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6. THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE IN MENTORING CONVERSATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with the role of knowledge in mentoring interactions. It reports on analyses of mentoring conversations on topics of teaching practice, and the purpose is to understand how the knowledge of both mentors and mentees come into play in learning interactions.

Conversation Analysis studies have contributed much to our understanding of the role of knowledge in social and institutional interactions (see Edwards, 1997, 2006; Heritage, 2005; Maynard, 2006; Koole, 2012). Various studies have shown for example how asymmetry in knowledge shapes interaction and sequence organisation (Heritage, 2012), how knowledge authority is established conversationally Heritage and Raymond (2005), and how people orientate themselves to asymmetries in knowledge in a conversation (Enfield, 2011). Similarly, in learning conversations, i.e. conversations set up for purposes of learning, such as in mentoring, knowledge participants draw on their knowledge when they interact.

Various factors determine the role of knowledge in mentoring for learning. As in other learning interactions, these include diversity in participants' language and socio-cultural background (Goodwin, 2007), and the "epistemic positions" taken by participants through their embodied action and language (Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig 2011: 8). The latter implies that both mentors and mentees participate in an interaction drawing on what they know, and on the conversational norms they are familiar with (see Sidnell & Enfield (2012). In mentoring interactions, similar to other learning interactions, diversity and ethnographic detail influence the differences in and use of knowledge (Rintel, Reynolds, & Fitzgerald 2013: 3).

The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to the understanding of the interactional nature of knowledge, by exploring how participants in mentoring use knowledge to orientate what they say and do in the interaction (i.e. 'epistemic primacy') for purposes of learning. Following the studies by Heritage (2012, 2013), the chapter explores how students exercise their relative rights to tell, inform, assert or assess something, given the asymmetries in their knowledge. Epistemic primacy is about the depth, specificity, or completeness of knowledge (Stivers et al., 2011:13; Heritage, 2013) and is at the heart of mentoring interactions where knowledge building is the purpose (Tillema & van der Westhuizen, 2014, this volume).

This chapter reports on video-analyses of interactions between a diversity of participants (two professors and their student teachers from different language and cultural backgrounds) on topics of teaching practice. It draws on analytic principles from Conversation Analysis research to study the use of knowledge in episodes of learning interactions, on the levels of utterances and sequences of utterances. Learning is observed in terms of assessments and 'claims of change of state' ranging from extreme/explicit to denying a change of state and neutral assessments of distancing self from a position taken (Paulus & Lester, 2013; see also Koschmann 2013).

In this exploratory study, evidence indicates how mentors and mentees orientate themselves differently in terms of questions and response preferences, the incongruence in the stances they take in relation to the topic of the mentoring session, and how mentees/students avoid accounts of insufficient knowledge. Students seem avoid assessing mentor utterances openly. Tentative interpretations are offered of how conversational norms are evident in what Heritage and Raymond (2005) and Heritage (2013) described as claims of access and the indexing of independent opinion. Findings are discussed in terms of both institutional and pedagogical norms at play in epistemic primacy and what Heritage (2010, 2012) calls the management of knowledge congruence.

PROBLEM ISSUE AND ITS RELEVANCY

It is characteristic of mentoring interactions that they display institutional norms of practice: the mentor is the knower, and the mentee the learner. Such norms shape social interactions and conversations to be typical of the institution (Drew & Heritage, 2006; Heritage & Sefi, 1992). For example, mentoring interactions in a teacher education programme would involve talking appropriate to the setting, with the mentor teaching and mediating the understanding and knowledge development need of the mentee (Orland-Barak, 2010). In such institutional interactions, knowledge is used in ways that are congruent with the purpose and institutional form of the conversation, often 'scripted' (Edwards, 2006). One would however, expect mentoring interactions to be dialogical, interactive, and, in Vygotskian terms, involving the development and mediation of semiotic tools of understanding and learning (Kozulin, 2003). In addition, mentoring interactions are also shaped by the nature of the relations among participants: it is assumed that a certain openness, distance/familiarity, ascribed authority co-determine learning (Tillema & van der Westhuizen, 2013), and that a certain quality of conversation is required (Tillema & Orland Barak, 2006).

Studies of everyday talk have gone a long way to help us understand the role of knowledge in social interaction. Conversation Analysis research is clarifying the role of knowledge in everyday interactions, as has been shown by the milestone studies of Sacks (1992), and others. Such interactional perspectives refer to 'epistemics in interaction', and assume that knowledge is socially shared and distributed in

epistemic communities (Heritage, 2013). This perspective distinguishes between epistemic *stance* and *status*. According to Heritage (2013), in everyday talk, participants have their own 'territories of knowledge' which can be depicted in terms of an 'epistemic gradient': ranging from the more knowledgeable "K+" to the less knowledgeable "K-", in terms of which status is presumed (see Heritage 2010, 2012; Heritage, 2013:376).

