

# The formation of teacherly character: mentoring relationships

Ruth Heilbronn,

UCL Institute of Education.  
University College London



Identitat docent i formació del caràcter als graus de mestre/a - Barcelona  
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# FORMATION AND CHARACTER

## TALK THEMES

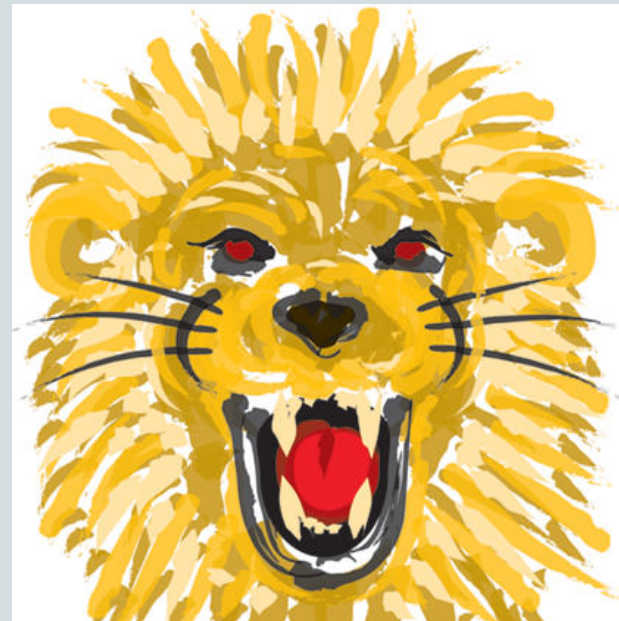
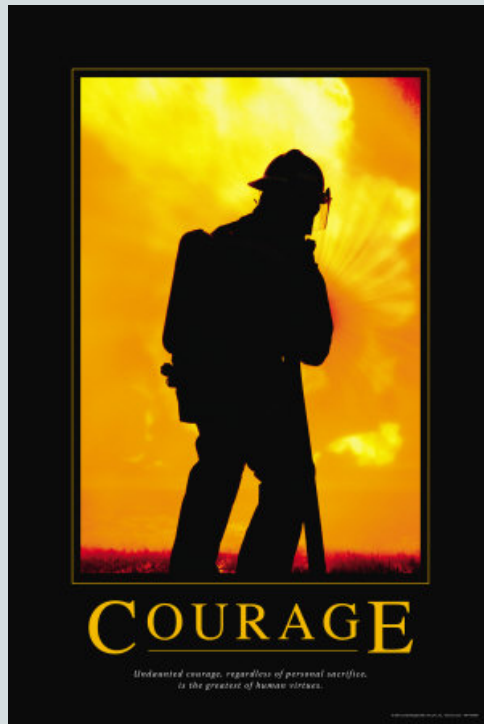
- **Character – taught or caught?**
- **Dispositions and abilities – to act and interact**
- **The social**
- **The virtues**
- **Teacherly virtues... What children say....** Beishuizen et al 2001, Kutnick & Jules 1993).

# QUALITIES AND DISPOSITIONS

Fostering the virtues

What to do when?

E.g. courageous or foolhardy?



**Judgement**

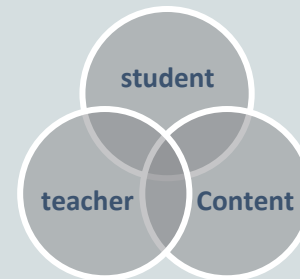


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- **Children have said good teachers ...**

- treat them well,  
respect them, care  
about whether they  
learn, like them .....

- **Complexity: multi-dimensional interactions in the classroom**

- **Teaching is a triadic relationship**



- **Knowledge – theoretical and practical.**

# TEACHING AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE

Training in specific skills. (DfE – ITT)

Education - e.g. In learning about special needs, or the law, or psychology of children's development for example (ITE). (Smith, 1992; Carr, 2003; Moore, 2004).

Formation - the development of the self. The person who has to stand in her own shoes and BE a teacher (Higgins 2010, Cook & Carr 2014).

*'Exposure' of being* (P. Standish; D. Aldrich)



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Induction into the practice by others

# MENTORING MODELS

(MAYNARD & FURLONG 1995)

1. APPRENTICESHIP - teacher apprentices work alongside and 'emulate' the behaviour of expert teachers (current in England a century ago) – transmission, rote learning.
2. CRITERION BASED – competencies/standards. Descriptors of good practice as the basis of training and assessment. ( Large literature) Can be used reductively, technically, or as basis for talking about practice.
3. REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

School-based mentoring is largely a result of the rise of school-based training ,  
(e.g. Calderhead, 1991; Earley & Kinder, 1994; DfES, 2002).



Collegiate environments and professional development

(e.g. Hennison et al. 2011, Butler & Cuenca 2012)

# GOOD MENTORS:

Engage in a 'disinterested' dialogue.

Do not hand down judgements.

Talk 'democratically' about examples of shared practice.

Help the mentee to understand her teaching : develop her knowledge and understanding.

Guide the acquisition of a 'language' with which to think about the the practice – developing a 'language of practice'.

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The ways in which this process works is in some sense continuous with the ways in which children learn the language of their communities and in the process develop as 'social selves'.

