

Assessment Dialogues in Mentoring in Norwegian Teacher Education: Tensions Between Different Forms of Knowledge

Monika Merket

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

monika.merket@ntnu.no

ABSTRACT. As part of the intention to create a research-based teacher education that is close to the practice, collaboration between university and practice is gaining more attention in teacher education. In Norway, a triad collaboration between school-based mentors, university-based mentors, and mentees collaborates on assessment in assessment dialogues. In this collaboration, the university-based and the school-based mentors may focus on different forms of knowledge. It is therefore of interest to examine what counts as legitimate knowledge in assessment dialogues. To do so, the theoretical and methodological framework of Basil Bernstein is used. The findings indicate that the mentees and school-based mentors see the assessment dialogues as a show aimed at satisfying the legitimised knowledge requirements of the university-based mentor. This paper thus problematises assessment in mentoring and discusses how it could create tensions between the different forms of knowledge.

Keywords: Norway, teacher education, knowledge, triad collaboration, assessment, mentoring

Introduction

As part of a neoliberal agenda, an ideological struggle exists in education over what knowledge should set premises for education (cf. Apple, 2016; Ball, 2017), and a research-based form of knowledge has been emphasised to improve the quality and effectiveness of the education system (Hammersley, 2002; 2007). In Norway, this is seen as part of the latest reforms in teacher education that have emphasised the implementation of a research-based teacher education close to practice (cf. Haugen, 2013; Ministry of Education and Research, 2014) and where there are intentions of creating a duality between the different forms of knowledge (cf. Afdal, 2016). Bernstein (2000) argues that these different forms of knowledge will be realised in vertical and horizontal discourses, where a horizontal discourse is local,

specific, and contextually dependent, and where vertical discourses are coherent, explicit, and have specialised criteria for circulation (pp. 156-160). In the perspective of teacher education, a horizontal discourse could be described as the practical knowledge the student experiences in practice, whereas the vertical discourse comprises the theoretical perspectives the student learns through campus-based activities at the university. Bearing this perspective in mind, the mentors working at the university and in schools can be seen as representatives of different forms of knowledge.

Recently, national policy has promoted the idea that the school-based mentors should collaborate more closely with the university-based mentors (Ministry of Education and Research, 2014) and that the university-based mentors should increase participation in practice (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). This can be seen as part of a global movement where teacher education has experienced a practice turn and with increased awareness in practice (cf. Reid, 2011; Zeichner, 2012). Consequently, the role of school-based mentors has also attracted more attention, where they are seen as playing a critical role in preparing the mentees for their profession (Ellis et al., 2020; Clarke et al., 2014). Traditionally, the school-based mentors' role has been to assist mentees in their daily activities and assess their development through mentoring dialogues in practice (Nguyen, 2009), and where the university-based mentors have played a less direct role in the students' mentoring.

In research, the collaboration between university-based mentors, school-based mentors, and mentees is labelled as a triad collaboration and in research is explored through such concepts as the third space (Zeichner, 2010) and partnership models between the university and schools (cf. Darling-Hammond, 2010). International research on triad collaborations has found that the university-based and school-based mentors emphasised different forms of knowledge in their feedback (Akcan & Tatar, 2010) and that the roles within the triad are ambiguous and that interactions are tense (Nguyen, 2009; Valencia et al., 2009). These findings are in line with Norwegian research into triad collaboration. Klemp and Nilssen (2017), exploring triad collaboration through digital meetings, found that this type of collaboration is difficult due to the vaguely defined roles and the challenging and problematic communication between the participants. Similarly, Lillejord and Børte found that a triad collaboration does not always work as intended. First, it models an ideal of a symmetrical relationship between the school-based mentor, university-based mentor and mentee, when, in reality, relations are asymmetrical (2017). Second, instead of bringing

together the best from different knowledge cultures, triads create tensions and lead to conflicts within the collaboration (2016). Halvorsen (2014) investigated identity construction within triad collaboration and found that the school and university-based mentors' professional identities reflected the problem of the well-known gap between theory and practice.

This gap between theoretical and practical knowledge in teacher education has been confirmed in research both internationally (cf. Hobson & Malderez, 2013; Willis et al., 2019) and nationally (cf. Haraldsen, 2012; Ulvik et al., 2018). Similarly, Norwegian policy claims that practice is not connected closely enough to the theoretical knowledge and argues for an integration of theoretical and practical knowledge in practice (cf. Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; White Paper 11, 2008–2009). As a result, there are attempts to create a closer relationship between university and practice and between school-based and university-based mentors and mentees. This can be exemplified through projects, such as Operation Practice, a project initiated by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), where the aim is to create a knowledge base and descriptors of successful practice (Helseth et al., 2019). Research reports from this project have shown an increased focus on the relationships between school-based mentors, university-based mentors, and mentees (Kristiansen et al., 2019; Lid et al., 2019) and difficulties with assessment in practice (Gjeitanger, 2019; Hegerstrøm, 2018). There are also pilot projects, such as dialogue conferences, that have attempted to strengthen the relationships between the university-based mentors, school-based mentors, and mentees by creating room for reflections on experiences of practice (Lejonberg et al., 2017; Mattsson et al., 2011). However, the intention to reduce the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge is a complicated issue, as, according to Bernstein, practical knowledge in schools is formed differently than theoretical knowledge. This implies that there is no one direct way to bridge the gap between the two, and attempts to do so can lead to struggles over which forms of knowledge should count as legitimate within the triad (cf. Haugen & Hestbek, 2017).