Research into the role of knowledge in mentoring is key to the challenges of improving professional learning. In the mentoring of teachers for example, knowledge about teaching is one of the main objects of mentoring. This would include knowledge of pedagogy and of practice. In teacher education research, professional conversations have been the focus of recent studies attempting to understand the discursive nature of professional preparation (Tillema, Van der Westhuizen & Van der Merwe, this volume), guided by studies in sociology and discursive psychology on the nature of everyday social interaction (see summaries by Koole (2013) and Edwards and Potter (2005). This study follows the strand of research on the epistemics of social interaction, which include the prominent studies by Heritage, 1990; Drew, 1991; Maynard, 2006; Edwards, 1996 and others.

Keogh (2010) reviewed studies on the "the interactional achievement" of mentoring, with reference to landmark studies by Orland Barak and Klein (2005) who showed how mentoring relationships work, and how they are "conversationally co-constructed". This implies that the relationship element is crucial for the effectiveness of mentoring, as has been emphasised by Korver and Tillema (2014) (this volume) who showed how levels of familiarity impacts actual mentoring conversations. Power elements of such relations however, are not to be underestimated (Keogh, 2010).

The focus of this inquiry is on the primacy of knowledge, i.e. the relative right of participants to know and to share what they know. The Afrikaans for primacy is 'vooropstelling', which, in the context of social interactions and conversations, is about how participants put their knowledge 'up front', make it primary for the conversation at hand. This *making your own knowledge primary* in a social interaction is also about the social/cultural norms of leading/dominating the conversation. In terms of the definitions offered by Stivers et al. (2011), primacy is about how participants orient themselves to asymmetries, i.e. the differences in knowing, and how they exercise their relative rights to know and to talk/tell their views about state of affairs (Stivers et al., 2011:13).

In mentoring, epistemic primacy would involve the mentor and mentee displaying what they know, and using conversational opportunities to share/ claim what they know. In mentoring, the authority to know is with the mentor, with the mentee the learners, with less authority, perhaps just in terms of practical experience. The question in this study is how epistemic primacy plays out in mentoring settings – if the mentor explains something, does that mean he is accurate in assuming that the mentee does not know? And alternatively, if a mentor requests information, e.g. by asking a question, it does not necessarily mean that the mentee has an answer. This

is where learning need comes into play, and where mentor takes up the teaching/mediating responsibility.

In mentoring, in institutional context, both participants share the responsibility for knowing what they know, and for taking into account how recipients will recognise what they say (Stivers et al., 2011:18, 19). This means that they would use turns to account for what they know and in doing so, adhering to the social norms of interaction and making morally accountable choices with informational and relational consequences (following the arguments by Stivers et al., (2011:19) in this regard).

From this outline it should be clear that knowledge plays an important part in mentoring. It is used *in-action*, and *as-action* (Rintel et al., 2013). The analysis of epistemic primacy would help clarify the dynamics in the micro-context of turn organisation in mentoring. Such an analysis will help clarify the stance taken by participants, and the rights participants have and how they exercise, claim and index their rights, relative to the status and stance of the other, and given the content topic of the interaction. In this analysis, primacy of knowledge would need to be related to interactional learning, defined as displays of regularities/change over time (Koschmann, 2011; Koschmann, 2013).

Epistemics and the Interactional Nature of Knowledge in Mentoring

Mentoring, as social interaction, is characterised by conversational practices and norms (Tillema & Van der Westhuizen, this volume). Herbert Clark (1996) described conversation as joint activity, cumulative and incremental – when people participate in a conversation, they bring with them knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions which they use to find "common ground" (Stalnaker 1978:39, quoted by Clark 1996). This means participants use their knowledge in a responsible way for the purpose of the conversation and for the moral obligations they have in interaction with one another (Stivers et al., 2011).

Interactional perspectives on epistemics in conversations assume that knowledge is socially shared and distributed, and that people form 'epistemic communities' based on what they share (Heritage, 2013). In everyday talk, epistemic status is about the presumed knowledge of the participant as well as the rights to possess it (Raymond & Heritage, 2006). It embraces what is known, how it is known and a person's rights, responsibilities and obligations to know (Drew, 1991); Stivers et al., 2011 quoted by Heritage, 2013:377). The primacy of *status* in an interaction features in for example requests for information and is a fundamental element in the construction of social action, more important than the form, i.e. the language in which a question is asked (Heritage, 2012). In contrast, epistemic *stance* is more of a moment by moment expression of knowledge relationships in the context of an interaction (Heritage, 2013:377). This distinction between 'stance' and 'status' would be useful for this study since they help clarify how knowledge is used "in action".

