

The Tension of Mentor- Mentee Relationships within Participatory Action Research Projects

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Introduction

- ▶ Participatory action research projects
 - Grounded in practice
 - Alternative model of teacher professional learning
 - Mentor-Mentee relationships
 - Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching (MKT)
- ▶ Thesis: The tensions of this work
 - highly dynamic positioning and hard to pin down nature of effective mentoring
 - MKT is both helpful and problematic as a focus/tool for teacher professional learner

Overview of Presentation

▶ Theoretical Framework

- Mentoring
- MKT
- Possible theoretical tensions

▶ Three Episodes

- Actual tensions in practice

▶ Discussion

- Themes for expanding the discussion around mentoring and MKT within participatory projects

▶ Conclusions

Theoretical Framework: Mentoring

▶ Relational

- Trust
- Critical

▶ A Model for Mentor Disposition Model

- Directive
- Interactive
- Responsive

Theoretical Framework: MKT

- ▶ Pedagogical Content Knowledge
- ▶ Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching (MKT)
 - For example, specialized versus common content knowledge
 - Connection to effective teaching

Some Possible Theoretical Tensions

▶ Mentor-Mentee Relationship

- Trust versus Critique
- Expert position = directive versus interactive or responsive

▶ MKT

- Collaborative versus MKT's deficiency potential
- A universal rendering of MKT?

Episode 1: Problem Solving

- ▶ A teacher's growth in MKT
 - Strong common content knowledge
 - Emerging pedagogical knowledge
 - Drawing the two together as a beginning teacher
- ▶ The positioning of the Mentor
 - Responsive or directive?
- ▶ A critical dialogue?

Episode 2: Circle Area

▶ $A = \pi r^2$

- Formulaic versus conceptual
- A teacher's formulaic background
- A teacher MAYBE learns from watching children
- A researcher DOES learn from watching children

▶ Unpacking the formula

- Accident vs powerful experience

▶ Mentor Position

- Shifting attention from classroom management
- Expert versus learner

Episode 3: Subitizing

- ▶ Some background
 - Knowing cardinality without counting
 - Randomized versus familiar arrangements
 - Correlations to ability
- ▶ Expert teacher, beginner teacher and mentor interact
- ▶ Subitizing is an important MKT datum?
- ▶ A silent mentor?

Three Themes for Expanding the Discussion

- ▶ Recall the context: participatory action research, mentoring, MKT
- ▶ 1. Mentor continuum is incomplete
- ▶ 2. Binding professional learning to identity
- ▶ 3. Contextualizing MKT

Conclusions

- ▶ Tension of theory into practice when mentoring
- ▶ In-situ complexity of mentoring to trigger growth in MKT