In a Norwegian integrated teacher education program, assessment dialogues in mentoring form the basis for assessing mentees' development (Helseth et al., 2019). Assessment dialogues are a triad collaboration between school-based mentors, university-based mentors, and mentees. How the assessment is carried out differs: sometimes, the school-based mentor has the final say if the mentee is to pass or fail, but often these decisions are made by a university-based mentor (Mattsson et al., 2011). However, research has shown

that the school-based mentors often feel abandoned in the assessment (cf. Eriksen, 2011; NOKUT, 2006) and would like to receive support from the university-based mentors (Helseth et al., 2019). At the same time, some research argues that the assessor role between school-based and university-based mentors is too vaguely defined (Smith, 2007) and that school-based and university-based mentors emphasise different skills and competences in the assessment (Eriksen, 2011). This means that assessment in mentoring reflects the well-known problem of what form of knowledge is felt to be most important.

The fact that the assessment dialogue comprises a meeting between two actors who potentially use different forms of knowledge can, as Haugen and Hestbek (2017) argue, lead to struggles over which forms of knowledge should be accepted as legitimate. This paper aims to explore assessment in mentoring through the lenses of school-based mentors and mentees, and how they describe the assessment dialogue and the university-based mentors' entrance into the mentoring context. The research question is: How do school-based mentors and mentees describe the assessment dialogue in mentoring in an integrated teacher education program in Norway? First, a description of the assessment dialogue will be presented, followed by the methodological and analytical framework. Then, the findings will be presented and discussed before summarising them in the conclusion.

The Assessment Dialogue in Mentoring

This study was performed in an integrated teacher education program that awards the students both a master's degree in one subject and professional competence over a five-year course of studies. As part of the professional competence, the students are supposed to be mentored in practice through mentoring dialogues with school-based mentors (Regulation on Framework, 2013, §3). However, mentoring is described as a shared responsibility between university and practice (Universities Norway, 2017). Therefore, assessment in mentoring is defined as a shared responsibility between the school-based mentors, the university-based mentors, and the school's principal. A holistic assessment of the mentees' mentoring is made by the university, which has the overall assessment responsibility (Universities Norway, 2017). This is made through the submission of reports based on the school-based mentors' assessment of mentoring dialogues and is supplemented by reports from the university-based mentors' assessment of assessment dialogues (cf. Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2020; University of Bergen, 2021a; University of Oslo, 2021). An assessment dialogue, therefore, takes place between school-based and university-based mentors and the

mentee, where the university-based mentor participates with the aim of assessing the student's development, whereas a mentoring dialogue is an ongoing pedagogic relationship between the school-based mentor and mentee during the entire practicum.

How the assessment dialogues are organised varies between the universities. Nevertheless, they are usually structured through a three-part framework (cf. Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2021; University of Bergen, 2021b). First, there is a dialogue between the university-based mentor and the mentee. Second, the university-based mentor and the school-based mentor observe the mentee in the classroom. Third, the session ends with a discussion between the university-based mentor, the school-based mentor, and the mentee, where the intention of this discussion is to reflect on the observed lesson taught by the mentee. The university-based mentor then writes a report to the university section responsible for teacher education.

Basil Bernstein's Theory as Methodological Framework

As mentioned in the introduction, as the assessment dialogue comprises a meeting between different forms of knowledge, challenges and tensions may be created. Bernstein (2000) not only maintains that the different forms of knowledge can be described as horizontal and vertical discourses but also claims that the vertical discourses have a hierarchical knowledge structure form and a horizontal knowledge structure (pp. 161-162). In the context of teacher education, a hierarchical structured knowledge would see research-based knowledge as a form of knowledge that could serve as evidence for practice, and a horizontal structure where knowledge could provide different perspectives for practice (see Haugen & Hestbek, 2017). As part of this type of perspective, there could be different perspectives on which form of research-based knowledge the university-based mentors contribute to the assessment dialogue when assessing the mentee's development.

Therefore, the approach in this paper is to explore how the school-based mentors and mentees describe the assessment dialogue and the presence of the university-based mentor in the dialogue. This will be done both by examining how the assessment dialogue is related to mentoring dialogues, and by examining the relationship between school-based and university-based mentors. The approach used is to explore relations of power and control that are in play in the assessment dialogue. Basil Bernstein's concepts of power and control are useful when taking such an approach, as they provide a language for analysing different forms of control and degrees of power insulations in the various aspects of a pedagogic

practice (Bernstein, 2000). This means that in this paper, the assessment dialogue is seen as a pedagogic practice through the theoretical lenses of Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing, with a focus on how power relations and forms of control create the distinguishing features of the assessment dialogue.