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The interactional perspective on the role of knowledge in mentoring requires a conceptualisation of asymmetric relation between the mentor and mentee, and the stances being taken by participants congruent with the institutional purpose of mentor interactions. Mentoring practices are, however shaped by at least two other sets of conditions. The one is the assigned roles and the institutional norms of mentors and mentees. The other is the task context, and the learning purpose which participants adjust their participation to. The latter is about the task structure, i.e. what the mentoring is about. This means that interactional learning works on a macro-episodic level (i.e. bigger sections of the interaction), and the micro of specific sequences (Appel, 2010). Learning from participation is vested the academic task structure, i.e. the content that has to be learned (Erickson, 1996; Appel, 2010; see Van der Westhuizen, 2011). Participation depends on the "cognitive state" of participants used as resource when and where they are interactionally relevant (Mercer, 2004: 171).

The interactional perspective on the role of knowledge in professional mentoring encourages a refined view of learning, as displayed during the interaction, and as outcome. Tillema and van der Westhuizen (this volume) noted that indicators of learning in mentoring would include a new/better/improved understanding, change in perspective, or willingness to try something new. From an interactional perspective, participants take responsibility for what they know, and use the knowledge they have to advance towards what is called 'epistemic congruence', i.e. when the status of a speaker is compatible with the epistemic stance taken (Heritage, 2013: 379; see Stivers et al., 2011).

Learning in interactions is also displayed in terms of a change of 'state' i.e. the position taken by a participant indicating a change in view (Paulus & Lester, 2013). have described evidence of an 'extreme change of state' where a participant makes announcements such as "I was amazed", and: "I can't believe". Other displays of learning include a more neutral assessments of news received as informative, interesting, helpful or enjoyable, or denying a change of state where a participant may claim that not much was learned, and aligning claims with personal experience (Paulus & Lester, 2013).

In conceptualising learning from an interactional perspective, the distinction between understanding and learning is useful. Central to conversations is "the orderly unfolding of sequences of actions in time" (Mondada, 2011:542). This unfolding can happen because of the possibility of understanding – which is "a collective achievement, publicly displayed and interactively oriented" (Mondada, 2011:542). Understanding is situated, contingent, embodied and intersubjective (Mondada, 2011:542). It is "not treated as a mental process but is related to the next action achieved by the co-participant and demonstrating her understanding (Mondada, 2011:543). The original studies by Sacks (1992) has clarified how speakers "do understanding" embedded in next turns in a sequence of interaction, and is as Schegloff (1992) put it, a by-product of conversational actions such as agreeing, answering, assessing, responding. Understanding is "a collective

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achievement, publicly displayed and interactively oriented to within the production and the monitoring of action" (quoted by Mondada, 2011:550).

In summary, depicting the interactional nature of knowledge seems to involve a distinction between epistemic access, primacy and responsibility (Stivers et al., 2011). Epistemic *responsibility* is played out conversationally through social actions such as claiming, accounting, questioning (Sidnell & Stivers, 2012). Epistemic *primacy*, is about how participants claim their right to knowledge and how the congruency/lack of congruency in epistemic stance of participants is managed (Raymond & Heritage, 2006); see also Heritage, 2012, 2013). Epistemic *authority* is claimed when participants assess the 'state of affairs' in the conversation and index their independent opinion in different ways (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). A claim of epistemic primacy inherently suggests asymmetrical, differentiated epistemic stances between interactants (Hayono, 2010:31). In this regard, social norms of alignment and affiliation influence understanding in conversations: interactants "show themselves to be accountable for what they know, their level of certainty, their relative authority, and the degree to which they exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities" (Stivers et al., 2011:9).

THIS INQUIRY

We explore actions of epistemic primacy in mentoring by means of an analysis of interactions between University lecturers and student teachers in their final year. The guiding question was how epistemic primacy is interactionally achieved by both mentors and mentees, and made consequential for student mentee learning.

Epistemic primacy, for the purpose of this study, has been defined as the orientation of participants to the asymmetries in their rights to know; their knowledge authority and claims; and the asymmetries in depth and completeness of knowledge. From this definition analytic principles were derived and used, as described below, to analyze selections of interactions.

The study involved two mentors interacting each with one student teacher in their final year of study. The mentors were both teacher educators with at least 20 years of experience. The mentor-mentee pairs were diverse in respect of language, culture, school subject domain, and how well they knew one another.

The mentors participated in planning sessions where the purpose of this inquiry was confirmed as a project of practice research aimed at understanding mentoring conversations, how they are conducted, and how they benefit student learning of practices. Mentors recruited students before they went to schools for six weeks on school experience/teaching practice. Recruitment included the request that students would write a reflection report on school experience, to be submitted to the Mentor. The Mentors then arranged for a mentoring session after they have studied the reflection reports and noted the issues they wanted to focus on during the mentoring session. The actual mentoring sessions were around 30 to 45 minutes in duration, video-taped and transcribed.