# A MENTOR'S UNDERSTANDING

**could be described as:**

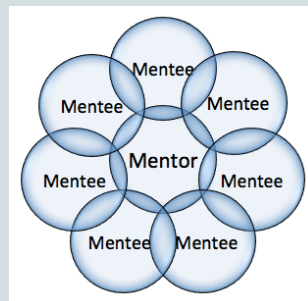
A sense of relative values or perspective: a sort of scale by which we can appreciate the relative worth and significance of things ... for when we come to practical life it is not merely knowing that two and two make four which counts, it is putting together this two with that other two; in other words, the ability to size things up at their right value. (Dewey, 1990, p. 337)

**The mentoring dialogue develops a shared understanding about the meanings of that practice, through a collaborative exchange.**

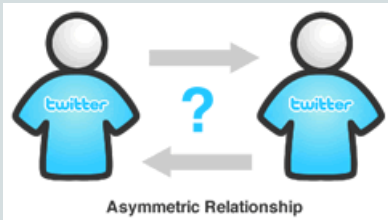


# STRUCTURE OF TALK

1. Mentoring as relationship;
2. Coming to understand 'meanings' in practice;
3. Coming to articulate practice;
4. Developing independent character.



# 1. MENTORING RELATIONSHIP DIALOGICAL



Relationship Status:  
it's complicated

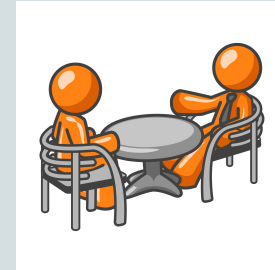
## 2. COMING TO UNDERSTAND MEANING OF PRACTICE – *THROUGH CO-CONSTRUCTION*

‘learning conversation’ is

‘a form of dialogue about a learning experience in which the learner reflects on some event or activity in the past. Ultimately, it is intended that people will internalise such conversations so that they are able to review learning experiences systematically for themselves, but at the beginning, the learning conversation is carried out with the assistance of a teacher or tutor ... it is a dialogue on the process of learning; the learner reflects on his or her learning with the assistance of a teacher or tutor’.

(Boud et al., 1985, p. 92)

# STAGES IN A LEARNING CONVERSATION



First there is the intervention point, the ‘mirroring’ or feedback which needs to be specific, behavioural and non-interpretative. Then the trainer has to deal with the emotional context of the learning, building up a supportive relationship ... Finally, the teacher or trainer helps the learner to articulate the new dimensions of quality. The learner needs to identify referents with which he or she can identify – significant others, peers or professional groups; (Boud et al., 1985, p. 92)

# RULES, MAXIMS, STANDARDS.

## A process of abstraction

**‘through which, by means of representations of concrete reality, we seek knowledge of that reality. The instrument for this abstraction in our methodology is codification, or representation of the existential situations of the learners’ (Freire, 1972, p. 31).**

**‘the context of authentic dialogue between learners and educators as equally knowing subjects’ (ibid., p. 32).**



**Rules, maxims, standards - after the event**



# 3. ARTICULATING A LANGUAGE OF PRACTICE

Important to be able to talk effectively about practice in order to share and develop. (Otherwise 'magic' – apprenticeship)



Not fully achievable though because:

1. Complexity in experiencing in the moment. Full recollection not possible.
2. Emotional affect on memory makes memory unreliable
3. Moral constraints on complete articulation - . 'the tact' of teaching (van Manen, 1991).

# GOOD MENTORS & A STANDARD PROTOCOL

Applying rules ? judgement.

What to do about and say to the excellent teacher who by-passes the rules, doesn't do the right thing, yet gets the results?

Mentor A – stickler for the rules. Mentor B – tolerant.

Teacherly character of Mentor B

- Has the dialogical virtues; wisdom, judgement
- Is a comfortable 'risk taker' in her own teaching;
- Able to take constructive criticism

**BUT A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR SUCCESS IS THE FAVOURABLE SCHOOL CULTURE.**

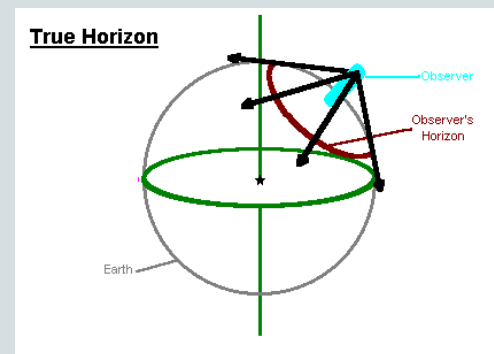


# 4. FORMATION OF INDEPENDENT CHARACTER

Divergent views - Learning conversation akin to:

**‘the fusion of horizons that takes place in understanding’  
(Gadamer, 1975, p. 273).**

- **Not purely subjective – the told experience imposes limits  
(the text imposes limits)**
- **There are rational means for establishing common viewpoints (e.g. dialogue, appeal to evidence)**
- **No definitive view of ‘good’ practice.**

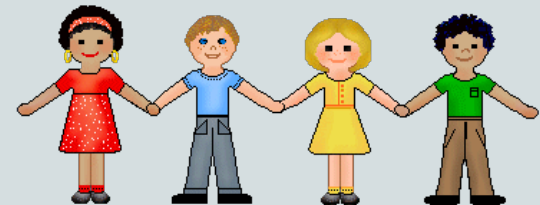




# FORMATION OF TEACHERLY CHARACTER

Virtuous behaviour,  
Reflective practice,  
Independence of thought

## PRACTICAL JUDGEMENT





SUPPORTING  
EMPOWERING  
ENGAGING  
TEACHING  
CHANGING  
REFLECTING  
ASSESSING  
NURTURING

seriously  
really too very  
just crazy  
busy

FOR REFERENCES – SEE HANDOUT