Analytical Tools and Framework

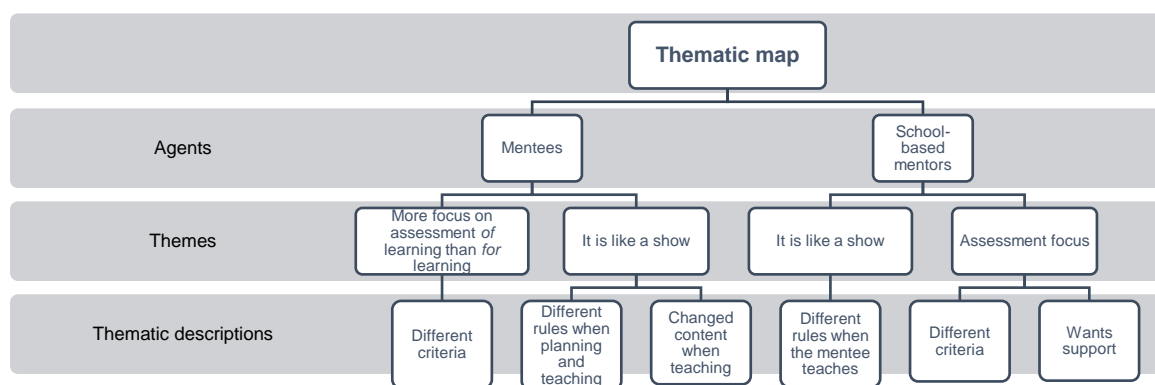
Bernstein (1971/2003, 1990, 2000) created the analytical concept classification, which is useful for exploring power relations between categories. According to Bernstein (2000), a category can only exist in relation to another category, and the space between the categories creates their specialisation, where a category could, for instance, be an assessment dialogue. In this paper, the concept of classification is used to investigate the relationship between mentoring dialogues and assessment dialogue. Bernstein (2000) distinguishes between strong and weak classification. A strong classification value is defined as a category with a unique identity, unique voice, and particular specialised rules of internal relations, whereas a weak classification has less specialised identities, voices, and rules (p. 7). In this way, a strong classification indicates that the assessment dialogue is seen as different from the mentoring dialogue and a weak classification when the dialogues are seen as being more similar.

To explore the relations of control within a pedagogic practice, Bernstein (1971/2003, 1990, 2000) presents the analytical concept framing, which is useful for exploring how these relations are controlled. Framing is defined as the principle regulating the communicative practices of the social relations within the reproduction of discursive resources between transmitter and acquirer (Bernstein, 1990, p. 36). A strong framing value is defined as when the transmitter has control over what is being communicated and weak framing when the acquirer apparently has control. In the assessment dialogue, the university-based mentor is given control through the role of assessor. This article investigates the assessment dialogue through the mentees' and the school-based mentors' lenses and, thus, how experienced the university-based mentor upon entering the session as an external agent. This implies that framing in this paper is used to refer to the relationship between university-based and school-based mentors. In this way, a strong framing value is defined as when the university-based mentor controls the communication and a weak framing value when the school-based mentor controls it. In this way, framing explores the relationships *within* the assessment dialogue, whereas classification explores the relation *between* the assessment dialogue and mentoring dialogues.

To operationalise the classification value and what creates the insulation between the assessment dialogue and mentoring dialogues, a thematic analysis is used. A thematic analysis is described as a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within data material (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This paper applies a dynamic relation between inductive and deductive analysis where the school-based mentors' and mentees' descriptions of the assessment dialogue create the specific categories, while also using Bernstein's theory prior to and during the analysis. The thematic analysis that is carried out concurs with Braun and Clarke's six steps of analysis (2006, p. 87, Table 1). First, the interviews were transcribed. The next step was to identify the sequences in which the assessment dialogue was discussed and then analyse them. What was discussed was noted and categorised into potential themes. Braun & Clarke (2006) argue that 'the "keyness" of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question' (p. 82). From this frame of reference, the themes were structured into a thematic map where they were related to the thematic descriptions that created each specific theme. The thematic map is shown in Figure 1 and illustrates the descriptions by the school-based mentors and mentees of the assessment dialogue.

Figure 1

Thematic map



From these themes in the school-based mentors' and mentees' descriptions of the assessment dialogue, three focal thematic descriptions were defined: changed rules, different content, and different criteria.

The analytical framework was developed by applying a dynamic relation between Bernstein’s analytical concepts of classification and framing, and these three selected themes: changed rules, different content, and different criteria through thematic analysis. In the thematic description of changed rules, the school-based mentors and mentees described a change in the rules that was related to the classroom context, where there were different rules for planning and managing the classroom in the assessment dialogue. Changed content referred to how and what the mentee taught in the classroom in the dialogue, and they described a change in teaching content and pedagogy. Moreover, the mentees and school-based mentors described different criteria, which referred to a change in the criteria and feedback that were given to the mentees in the assessment dialogue. As a result, these three themes outline the three categories: contextual rules, teaching content and pedagogy, and criteria and feedback. These three categories conceptualise the classification principles and are described in Table 1 as to whether they created a strong classification (+C) or a weak classification (-C) between the assessment dialogue and mentoring dialogues.