Table 1. Selection of learning episodes per Mentor – Mentee pair

Topic	Mentor/Mentee dyad	Frequency of contact/ interaction between mentor and mentee	Duration
Note taking in a high school classroom	Dyad 1: Mentor: Lecturer L, male, Afrikaans home language and Student S, female, Sotho home language	Infrequent	Lines 20–60
Classroom discipline	Dyad 1: Lecturer L, male, Afrikaans home language Student S, female, Sotho home language	Infrequent	Lines 150–200
Teacher reflections on practice	Dyad 2: Lecturer J, male, Afrikaans home language Student G, female, Afrikaans home language	Frequent	Lines 69–86

Reflection reports by the students varied and covered topics of teaching methods, discipline, student learning, and interactions with teachers in the school. Four episodes were purposefully selected from two of the mentoring interactions. They were examples of interactions focused on one specific topic, involved extended participation, and included a closure of learning attained – see Table 1.

Data was analysed in terms of Conversation Analysis principles, derived from studies on epistemics in interaction, including Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) on turn organization, Schegloff (2007) on sequence organisation, Heritage (2012) and Heritage and Raymond (2005) on epistemic stance and authority, Drew (2012) on sequencing and repair, Edwards (1996, 2006) and Edwards and Potter (2005, 2012), and (Mondada, 2011) on intersubjectivity and shared knowledge, and Koole (2010) on displays of understanding and knowledge in interaction (see Van der Westhuizen 2012).

The focus on epistemic primacy required analyses of utterances and sequence organisation in the selection of learning episodes. We noted specifically

a. the approach of participants in terms of their epistemic status, and how they positioned themselves relative to the other as knowledgeable/less knowledgeable;
b. the *stances* taken by mentor/mentee, i.e. their moment by moment actions as expression of knowledge and how they allowed for the asserting, claiming of, and accounting for knowledge (Heritage, 2012), and
c. *primacy* actions of

+ *orienting* themselves to difference/asymmetry in knowledge, e.g. supporting vs downgrading knowledge claims;

+ *assessing* knowledge (own and another's)
+ *claiming* the right to know and to say and *asserting* their own;

d. *Learning* – following Paulus and Lester (2013): learning as assessing utterances; claiming change of state by accepting, denying, or staying neutral by distancing self from utterances made by the mentor.

FINDINGS

1. Epistemic Primacy in an Episode of Learning on Note Taking

In this learning episode the Mentor L (Afrikaans first language speaker, with more than 30 years of experience in teacher education) interacts with S, (a Sotho speaking female student teacher in her final year or professional preparation) on the topic of note taking in a high school class (Dyad 1). The Student talks about her observation during school experience where the teacher wrote extensive notes on the board on the lesson topic, and required of learners to copy.

The episode of interaction took around 49 turns, and eight sequences were observed, mostly question answer sequences on what the student observed in lines 20–39, the problem the student sees with note taking in lines 35–57, an explanation of the assessment of the problem 58–73, solutions offered 74–87, extended solutions 88–102; the skills involved in note taking 103–113 and a conclusion/closing in lines 114–121.

The sequence organisation and progression seem to reflect the roles and epistemic status of participants. The mentor's status is confirmed by utterances of questioning such as in lines 33, 46, 103, and requesting and probing clarity in for example lines 56 and 74. These utterances communicate status of the mentor as teacher educator. The status of the student is confirmed by for example accounting for observations and offering such accounts for the mentor to consider, such as in the turns starting with lines 66, and 95.

In this extract the Mentor L, after introductions, starts with an announcement in line 20/21 of one of the points made by the student in her reflection notes. The role of Mentor is acted out by this announcement of what the first part of the conversation should be about line 21. S is invited by L in line 33 to assess her observations in one teacher's class during school experience, taking stance that the observed practice is problematic. This happens after S informed L of her observations, encouraged/confirmed by L in turns lines 56 and 66. S gives an extension of her observations of children copying notes from the board in the teacher's class in lines 35 to 39. The utterance by L in 40 seems to be an assessment in the form of a reflective summary of what S said in the previous turn, and is followed by the affirming 'Yes' in 41, the assessment by S in 43 that the teacher could have been more interactive, and the extended account of what she meant in 48 onwards.

Table 2. Learning episode on note taking, Dyad 1

20 21	L	You're talking about (.) your expectations:: befo::re but then also finding children ahm (.) ah (.) making notes all the <u>time</u>?

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		Ye::s ((nodding)) ahm I think just writing all the time because it wasn't an actual ((gesture both hands)) handout (.) >if you get me< especially in LO all they ha::ve is what they're ((right hand gesture)) given (.) if you get me (.)=
		                         [Ja::]
		=for tasks
		    [Ja::]
		=and all their work they wrote out.
		                      [Ja::]
		There're no worksheets for them. So they spent many hours writing.

