Mentoring in the Time of Cholera: The case of EFL mentoring in teacher education

Lily Orland-Barak,
The University of Haifa
Reinventing ourselves and our wisdom of practice ....

“...human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but life obliges them over and over again to give birth to themselves.”

“wisdom comes to us when it can no longer do any good.”

Gabriel García Márquez
Love in the Time of Cholera
Focus

Issues that associate with mentoring in the digital space

Connecting to extant conceptualizations of mentoring

Unattended areas of research, challenges and affordances

Trigger further thought

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The 1987 Presidential Address
Learning In School and Out

LAUREN B. RESNICK

It takes all sorts of in and outdoor schooling
To get adapted to my kind of feeling.
—Robert Frost

Popular wisdom holds that common sense conveys school learning for getting along in the world—that there exists a practical intelligence, different from school intelligence, that matters more in real life. As is often the case, this wisdom is difficult to assess directly from a base of scholarly research. But recent research on the nature of everyday, practical, real-world intelligence and learning is beginning to provide a basis for understanding what distinguishes practical from formal intelligence. Drawing on this work, I want to explore in this essay four broad contrasts which suggest that school is a special place and time for people—discreet and often in some important ways distinct—of daily life and work. Then, in light of these contrasts, I will consider where and how the economic, civic, and cultural aims of education can best be pursued and whether schooling itself should be reorganized to take account of what we are learning about the nature of competence in various aspects of our lives.

How School Learning Differs from Other Learning

A small body of recent research by cognitive anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists has examined cognitive performances in a number of practical settings. Cumulatively, this research highlights four broad characteristics of mental activity outside school that stand in contrast to typical school work. The studies discussed here have examined very specific work situations, but the findings suggest wider applicability.

Individual cognition in school versus shared cognition outside. The dominant form of school learning and performance is individual. Although group activities of various kinds occur in school, students ultimately are judged on what they can do by themselves. Furthermore, a major part of the core activity of schooling is designed as individual work—homework, in-class exercises, and the like. For the most part, a student succeeds or fails at a task independently of what other students do (except for the effects of grading on a curve). In contrast, much activity outside school is socially shared. Work, personal life, and recreation take place within social systems, and each person’s ability to function successfully depends on what others do and how several individuals’ mental and physical performances mesh.

An elegant example of this social distribution of knowledge and skill has been provided by Edwin Hutchins (personal communication, April 1987), an anthropologist who has studied navigation practice in the highly technological work environment of U.S. Navy ships. The activity of interest occurs on a ship being piloted into and out of San Diego harbor and involves six people with three different job descriptions. On the deck two people take visual sightings on predetermined landmarks, using special telescopic devices mounted on gyrocompasses that yield exact readings of direction. They call out these readings to two other individuals, who relay them by telephone to a specialist on the bridge. This individual records the bearings in a book and repeats them aloud for confirmation. Next to the navigator, another individual uses specialized tools to plot the ship’s position on a navigational chart and to project where the ship will be at the next fix and beyond. These projections of position are used to decide what landmarks should be sighted next by those on deck and when a course correction will be required. The entire cycle is repeated every one to three minutes.

No individual in the system can pilot the ship alone. The knowledge necessary for successful piloting is distributed throughout the whole system. Furthermore, important aspects of that knowledge are built into tools. These aspects of knowledge, although not needed by the people who actually pilot the ship, are needed by cartographers and gyrocompass builders. Thus, there is a further sharing of knowledge—with tools, and with the builders of tools, who are not present during piloting, but who are part of the total knowledge system required for successful piloting.

Pure mention in school versus tool manipulation outside. The centrality of tools in ship piloting suggests a second major contrast between cognition in school and outside. In school, the greatest premium is placed upon “pure thought” activities—what individuals can do without the external support of books and notes, calculators, or other complex instruments. Although use of these tools may sometimes be permitted during school learning, they are almost always absent during testing and examination. At least implicitly then, school is an institution that values thought that proceeds independently, without aid of physical and cognitive tools. In contrast, most mental activities outside school are engaged intimately with tools, and the resultant cognitive activity is shaped by and dependent upon the kinds of tools available.

LAUREN B. RESNICK is at the Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260. This article is a slightly revised version of her AERA Presidential Address, given in April 1987, in Washington, D.C.