Table 1

Classification principles

| | Contextual rules | Teaching content and pedagogy | Criteria and feedback |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| Classification (C) | +C: The mentee applies different rules during the assessment dialogue. | +C The mentee teaches differently during the assessment dialogue. | +C The mentee is given different feedback during the assessment dialogue. |
| | - C: The mentee applies similar rules during the assessment dialogue. | -C The mentee teaches similarly during the assessment dialogue. | -C The mentee is given similar feedback during the assessment dialogue. |

Furthermore, framing is used to explore who controls the communication within the assessment dialogue. In this paper, framing describes the negotiation of control between the school-based and university-based mentors within each of the categories: contextual rules, teaching content and pedagogy, and criteria and feedback. Framing is utilised to describe how the negotiation of control was perceived by the mentee and school-based mentor in the assessment dialogue. The analytical process was carried out by categorising the descriptions

of the assessment dialogue according to Table 1. On completion of this process, framing was then used to describe the negotiation of control within each of the categories in Table 1.

Data

A strategic selection was used to recruit participants for this research project (Brottveit, 2018). The school-based mentors and mentees who were engaged in an integrated teacher education program at a Norwegian university were invited to participate. In the first step, a cover letter was e-mailed to all the schools collaborating with the university in this program, requesting permission to contact the school-based mentors and mentees. A positive reply was received from 20 of the 21 schools collaborating with the university in question. Thus, an e-mail was sent to all the mentors and mentees that were engaged in the program in the spring semester of 2019. This process found nine mentors and eleven mentees who are doing their practical at four upper secondary and two lower secondary schools. The mentees were in their last practice stage and consisted of two men and nine women. The school-based mentors, two males and seven females, had been mentors for between five and 20 years. To preserve the participants' anonymity, the mentors were labelled by letters and the mentees by numbers, and then, for example, as A1, B2, C3, D4, D5, E6, F7, G8.9, H10.11, and I12, where they were working together in mentoring dialogues. In this way, mentor D mentored two mentees in separate dialogues, creating D4 and D5, and mentor H and G mentored mentees in couple mentoring, creating G8.9 and H10.11. Both the mentors and mentees were interviewed separately, except mentees 8 and 9, who were interviewed as a couple. Mentee 10 did not want to attend the interviews, and thus, only mentee 11 was interviewed.

These nine school-based mentors and 11 mentees were interviewed according to a semi-structured interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This interview guide originally focused on the mentoring dialogue and how practice was related to the university. However, in discussing the relationship to the university, the assessment dialogues and the entrance of the university-based mentor into practice were highlighted as centres of interest. Thus, the assessment dialogue was a theme that was not included in the original interview guide. Consequently, the university-based mentors were not interviewed, and only the school-based mentors' and mentees' descriptions were included. However, when three out of the four first school-based mentors and mentees mentioned the assessment dialogue as a distinct theme, it was included in the interview guide. When the remaining participants were interviewed, they were asked to describe the assessment dialogue and how they had experienced it. How the

school-based mentors and mentees responded to these questions comprises the data for this paper.

Ethical Considerations

When collecting the data, the rules and standards of the Norwegian Centre for Research Data¹ (NSD) were followed. The participants were informed about the project and signed a consent form, and were informed that they could withdraw from the project at any time. An ethical perspective pervaded the research process, from data collection to data analysis and the presentation of the data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). To make the research process transparent, many extracts from the participant interviews were used in the presentation of the findings.

Findings

This section presents the findings from the analytical process and is structured according to the three thematic categories described in the analytical framework: contextual rules, teaching content and pedagogy, and criteria and feedback. This was done to visualise how these categories created a similarity or difference between the mentoring dialogue and the assessment dialogue and how they influenced the negotiations over the control within the assessment dialogue.

Contextual Rules

Five of the mentees described that there are different contextual rules in the assessment dialogue than in the mentoring dialogue. In referring to contextual rules, several mentees state that they practice different rules in the classroom during the assessment dialogue and that different organisational rules guide how they plan the teaching context. Mentee 1 expresses how during the assessment dialogue he or she practices different rules in the classroom, describing how, in consultation with Mentor A, he or she applies rules in the classroom that they both think will give the university-based mentor what they want to see in the assessment dialogue:

[Y]ou have to get them [pupils] working even if you know they will not be working, so you can defend it during the discussion in the assessment dialogue, but we [the mentee and school-based mentor] do not usually do it this way....