33 34	L	[So what was the:: (.) issue for you <u>there</u>? (1.0)
35 36 37 38 39	S	I think in a sense maybe expecting ((right hand gesture)) the teacher as <u>well</u> to interact with the children ↑more and to speak to them because literally (.) the children would come to class and then (.2) "↑Morning, ↑afternoon class. Okay:: your work is on the board↓. Just write it out.↓" ((right hand waving gesture))
40 41 42	L S L	So they would sit and copy all the time. [Yes Okay.
43 44 45	S	[Sit and copy so that's why that ((right hand open palm gesture)) troubled me:: feeling that maybe she needed to interact with them more so °ja°
46 47	L	So what would be ↑bet↓ter than just sit and eh eh (.) and copy notes from the bo::ard?
48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55	S	(0.4) I feel that maybe even if she <u>did</u> ((right hand gesture)) write all those notes↑ (.) maybe:: be more interactive with the:m and ((gestures)) trying to teach the:m what's going on because even when she did stand up it was "Oh this is what's on the boa::rd↓ ((right hand pointed gesture)) okay" you know feeling that she should interact ((both hands swirling gestures)) with them more >trying to get them< invo::lved. You know it's more like a free period it's more like a free (0.2) period in cla:ss
56	L	So it's not hard work to sit nn <u>copy</u> <u>notes</u>=
57	S	=No not at all

Table 2. (*Continued*)

58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65	L	Jah::: Its als it's also so ah ahm:: maybe establishing some kind ((left hand gesture)) of ah >relationship< where you don't have to <u>work</u> hard, you can just come here and make <u>notes</u> ((left hand through hair)) uhm and I think you're ↑right (.) the ah (.) the alternative is >to be much more interactive< and ahm to let the learning happen in the ((left hand gesture)) interaction. (.) And then where would the ah note taking fit such interactions? Ahm would you <u>say</u>?
66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73	S	I think (0.2) maybe firstly explaining what ((gesture both hands)) it is that they're doing. They can't take notes:: (.) coming to cla::ss "This is what we're doing↑ This is what it's about↑." Ahm <u>telling</u> the students >what they're doing<. <u>Then</u> ↑<u>they</u> can write their notes ((gesture both hands)), because they know what it <u>is</u> and they know what they're ↑<u>doing</u> or alternatively letting them write the notes and the next day (.) ((gestures)) explaining everything to them.
74 75	L	[Ye:s ye:s so you're saying that they can do the interaction around the notes=
76	S	[Yes ((nodding))
77	L	=But then the notes can also be used (.) as a learning (.) as a learning tool↑
78	S	Mmmm ((nodding head))↑
79 80 81 82 83 84	L S L	Because ah ah::m taking notes is (.) is a ↑skill [yes] (.) is a skill↓ Have you >seen a teacher doing that<? letting (.) you know (.) letting ah (.) children taking notes from class? Or was was=it mostly copying from the board? ((left hand touching head))
85 86 87	S L S	Yes it was mainly ((nodding)) [Mostly that. Oh okay. Okay. Yes it was mostly tha:t.
88 89 90 91 92	L S	How would a lesson like that <u>wo:rk</u> where you encourage (.) ah note taking? (1.0) But not copying from the board ((gesture left arm)) but have interaction and then do notes. How would such a lesson work? ((nodding))
93 94	S L	Do you mean in the doing of the (.) the lesson? [Ja] [yes]
95 96 97 98 99	S	Ah::m (0.2) I feel that (0.2) maybe in a sense >integrating the two< ((gestures both hands)) (1.0) so you can have your lesso:n speaking to the students and then↓ in a sense ↑asking them to write it after they've written so that it's a bit of both ahm (1.0) ((gestures))

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (*Continued*)

100 101	L	Ye:s ((left arm gesture)) so first the lesson and then let them make notes about what they are (.) about what they observe.
102	S	((nodding)) Ye:s.
103 104	L	Okay. What about writing (.) ah notes ↑while ah the ↑lesson is going on↓?
105 106	S	Oh yes that as well >what we do< ahm <u>here</u> at varsity. That also works.
107	L	That's how it works here.
108	S	Yes ((nodding))
109 110	L	So what do you teach them? What <u>skill</u> would you teach learners ah note taking during a lesson.
111	S	Mmmmm I think maybe it's the skill ((right hand gesture)) of being able to listen↑ (.) and to also write↓.
112	L	Yes
113	S	It's a very good skill to <u>do</u> that ((right hand gesture))=
114 115 116 117	L	[=So its listen and <u>write</u> but its also ((left hand gestures)) identifying the <u>main</u> idea a:nd you distinguish >what's good, what's not good<. I should write this and not tha::t ((left hand gestures)) and not copy everything.
118	S	((nodding)) It's like reasoning as well in a sense.
119	L	Ye:s ((nodding))
120 121	S	You're thinking about what you're writing and you're thinking about (.) what you're hearing instead of mere (.) just copying.
122 123 124 125 126 127	L S L	((nodding)) Ye:s You were also saying in your reflection notes ((left hand pointing to notes)) that you (.) you were surprised by the problems that uh the children have with the reading and writing. Uhm ((nodding)) Tell me a bit about that?

From this interaction, it seems that the mentor actions of primacy consist of assessing the student's knowledge (for example lines 33, 46), extending (58, 79), and supporting student views (58 onwards). Mentee actions of epistemic primacy include informing the mentor of experiences (22, 27), assessing observations (34, 43) and asserting own views of the observations (22–28 and again in 44 and 48).

