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Liberating the learning; tackling the complexities of mentoring through our ‘sayings, doings and relatings’

Rachel Lofthouse

r.m.lofthouse@leedsbeckett.ac.uk @DrRLofthouse
@CollectivED1

Individual reflection

- Think about how you mentor (be honest)

- Write no more than 3 words per question

1. How do you organise your mentoring?
2. What do you talk about with your mentee?
3. How do you feel when you are mentoring?

Shared observation

- For each of the next 3 images ….
  - Have a quick discussion in small groups and note down what words or phrases describe the nature of each situation and interaction.

1

2

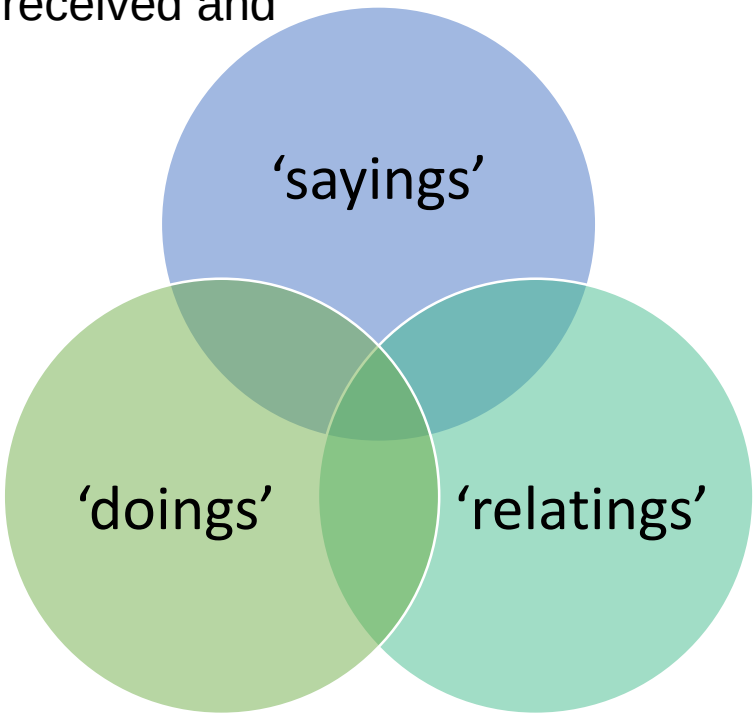
3

Compare and contrast

- Take your list of ‘mentoring’ words and your notes on the photos.
  - Discuss what the overlaps and differences are, use the model on the next slide as a guide.

Theory of Practice Architecture
Stephen Kemmis

SEMANTIC ‘SPACE’
What is said, nature of the language, its meaning, intention and comprehensibility, its formality or informality, how it is received and responded to



PHYSICAL / TEMPORAL ‘SPACE’
What activities occur, productiveness of actions, how the space is configured and set up, how resources are deployed, how individuals undertake their activities

SOCIAL ‘SPACE’
How individuals connect and relate to one another, what roles they take, formal and informal relationships, the significance of power, trust and solidarity, how individuals feel in the social space

Widening our perspective

- Take a look at the 10 quotes from focus groups on mentoring.
  - Discuss what these reveal about some of the aspects of ‘sayings, doings and relatings’ of mentoring practices.

Quotes from focus groups, questionnaires, interviews and assignments: PGCE Students, Professional Tutors, Mentors

1. My weekly hour mentor meetings have proved invaluable in terms of my progression. The dialogue has bought on my confidence and allowed my mentor to talk of her past experiences which I can relate to.

2. As a mentor I would want to feel that both myself and the student have worked together in order to produce the best teaching experience for the student.

3. It can be the most brilliant responsibility to have being a mentor when things are going well, but it can be very emotionally draining when people aren't making any progress, when you're making suggestions and nobody's taking any notice and you're having to have some quite difficult and sensitive conversations

4. I think it's quite nice for ITT students to work with people who aren't much older than them who have a real empathy for their situation and for where they are and can remember what it felt like.

5. Mentors ask a lot of questions to provoke you to think, so if they don't agree with something they'll ask a question and provoke you to think about it and then you sort of come to their idea.

6. If you're going to do anything properly then you're going to have to have the time to do it, as having the right people

7. The mentor is judging you and you're getting disheartened about things you've done, they're not requirements of an actual PGCE student, they're requirements of a [school name] teacher and their policies and procedures.

8. I would say that I've obviously had my subject mentor and we've had the meetings every week and in certain situations we didn't always see eye-to-eye but I think it was more of a personality thing than a professional thing, so sometimes it was kind of difficult for me to go to them.

9. In my own experience when correctly matched the student teacher finds it easier to voice concerns and problems therefore creating open, substantive discussion rather than closed conversation.

10. The attitude of students can be difficult, if they are set in their ways and not willing to take advice or reflect upon their teaching it can make mentoring difficult.

Workplace Vulnerabilities of mentoring

- Duality of school placement – invitation to learn & learner engagement.
- Education policy and culture context affects learning & workplace processes – there is a trend towards judgementoring with QTS as the dominant discourse.
- Mentors act as mediators / gatekeepers - performativity can limit learning.
- Variations exist in mentoring.
- With more school-based training there may be dependency of trainees on school community, less access to peer group or outside support.

Think ahead

- Thinking about your own practice as a mentor
- What might you be able to develop further or do differently in order to liberate the learning of your future ITE student?
- Would deliberately altering the sayings, doings or relatings offer leverage for change?

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