Mentee 1 describes how they modify the rules in the classroom to fit the university-based mentor's expectations to ensure that the mentee will get a passing grade. Moreover, mentees 8 and 9 describe changes in contextual rules that influence how they prepare and plan the teaching context for the assessment dialogue as follows:

Mentee 8: We have to adapt a lesson for the assessment dialogue.

Mentee 9: You do that.

Mentee 8: You do that. There are certain demands concerning how they [mentors from the university] want to see you, so even if we had, even if we had thought of something else, we have to do something that suits the assessment dialogue.

In this extract, Mentees 8 and 9 describe how different contextual rules influence how they plan their lesson because they want to satisfy the university-based mentors' expectations. Thus, the mentees describe how the contextual rules create an insulation between the mentoring dialogue and the assessment dialogue and create a strong classification between the dialogues. The mentees' descriptions of changed contextual rules indicate a strong framing value where the classroom context is adapted to fit the university-based mentor's expectations. The strong framing value indicates that the mentees have realised who controls the session and aim to comply with the contextual rules they think the university-based mentor wants to see.

At the same time, there is a weakening in the classification value in the descriptions. Mentee 11 states that the contextual rules within the two dialogues are similar and that he or she feels the freedom to plan the lessons as he or she wants.

I feel free, I am pleased that we have practice because then we can try different approaches and learn a lot from differentiating....

Mentee 11 is basically saying that he or she does not see that there are different rules framing how the assessment dialogue is planned and that he or she does not adapt to fit the university-based mentors' expectations. Mentor G supports Mentee 11's statement: 'hmm. I really do not think that there has been that much difference....' This weakens the classification value and indicates that the dialogues are sometimes less specified. This also indicates a weakening

in the framing value, where the school-based mentor also sets the premises for which contextual rules are applied in the assessment dialogue.

At the same time, six out of the school-based mentors describe that when the university-based mentors participate, different contextual rules apply to the assessment dialogue. The changed rules within the dialogue lead Mentor A to describe the session as: ‘It is like a show, a performance,’ and Mentor C: ‘it becomes a show.’ Thus, the mentors openly admit that the mentees put on a show by adapting the contextual rules to meet the expectations of the university-based mentor. Mentor A further explains what he or she means by changing rules within the classroom context:

[A]nd when the university-based mentor comes, then they [university-based mentors] would say that you continually have to correct them [the pupils]; cut the small-talk, take the mobile phones from them, watch them continually focus on you as a teacher, but this does not work; you cannot act like this....

Mentor A says that Mentee 1 has to change the rules in the classroom in the assessment dialogue so he or she can satisfy the university-based mentors’ expectations and that this reduces the assessment dialogue to a performance. Thus, Mentor A supports the strong classification value that is described by the mentees. Mentor D also describes a strong classification value because different contextual rules are used to frame the classroom context:

[F]or instance, one of the goals for this lesson was how the student should handle this pupil, right? And then I am mentoring the student about that, yes, I thought it went well, you [mentee] took time to speak with her [pupil] and you became aware of, you received a good response, and you treated, right.... [W]hen the university-based mentor comes in and starts talking about the mentee using so much time there and now so much time has been used, these are examples from real life here, and then I am thinking: go away! You [the university-based mentor] are ruining the job I am doing!

Mentor D describes that the university-based mentor sometimes disrupts the mentoring by focusing on issues that are not related to the contextual rules the school-based mentor and mentee use in the mentoring dialogue. Thus, a change in contextual rules reveals a power struggle with respect to what is important knowledge to discuss in mentoring and indicates a strong classification value and strong insulation between the contextual rules in the two dialogues. At the same time, this indicates that changes in contextual rules impact the form of control in the session. Mentor D argues against the university-based mentor and shows how the school-based mentors sometimes set the outer limits for which knowledge is to be discussed in the session. This indicates a weakening in the framing value and shows how the form of control is less prominent in some dialogues.

Teaching Content and Pedagogy

Nine of the mentees described how they adapt the content to the assessment dialogue and teach differently. Thus, not only does a change in contextual rules shape the assessment dialogue, turning it into a show, but there is also a change in teaching content and pedagogy. Mentee 4 expresses it this way:

I have to adjust it to the university-based mentor then, not to my pupils, to do something exciting, but my pupils are not used to working in this way: it gets kind of more fragmented, a kind of performing art....

Mentee 4 describes how this lesson is designed to fit the expectations of the university-based mentor and how the change in content moves the focus away from the pupils' learning process and rather onto the performance. In the same vein, Mentee 7 describes how this change in content leads to a form of performance:

[T]hey [the assessment dialogues] are kind of artificial [...] because you often adjust the activities, so they suit the university-based mentor's expectations.

Mentees 8 and 9 also talk about how they have to change their teaching in the assessment dialogue to fit these expectations. They describe that when they have a class where the pupils do not talk, they have to train them and ask them to play a role in the session to make sure that they get a passing grade:

Mentee 9: We have a challenge in our class, they do not talk.

Mentee 8: Yeah, they do not talk.

