being an expert teacher might mean “being a teacher leader” (as in Graeme’s case). This shows that ‘partnerships’ is not a term that has predefined meanings but rather one that is enacted locally and is always in flux, changing as contestations and agreements happen through the talk. This is a situated achievement, accomplished through specific resources of language: long segments of interrupted talk, use of specific technical or educational terms/jargon, and the naming of category-bound activities that belong to the membership category of partnerships. Made visible were the social and moral choices made by the participants as they allocated particular category identifications of what it meant to be a partner, a teacher, and an expert. This work does not propose how to do partnerships better, but it does make visible the complexities and delicate interactional work of managing partnerships. This study is one of the few that actually investigate the local accomplishment of partnership, showing how the participants construct, for themselves and each other, the work of partnership.

Appendix 1: Transcript notation

Data are transcribed using a system created by Gail Jefferson (Psathas, 1995). The following are the features used in these transcripts.

- () word(s) spoken but not audible
- (was) best guess for word(s) spoken
- (()) transcriber's description
- but emphasis
- BUT** greater emphasis
- [no* the point at which an overlap occurs
- [[no* the point at which multiple overlaps occur
- = no interval between turns
- not↑ rising inflection
- °up° talk that has a noticeably lower volume than the surrounding talk
- do:on't sound extended
- (h) in-breath as in laughter, crying
- (2.0) pause timed in seconds

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