Back to Basics …
Lauren Resnick, 1987
Learning in School and Out: How School Learning Differs from Other Learning

In school:
- Individual cognition
- Pure Mentation
- Symbol Manipulation
- Generalized Learning

Out of school:
- Shared Cognition
- Tool Manipulation
- Contextualized Reasoning
- Situated Specific Competencies
Learning in School and Out

**IN SCHOOL**
- Positivist paradigm

**OUT OF SCHOOL**
- Social Constructivist Paradigm

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The case of EFL: Where are we?

*English curriculum 2020.*

Can do’s

A differentiation is made between *global* can-do statements and *operative* can-do statements.

Curriculum focused on use of language (Domains of Language Use)

“Learners are now required to develop a variety of language competences and to use English both orally and in writing in performing a wide range of tasks.”
In the Hybrid Space between in and out of school

One foot in a known area and another in an unknown area

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In school:
- Individual cognition
- Pure Mentation
- Symbol Manipulation
- Generalized Learning

Distributed Cognition
- Blended Activity
- Virtual Engagement
- Eudaemonic Learning

Out of school:
- Shared Cognition
- Tool Manipulation
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- Situated Specific Competencies

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Cognition and knowledge are not confined to an individual; rather, they are distributed across objects, individuals, artefacts, and tools in the environment to analyze situations that involve problem-solving.
Combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, with some elements of student control over time, place, path, or pace.
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Distance learning conducted in a virtual learning environment with electronic study content designed for self-paced (asynchronous) or live web-conferencing (synchronous) online teaching and tutoring.

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In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (350 B.C.E./2000) describes *eudaemonia*, variously translated as "happiness" or "flourishing," as a state in which individuals grow in their capacities and actions but do so in dialogue with the society they live in.

If we look at how technology changes the relationship between individuals, learning, and society, we see that technologies are creating the space for a fifth wave of technology mediated learning. Technology is loosening the ties between fixed learning goals and formal, institutionalized educational pathways.

Mentoring in the Digital Space

Known

Unknown

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The bilevel knowledge base for mentoring: What mentors need to know

- Bilevel
  - Targeting teachers
  - Targeting students

- Learners and learning
  - Novice-expert as learners

- Curriculum and teaching
  - Roles
  - Kinds of knowledge
  - Building knowledge

- Contexts and purposes
  - Organizations leadership
  - Schools and classrooms


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How can we use the features of the digital context:

- Distributed cognition
- Blended activity
- Virtual engagement
- Eudaemonic Learning

To help teachers redefine these conditions in their digital classroom?

- Time
- Interaction
- Focus
- Voice and Silence
- Visibility and Presence
- L1 and L2 language

Additional level of knowledge: The Unknown Mentoring in the context of the digital space

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EFL mentoring for teacher learning in the digital space

How do you build upon the teachers’ strengths and areas of competence as a starting point for diving into the unknown? Less familiar?

How do you conduct a learning conversation with the teacher to assist her in becoming aware and developing practices of learning that build upon these conditions?

How do you maximize the potential conditions of the digital learning space when mentoring teachers?

What mentoring roles, processes, strategies from extant mentoring models can be adopted and adapted?

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Integrated approach to mentoring

Challenge and Support

Adaptive expertise

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BIG IDEAS: AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO MENTORING

Sometimes a novice sometimes an expert

- Integrating theory and practice
- Immediate practical solutions
- Concrete thinking
- Lack of tolerance of ambiguity
- Authority-oriented

Being a novice in the digital age

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Building expertise as a community

- Five Ways to Engage Students On Line
- English from Home Website
- Taking It Online: Blended Teaching and Learning
- Five Things the COVID-19 Taught Me About Distance Learning
- Teaching Future Teachers in Corona Times
Sometimes a novice sometimes an expert

Seeing the new in light of the old …

There is no one best model

Start from the safe and known

Raise awareness of the new conditions and features of the digital learning space
BIG IDEAS: Assuming dialogical roles in the digital learning space

Awareness of how mentors’ traditional models of teaching and mentoring inform their pedagogical reasoning and actions in the new digital space …

How these need to be reframed, and how/whether they are congruent with those of the mentee-teachers
Integrating models ...

- **Personal Growth Approach**
- **Strategic Approach**
- **Situated Approach**
- **Critical Approach**

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Strategic Mentoring in the 80-90’s: Mentor as manager

- Strategic planning and predetermined products
- Training on practical skills and modeling best practices
- From processes to desired outcomes
- Summative evaluation of programs
- Monitoring teaching activities
- Dyadic interactions
- Mentor as transferring knowledge
- Focus on observable and doing

(e.g. Daloz, 1983; Tomlinson, 1995; Wilkin, 1992)
Direct teaching / modeling

Telling

Illustrate from one’s own experience

Show how

Elaborate on

Explain why

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Personal Growth and Collaborative Mid 90’s onwards : Mentor as co-thinker

- Value of collaborative professional learning
- Reflective practice and scaffolding
- Initial beliefs and routines of practice
- Team and co-teaching
- Creating partnerships
- Shared activity and dynamic products
- Mentor as facilitator and co-thinker

(Kerry & Mayes, 1995; Mullen & Lick, 1999; Shulman & Sato, 2006; Achinstein & Anasthases, 2006).