Mentee 9: Then, we had to find a solution for that. We felt the need to prepare a performance in the assessment dialogue, you even have to practice in the lessons before the assessment dialogue, and, even in the lessons before the assessment dialogue, you say to the pupils that a university-based mentor is coming, and many ask the pupils to be quiet and kind....

Mentee 5 agrees with Mentees 8 and 9 when describing that the assessment dialogue is a predetermined show aimed at guaranteeing a positive outcome. In a similar comment, Mentee 6 says:

[W]hen I am having the assessment dialogue, I feel I have to adapt to the activities the university-based mentor has taught us [at university], kind of, kind of doing it his or her way....

In this way, the mentees say they basically change content and activities in the assessment dialogue to please the university-based mentor, assuming what he wants to see. This indicates a strong classification value between the teaching content and pedagogy in the mentoring dialogue and the assessment dialogue. A strong insulation is therefore established between the dialogues, as they have their own unique voice and content. This also indicates a strong framing value where the university-based mentor sets the premises for which teaching content and pedagogic approaches are used during the assessment dialogue. Mentee 7 describes that this strong framing value takes the focus away from the pupils during the planning and teaching of the lesson:

[Y]ou plan a lesson to include the pupils, but you are not focusing on that, you are only focusing on creating a great lesson, so that you will pass, and what the pupils do you do not give a damn about, you become a little like that, if you have prepared a discussion and the pupils do not discuss, then you become a little, you are not thinking you [pupils] are not learning anything, but more like, you are destroying it for me because you are not discussing.

Mentee 7 expresses a change in the form of control in the assessment dialogue that moves the focus away from the pupils and onto his or her own performance, describing a strong framing value where the university-based mentor controls the communication, and this leads to a change in focus where being approved is more important than focusing on the pupils' learning process. This means that in some sessions, the university-based mentor sets the premises for which content and activities are seen as legitimate.

On the other hand, four of the mentees described that they teach in much the same way and that the content is similar in the two dialogues. Mentee 6 explains that he or she does not modify how or what is taught when the university-based mentor participates:

[A]nd he or she [university-based mentor] wants to see how I am as a teacher and not how I copy him or her as a teacher, so, this year, I have focused on doing the same that I would have done in every other lesson....

Mentee 11 supports this statement, claiming,

[W]e are encouraged to test alternative learning arenas, to get out of the classroom or, as I said on the subject, we are encouraged....

This indicates a weakening of the classification value where the insulation between the dialogues is less specified. It also reveals that the power struggles are less prominent in some dialogues, where they and the mentoring dialogues have less unique voices and less specified identities. At the same time, this indicates a weakening in the framing value, where the school-based mentors also set the premises for which activities are used in the assessment dialogue.

Criteria and Feedback

Nine of the mentees described that the university-based and school-based mentors give different feedback and apply different criteria and that this creates an insulation between the mentoring dialogue and the assessment dialogue. Mentee 5 explains why he or she thinks the university-based mentors give different feedback:

I do not know what criteria they [university-based mentors] use, but I remember my last assessment dialogue, my school-based mentor and I, we had been working on how I taught the subject, used the blackboard and how much the pupils comprehend, whereas it seemed like the university-based mentor was more focused on relations and classroom management....

Mentee 5 states that they have been working on how to teach the subject, but when the university-based mentor entered the dialogue, the focus shifted to relations and classroom management. This mentee is then uncertain as to which criteria the university-based mentor is using. Mentee 7 also describes how the university-based and school-based mentors focus on different aspects of the teaching profession:

A school-based mentor can comment that, in your last lesson, you managed to include the boys sitting at the back of the class, as you have been working to accomplish that. However, a university-based mentor could ask, or say, like, you asked a question and got a response, what do you think of that? Or, like, why did you do that?

Mentee 7 noted that the school-based mentor focuses more on contextual knowledge within the classroom, whereas the university-based mentor's questions about the teaching context are more decontextualised. This difference was also voiced by Mentees 8 and 9:

Mentee 9: It was the first time we were asked to defend what learning outcome we expected from an activity we had chosen.

Mentee 8: Asking more critical questions.

These two mentees find that the university-based mentors ask them different questions and challenge them in a different way. In this way, the mentees describe how feedback from the university-based mentor challenges them in a different way and that it often is of a more decontextualised nature. This indicates a strong classification value and shows how different criteria and feedback create strong insulation between the two dialogues, where the dialogues have their own unique voice and identity.

Seven of the school-based mentors give descriptions where they agree with the mentees when it comes to their claim that there is a change in criteria and feedback in the

assessment dialogue. Mentor A voices that the university-based mentors often arrive with a ‘template.’ This experience is supported by other mentors who say that the university-based mentors are often more concerned about details and give superficial feedback. Mentor H puts it this way:

[N]o, it becomes kind of superficial, right, that we are just kind of talking about how the last lesson went, how the mentee started the lesson, ‘you [mentee] started the lesson in a good way, you managed to end the lesson in’, and so on, and then we are in reality satisfied, if you know what I mean, and then the assessment dialogue is approved.