In lines 58 to 65 the mentor extends the view of the mentee that the note taking required by the teacher she observed, may be problematic. He then offers an invitation to the mentee to consider alternative. In 66 S responds by claiming her understanding, confirmed in 76 that note taking can have interactional value. This

claim can be taken as representing learning on the part of the mentee, i.e. positively assessing the suggestions by L.

The sequences from 77 onwards zoom in on the question how note taking can be used for learning. L invites S to respond with the question 77 and extension of the question in 81 to 84 and 88 to 91. S claims her views in the turn of 95, summarised by L in 100, 191. L's challenge in 103 is a push for alternative/extended views and S confirms her agreement in 105.

2. Epistemic Primacy in an Episode of Learning on Classroom Discipline

In this second episode, the mentor raises questions on discipline, referring to by the Mentee in her school experience report.

Table 3. Learning episode on classroom discipline, Dyad 1

150 151	L	So from you:r uhm schoo:l experience what else came out for you (.) that are ah uhm (.) that are points you want to talk about↓?
152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163	S	(.) So I think the last thing that I wrote which I said was a concern ((right hand gesture)) a question when I'd find that in a cla::ss let's say (.) five students were outside (.) for four days. So (.) I <u>understand</u> ((gestures)) they sometimes didn't do their <u>work</u> or if they're absent they must bring a letter↓ to say why it ↑is but for <u>me</u> there was a problem of (0.2) how I think >it was the last question< I wrote how do I tackle <u>that</u> ((right hand gesture)) if I'm in the <u>school</u> environment. I don't think they're learning by sitting outside↓= ⌈Yah =and some students don't wanna learn (.) so its like "Oh it's cool. I just will do it 'cause I can sit outside (.)
164 165 166	L	Was (.) was that an opportunity where ah ah ah::m:: where you had to do ↑<u>discipline</u> with the learners? Ah:: that was interesting↑ in your notes he::re (.) tell me about that↑.
167	S	Ah you mean (.) in terms of them being quick to <u>hit</u> the children?
168	L	Ye::s (.) ye::s
169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176	S	Yes that too was a problem for me because I <u>think</u> it was more (…) ((right hand gesture)) outside being (.) not a (.) "Why are you doing this". A student would (.) do something and >the first instinct was the teacher will <u>hit</u> them< or (.) or it also troubled me that ↑once I was left alone ((right hand gesture)) with the children and then I was just like (.) "I'm not gonna shout at you. What's wrong? Why are you making such a noise?" One of the children was like >"you must hit us or just swear at us< or something"
177 178	L	⌈Ja:: ja::: give me an example of the hitting. How did the hitting happen?

(*Continued*)

Table 3. (*Continued*)

179	S	(.) So a teacher was gone (.) a teacher was gone for some reason
180		and then I was asking them to hand in their work ((gestures)) and
181		I'm like "why did you not do your work? And half the class
182		didn't do their work. "why did you do it?" and then they're like
183		uhm I think the best way to get through to us is hitting us."
184	L	Oh:::: okay.
185	S	["Just hit us and we'll listen." And I found that (the)
186	L	unruly like if I say "if you don't do your work, <u>stand</u>. "
187	S	So you tried something ↑else.
188		Ye::s. Tried something ↑else.
189	L	Okay So what are your views about this idea of hitting? Hitting
190		children.
191	S	[Ahm for me personally I don't agree:: definitely don't agree
192		especially the context (.) that ahm so many of those children came
193		from because some are being abu:sed at home some aren't being
194		listened to. So I think its more (.) a (.) "I care ((right hand
195		gesture)). It should be from that perspective. Trying to find out
196		what the problem is rather than "I'll just hit you "'cause that's
197		probably what happens at ↑<u>home</u>.
198	L	Ye:::s
199	S	….A child doesn't listen… "I'm just gonna hit you." ((tight hand
200		gestures))
201	L	Ye:::s That's just continuing the practice of ahm scolding and ah
202		ja:: ja:::
203	S	Mm hm:::
204	L	Well you're saying that there should be a more ↑positive response
205		and I think I agree with tha:t I <u>think</u> ahm it is more <u>constructive</u>
206		you know to (.) work out the ↑discipline ah (.) in class in a
207		<u>different</u> way.
208	S	Yes ((nodding))
209	L	Ah (.) ah rather than being ah:: punitive. Its better to: ahm try to
210		be more constructive and have other ways of establishing (.) the
211		discipline ja::, ja::
212	S	Yes ((nodding))
213	L	Ahm you ahm ((clearing throat)) you also ah made one you
214		referred in your notes to a method of spelling tests? ah:::m ah::
215		let's ah:: talk about that please↑.