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Extending teacher thinking

- clarifying questions
- paraphrasing
- Probing
- making connections
- projecting
- brainstorming
- pausing

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Onwards... 2000 Mentor-as-mediator

Improvisation in mentoring (Orland-Barak, 2010).

Disciplinary aspects of mentoring

Using knowledge of teaching and educational experience to mediate learning 'here and now' in specific situations (Berry, 2009; Koster et al., 2005)


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Integrative Mentoring: Between transmission and mediation

- Acknowledging contradictions, tensions and complexities
- Discrepancies between ideological, political, and moral stances, pedagogical reasoning and actions
- Professional learning as a ‘messy’ construct

Importance of apprenticeship
Modeling and representing best practice
Decomposing mentoring practices

(Cochran-Smith, 2004; Grossman et al., 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Edwards, 2010)
Mediation and adult learning

Interaction whereby the mentor or expert professional selects and frames experiences, which are authentic, relevant, and deal with real life problem solving situations and management of dilemmas.

The expert mentor sequences the kinds of stimuli provided, gradually surfacing, analyzing and encouraging reflection on emergent gaps and new connections and modifications.
Historical shifts

Transmitting knowledge
- Strategic views
- Behavioral-cognitive psychology

Mediating knowledge
- Socio-cultural approaches
- Cultural psychology
Socio-cultural approaches in the digital environment
social interaction in the digital space
the co-construction of knowledge in the digital space
norms and rituals
Cognitive and social presence

Transmitting knowledge
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Mediating knowledge
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Digital Mediation
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Digital Mediation

- Socio-cultural approaches in the digital environment
- Social interaction in the digital space
- The co-construction of knowledge in the digital space
- Norms and rituals
- Cognitive and social presence

Remember the conditions...

Time
Interaction
Focus
Voice and Silence
Visibility and Presence
L1 and L2 language

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Mediation between:

- People
- Institutions
- Ideas
- Discourses
- Ideologies
- Theory and practice
- Teaching and subject matter

in the digital learning space

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Putting it into Practice: EFL Teaching Scenario

• An expert teacher recording a lesson for the 7th grade for national broadcasting that takes into account the fact that the lesson will be taught digitally..

• The teacher does not have students in the recording studio

• Flashback to Educational TV???

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Using the filmed lesson as an opportunity for professional development:
Adapting the filmed lesson to the conditions and features of DLS.

Awareness / reflective questions

Integrating interactive tasks as jump off additions / extensions of the lesson

Looking at the digital lesson differently through the lens of the new conditions and features.

Identify and diagnosing strengths and areas of development

Getting into the teacher’s head (beliefs, rituals of practice, pedagogical reasoning, context)

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“Education is not a transactional experience but a relational experience ..”
Andreas Schiller

• The role of the mentor is to transform the film from a transactional experience to a relational experience

• Making teaching in the virtual space an intellectually attractive experience

• Good teaching is good teaching
Using the film to demonstrate, co-construct, elicit

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Visualizing...

- In which class could you use parts of this lesson? Why?
- How would you divide time on task?
- How might different styles of digital learners respond?
- Who will feel comfortable
Noticing ...

- How is this different/similar to my teaching?
- What am I surprised to discover?
- What kind of resistances does it create for me in the digital space?
- Who will be engaged? Who will not?
Adopting and Adding ...

- How do I put aside my own views to make place for recognizing the potential of the activity for my classroom?
- What am I prepared to change and what not? Why?
- How can I adapt this to what I am teaching in the virtual space?
- What digital tasks can I add to elevate distributed cognition?

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Connecting …

- What would I do differently?
- What problems do I anticipate?
- How is it congruent with what I know?
- What is this a case of …?
- How does it compare with…?
- What can be replicated, what cannot?
Owning …

- What cultural codes of the environment do I need to consider?
- What do I take? What do I leave? What do I add?
- How do I make the parts I take blended?
- How do I teach / facilitate this for all my students?
“An education isn’t how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It’s being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don’t.”

Anatole France