As a result, these school-based mentors describe, in line with the mentees, that the criteria guiding the feedback from the university-based mentor are often of a more decontextualised nature. This is referred to by Mentor F when talking about how the criteria guiding the feedback and assessment are different:

[M]aybe I am more concerned with the relationship with the pupils, getting the pupils involved and seeing them, whereas the university-based mentor often is more concerned with, that there are correct facts, showing a high academic level, and, for me as a school-based mentor teaching at a lower secondary school, the subject is important, but, however, other things are also important.

Mentor F says that what is seen as important deviates between the university-based and school-based mentors. Concurring with the mentees, the school-based mentors find a difference in focus on which type of knowledge is seen as important. This indicates a strong classification value between the criteria used and feedback given in the two dialogues, and also strong insulation, with a unique identity and voice.

The school-based mentors also describe that this deviation in the feedback given by the school-based and university-based mentors influences their negotiation over control. Mentor A explained:

[O]ne time, during an assessment dialogue, there was a focus on details, like: ‘How could you have started this lesson?’ ‘How could there have been a little more ‘swing’ to it?’ And yes, it was, like, ‘surely, starting the lesson could have been better,’ but everything else was great, and then, why should they [university-based mentors] focus on that when the overall picture is really good, I do not understand!

Here Mentor A disagrees with the university-based mentor and his persistent focus on and need to pick on details. This indicates a weakening in the framing value, where the school-based mentors set premises for the criteria that guide the feedback. Mentor B states that the negotiation over control between the university-based and school-based mentors centres on the expectation that the university-based mentor should enter the assessment dialogue and deal with a problem. Mentor B says:

[T]he assessment dialogue: [...] sometimes I have been really disappointed over the university-based mentor then, ehh, having said little and not addressing a clear problem area, when I have talked about it many times, it would have been nice if someone with kind of more authority also addressed it.

Mentor B wants the university-based mentor to agree with him or her and support the feedback given to the mentee. This reveals the expectation that the university-based mentor should agree with and support the focus on problem areas that the school-based mentor has pointed out to the mentee. Thus, the school-based mentors sometimes also set the premises for the criteria and feedback given in the assessment dialogue and that the negotiation over control is less prominent in some sessions.

At the same time, there are some indications that the negotiation over control has more impact in some dialogues. Eight of the school-based mentors described that they agree with the university-based mentors, claiming that they contribute with new perspectives. Mentor H says that ‘the university-based mentor was very competent,’ while Mentor G says:

I have not experienced disagreeing with the university-based mentors, for instance, or that there has been a struggle over power or that they do not understand how it is....

Mentors G and H find that the university-based mentors are competent and that the form of control is similar. Mentor E supports this statement and explains,

I experience it as positive; we agree, we see it the same, and this I experience as positive, I experience this as good, to get support, us seeing it the same, I experience that, or that they [university-based mentors] are professional, that we often point out the same things.

Here, the school-based mentors find that they and their university-based counterparts often agree and see the same aspects as being important. This indicates a strengthening in the framing value, where the university-based mentor sometimes controls the communication and sets the premises for the criteria and feedback that are given in the session.

This also indicates a weakening of the classification value where the school-based and university-based mentors practice similar criteria in the assessment dialogues. Mentee 6 expresses it this way:

[T]oday, it was equal, now it was the same, and that was good for me as a student, to know that there is agreement on what works and what has to be worked on. That means that it is not only a subjective opinion but that several people have the same perspective....

Mentee 6 finds it assuring that the school-based and university-based mentors use the same criteria. Mentor B concurs with Mentee 6, stating,

[A]nd then I felt we agreed then, I felt it was good then, that it was seen, yes, because I thought they were important things....

In line with Mentee 6, Mentor B elaborates on being assured and feeling secure when the university-based mentors practice similar criteria in the assessment dialogue that the mentee and school-based mentor have used in the mentoring dialogue. This indicates a weakening in the classification value and a weakening in the insulation between the two dialogues, which means that they have less unique voices. This also indicates that power struggles are less prominent in some assessment dialogues.

Discussion

The results indicate that most of the mentees put on a show to meet the expectations of the university-based mentors as they adapt the rules and content to the assessment dialogue. At the same time, the different forms of knowledge in play create challenges in the assessment dialogue and in the negotiation of control between university-based and school-based mentors. These aspects will be discussed in the following section in relation to Bernstein's knowledge discourses and the implementation of a research-based teacher education close to practice.