This extract is from a later episode of the mentoring interaction of Dyad 1. In this extract the Mentor L continues to confirm his status as mentor by steering the interaction with questions. The focus of this episode is classroom discipline and the

student gives an account of what she observed in class. In this episode, the stance of the Mentor is one of assessing (164) and exploring (166), and claiming the stance of wanting to know more in 168. The Mentee uses her turn in 174 and 175 to give an account of her response to learners' demands, extended further in 179 and 185. In 191 she takes the position of not giving in to learners' demands. This stance is supported by L in 204–207 and 209–211.

In this extract evidence is found of L requesting S to state and account for her views on discipline, based on what she observed in class. It seems L holds back on his views, allowing S to use the space for taking and claiming her stance. In 204 onwards the mentor offers an assessment of the student's views by summarising the views noted by the mentee, and confirming agreement in views, i.e. epistemic congruence. This assessment may be taken as a summary of the learning on the part of the mentee based on her observations during school experience.

3. Epistemic Primacy in an Episode of Learning on Teacher Knowledge

This episode is an interaction of Dyad 2 between Mentor J and student G, both Afrikaans speaking, who agreed to have the session in English.

Table 4. Learning episode on teacher knowledge

52 53 54	J	What do you think of the knowledges that a teacher need to have↓? ( ) a teacher who's been teaching for a while. What do you thi:nk (.) of the different types of knowledge that a teacher needs to have↓?
55 56 57 58	G	Uhm (.) Definitely, obviously <u>content knowledge</u> ↑and like we've learned the pedago.<u>pedago</u>(.)gical ((laugh)) <u>content knowledge</u>. Uhm you have to be able to (1.0) >in a way< <u>sum up</u>↑ (.) <u>children</u> (.) and where they come from:: and how they wo::rk and
59	J	[a little bit of contextual knowledge=
60 61 62 63 64 65 66	G	=Yes a contextual knowledge. So definitely you need to know your contextual knowledge <u>and</u> your content knowledge and how the two work together (.) and skills of multitasking↓ like I <u>said</u> and <u>being flexible</u>↑ >is also an important thing< about (.) you might have planned a lesson to:: (.) You're gonna do this and this and this but when you start the lesson you see that its not gonna work and then you have to be able to (.) think on your feet and be flexible and change it so that it=
67 68	J	=[Oooh… Two important issues. So what you're saying you need a bit of <u>self</u>-knowledge
69	G	[Mmm
70	J	and then you also need to have (being reflective)
71 72 73 74	G	Yes definitely (.) Ja. self knowledge is <u>very important</u>.knowing what <u>you</u> are capable of doing. If you are ↑<u>not</u> a person ((gesture both hands open fingers pointing together)) who is good with building things or doing models >and things like that? ( ) then you shouldn't do that.

(*Continued*)

Table 4. (*Continued*)

75	J	[mmm]
76 77 78 79	G	Ja and kno:w (.) <u>knowing</u> yourself↑ is a very important thing. And obviously being reflective and seeing if (1.0) what you've <u>done</u> has worked and obviously then <u>working on yourself</u> 'cause yes (.) you must know yourself but you can also change yourself and >improve yourself for the <u>better</u><.
80	J	So how do you do your own ↓personal ↓professional) reflection↑?
81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90	G J G	Ahm:: (hhh) (1.0) A lot throu::gh >the learners' response< ((right hand gesture)) To what (.) to <u>what they say to me</u> or what they=especially with junior school kids ((gesture both hands)) you can <u>see</u> (.) They're not like high school children who are (0.2) very (.) rese::rved ((both hands horizontal with fingers pointing)) >and things like that<. ((laugh)) I can <u>see it on their faces</u>. And I can <u>see</u> ((left hand gesture)) if they're sitting and they're day dreaming ((left hand gesture)) ((scratching neck)) >I suppose in high school as well< if they're not listening at all and I can see the difference between if they're <u>engaged</u> with what I'm saying or not. And obviously through my assessments as well (.) uhm (.)=
91 92 93	J	((head resting on left hand)) =So would you say that (1.0) ((chin on right hand)) uhm (.) ill-discipline ((right hand pointing on table surface)) sometimes can be the result of the teacher not having↓ an engaging (.) lesson-
94	G	[mmm:: ↑definitely
95	J	(0.2) or involvement in the engaging pedagogics
96	G	Yes, definitely↓
97 98	J	Okay and do you feel that you can ↑<u>judge the success of your lesson planning</u> by the engagement↓ of the learners?
99	G	Mmmmm definitely (2.0)
100	J	I agree with you (2.0

In this episode the interaction is about teacher knowledge and what it means to be reflective as a teacher. The Mentor J starts in 52 by asking a question about the 'knowledges' needed by a teacher. Student G's response in 55 to 58 is approved in 59 and added to. In 60 to 65, G accounts and extends her views, which led J to summarise the points made in 67 to 70.

The utterance by J in 70 is an invitation to G to explain her understanding of what it means to be reflective. G informs J in 71 and 76 of her view that being reflective goes along with self-knowledge and 'working on yourself' to improve (77, 78). The question in 80 is J's way of focussing the interaction on reflection, and in 81 to 87 G claims her view that she does reflections based on observing and attending to learner responses. In this turn, G claims that in her experience teacher reflections should be based on actual observations.

In this learning episode the participation of both Mentor J and Mentee G reflect their status – J guiding the interaction and asking the questions, with G answering with confidence. Epistemic primacy on the part of the Mentor is observed in the continued reference to knowledge beliefs (59 and 67), while the Mentee's knowledge claims draw on practice experience (line 81 onwards).

The learning focus in this episode was introduced by the Mentor in 52 and includes the understanding of the 'kinds of knowledges' teachers should have. The Mentee's responses are accepted and extended by the Mentor, judging from lines 59 and 66. The Mentor pursued for a deeper understanding of what self-knowledge and reflection is about by inviting an extended account in 69 and 70. The Mentor accepts the account in 80 by asking how the Mentee does her reflection. The account given by the mentee in 81 onwards is agreed upon by the Mentor in 91 and 95, with the Mentee confirming her agreement in 96 and 99.

DISCUSSION

The finding that for the Mentors epistemic primacy involves confirming their status as mentors through the use of questions and specific conversational actions such as assessing, requesting, supporting etc., seems to be congruent with their institutional role as teacher educators. The epistemic status of the mentors is in the assessments of student utterances and the leading questions they asked. By soliciting views around the topic of learning, the mentors make eminent their stance of being more knowledgeable. This knowledge authority is made clear through the consistent questioning stance which, as has been argued by Heritage and Raymond (2005) often is a first speaker's way of indexing authority. Mentor authority has been exercised in terms of what Drew and Heritage (1992) described as the structuring of questions and the management of sequences. The Mentors used questions to create the learning episodes, explore, confirm and come back to a topic.

The mentees in this study confirmed their status by their response preferences of answering questions. They assert their knowledge by drawing on references to and reflections on practice experiences. This is the primary way in which mentees exercise their right to tell, drawing on own experiences and asserting their beliefs as their own "territory of knowledge" (Heritage, 2012). Mentee authority claims seem to be located in their own practice experiences. The questioning of mentor claims and assertions by the mentees is absent, which is probably an indication of status dominance. Heritage (2012) describes such social actions in conversations as epistemics in action, where participants do different things to form and maintain their knowledge territories.

The participation was clearly guided by the Mentor while Mentees were not inclined to request the Mentor to account for views. In all three episodes, learning seems to be mainly facilitated by the Mentors' conversational moves of assessing, asserting, requesting agreement and accounting for views. Learning was displayed

interactionally by mentees agreeing and confirming the views of the mentor. In many ways, this is the process of 'talking knowledge into being' (Keoch, 2010:51).

Findings indicate that institutional norms seem to prioritise mentor access and inhibit stances of openness. Some evidence was found of questions which allow mentees their right to tell and explore their own depth of knowledge. These actions indicate how mentees assert themselves and claim authority of knowledge. The evidence of learning in these episodes indicate some achievement of knowledge congruence (see Heritage, 2010, 2012), which highlights Tillema and Orland-Barak (2006) notion that professional conversations involve forms of collaborative inquiry for the development of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The intention with this study was to develop an understanding of the role of knowledge in mentoring interactions by zooming in on epistemic primacy – how both mentors and mentees participate in the interaction, and use their knowledge to contribute to learning. While the inquiry was limited in scope, the evidence suggests that mentors use specific conversational actions associated with their institutional role which included the ways in which they steer interactions by means of the questions, and that mentees use their knowledge to account for and make claims about their own experiences and learning.

This inquiry highlights the complexities of Koschman's (2013:1039) notion of "learning-in-and-as-interaction": interaction provides evidence of learning, and is at the same time the place where learning is to be found. This study showed how such learning may be identified in terms of Mentee utterances accepting what Mentors say, as an indication of change of state. It would be important however, to pursue studies of the interactional achievement of learning, considering the recommendation that CA studies need to also look at learning trajectories observed over time (Koschman, 2013).

The research reported here followed methods of conversation analysis to highlight the kinds of "primacy actions" in the mentoring of learning; actions which on one level confirm epistemic status and stance, and on another level ensuring progress towards learning by means of specific conversational actions. While the topic of this inquiry warrants further inquiry, some tentative implications for mentoring practice may be considered. Assuming that mentoring conversations involve processes of knowledge sharing /negotiating meaning (see Edwards, 2004), mentors may benefit from being reminded of the knowledge responsibility they have in mentoring. Such a responsibility would recognize the status and institutional role of the Mentor, while specific conversational actions can be used to create space for mentees to bring their own knowledge to the fore and inviting epistemic primacy.

Greater sensitivity to the dynamics and complex interplay of knowledge in mentoring would go a long way to ensure that the "the morality of knowledge"

Stivers et al. (2011) is taken seriously, in terms of both mentor and mentee carrying the responsibility to use their knowledge in the interaction for purpose of learning.

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