Norwegian policy argues that there is a too weak relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge in teacher education and finds it necessary to strengthen the triad collaboration where the university-based mentor more actively participates in practice (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; White Paper 11, 2008–2009). Therefore, there are intentions in the national policy to integrate theoretical knowledge in practice. However, using Bernstein's theory, it can be argued that the different forms of knowledge are important to preserve, as it is the gap that creates the opportunity for new knowledge to be realised (cf. Haugen & Hestbek, 2017). In teacher education, the university has traditionally been an advocate of the vertical discourse that could be described as research-based knowledge and practice of the horizontal discourse that could be defined as experience-based knowledge. In this paper, the mentees and school-based mentors refer to this difference when they say that the university-based mentors' feedback has more of a decontextualised nature, while the school-based mentors' feedback is more likely to be related to the school context. Both the school-based mentors and mentees describe that this adds new perspectives to the mentoring dialogue. In this way, it could be argued that there is a difference between research-based and experience-based knowledge that enables and brings new knowledge into being. The university-based mentors can, in this perspective, be seen as providers of research-based knowledge with a horizontal knowledge structure that gives the mentees theoretical perspectives on practice. The mentees express this when mentioning that the university-based mentors challenge them in new ways by asking questions where they have to defend their choice of an activity or specific content. A research-based knowledge with a horizontal knowledge structure is described by Bernstein (1999) as providing new perspectives and new questions to ask for further development. In this way, the different forms of knowledge the school-based and university-based mentors bring into the dialogue

could stimulate the mentees' reflection. This could be seen in line with dialogue conferences, which intend to create room for reflection through triad collaboration (Lejonberg et al., 2017; Mattsson et al., 2011). Thus, where Norwegian policy argues for a closer relationship between the different forms of knowledge, using Bernstein's theory, it can be argued that the different forms of knowledge contribute to complementary perspectives on being a teacher (cf. Hestbek, 2014).

At the same time, in the assessment dialogue, the university-based mentor is given the role of assessor. In this paper, the school-based mentors describe how this role sometimes undermines their ongoing mentoring dialogues, and the mentees point out how it sometimes moves their focus away from the pupils' learning and onto their own performance. The ambiguity of the roles within the triad is well-known in research (cf. Klemp & Nilsen, 2017; Lillejord & Børte, 2016, 2017). In addition, the school-based mentors and mentees describe that it results in the mentee putting on a show to get a passing grade in the assessment dialogue. As Bernstein (1999) argues, the horizontal discourse is context-dependent and embedded in ongoing practices that are highly relevant for the acquirer. This means that in mentoring, mentees learn how to be teachers within a professional community that has a segmental and context-dependent form of knowledge. In this way, there might not be a relation between what is learned in the different segments in mentoring. Seen in this perspective, the university-based mentor is given a role to assess a segmental form of knowledge that is related to the ongoing pedagogic practice between school-based mentor and mentee in mentoring dialogues. Vertical discourse is not integrated at the level between the different segments in a context but is integrated at the level of meanings (Bernstein, 1999). Therefore, a form of knowledge that is not necessary is related to the mentees' specific practice but knowledge that could be discussed in a more general manner in teacher education and mentoring. Entering as an external agent into the assessment dialogue, the university-based mentor is put in a position to assess experience-based knowledge with research-based knowledge and, in turn, could give the mentee an understanding of a priority between the different forms of knowledge. In such a perspective, the research-based knowledge could be seen as having a hierarchical knowledge structure that holds a generality between contexts, which could be exemplified by statements where the school-based mentors describe that sometimes the university-based mentors arrive with a template. This problematises assessment in mentoring of this contextual form of knowledge by an external agent, a

problem that has been acknowledged in NOKUT's project Operation practice (Gjeitanger, 2019; Hegerstrøm, 2018).

This shows how the focus of creating a research-based teacher education close to practice could create tensions between the different forms of knowledge. First, that it is the space between the different forms that creates the possibility for new knowledge to be created. Second, that assessing experience-based knowledge with research-based knowledge could be challenging. Considering this, the findings reveal a complexity in the assessment in mentoring and point to a problematic aspect in the assessment dialogue. The role the university-based mentor is given often makes the mentee put on a show and adapt the teaching content and rules to what is seen as legitimated research-based knowledge. In such a role, the research-based form of knowledge is given priority, and the complementarity between the different forms of knowledge is not emphasised.

Conclusion

The aim of the current study has been to explore how school-based mentors and mentees characterise the assessment dialogue in mentoring. The findings from this investigation indicate that the assessment dialogue is characterised as a show that the mentees put on so that they can get a passing grade and that the strong focus on assessment changes the mentees' focus on their own performance. The research has also shown that the different forms of knowledge in play in the assessment dialogue create challenges and possibilities: Possibilities as when the different forms of knowledge are seen as complementary and that they give the mentees different perspectives of practice, and challenges if there is a perspective of a preference between the different forms of knowledge and the research-based knowledge sets the premises. In this way, this study focuses on what the consequences could be when implementing research-based teacher education close to practice.

These findings cannot say anything about assessment in general in mentoring and what it in general means to implement a research-based teacher education close to practice. More research is required to explore what consequences it must attempt to create a duality between the different forms of knowledge in mentoring. At the same time, the approach taken in this research has been through the lens of the school-based mentors and mentees; it does not consider how the university-based mentors describe the assessment dialogue. Further research on how the university-based mentors perceive the assessment dialogue is needed.



Monika Merket, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1959-6620>

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¹ NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data) is a national centre and archive for research data.