Coversheet

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The work of categorisation in achieving moral order in feedback talk during the school-based professional experience

Abstract

As part of the school practicum experience, supervising and pre-service teachers have regular professional conversations about classroom practices. Supervising teachers are expected to model, assess and evaluate their pre-service teachers' classroom skills to support learning in real classrooms. A key component of this learning process happens when supervising teachers provide feedback about pre-service teachers' teaching techniques. By drawing on seven audio-recordings of conversations about classroom practices that occurred during the school-based professional experience (the practicum), this paper uses conversation analysis and membership categorisation analysis to unpack initial three turns of 'feedback' talk between supervising and pre-service teachers to show how they have procedural consequence for the speakers' professional relationships and for the talk that follows. Analysis reveals some of the conversational ways the participants constitute their institutional roles and relationships within a particular moral relational order, the speakers talking *as* supervising or pre-service teachers *with* and *for* each other *about* teaching practices. Pre-service teachers are seen to mostly agree and align themselves with their supervising teachers' versions of events. These speakers collaboratively co-construct asymmetrical institutional relationships, interactively normalising their shared understandings of attributes associated with 'good' teachers and effective teaching. We suggest that the development of such asymmetric relationships and understandings may well inhibit pre-service teacher learning, limiting possibilities for extended understandings of alternative classroom practices.

Keywords: membership categorisation analysis; conversation analysis; school professional experience; pre-service and supervising teacher relationships; asymmetry; culture in action.

1. Introduction

School-based professional (practicum) experiences enable pre-service teachers (hereafter referred to as PTs) to put theory into practice by observing, practising and displaying their developing pedagogic understandings and skills with students in real classroom situations, under the guidance of experienced supervising mentor-teachers (hereafter referred to as STs) (Zeichner and Gore 1990; Franke and Dahlgren 1996; Keogh, Dole and Hudson 2006). Professional conversations about classroom practice between STs and PTs are an important component of the school-based professional experience (Timperley 2001; Hyland and Lo 2006). Despite their importance, it seems that there is a lack of research regarding the role that such conversations play in the learning process during the practicum. This paper works in part, then, to address this gap in the literature.

Using conversation analysis (CA) and membership categorisation analysis (MCA), the paper works through initial turns of three exemplars ST PT 'feedback' talk to examine the conversational devices these speakers use, as members of their respective institutional ST / PT categories, to constitute their rights, roles and relationships as culture-in-action (Baker 2000). In the paper, we provide a brief overview of previous research on the professional experience. We then describe the methodological approach and key notions that inform our analysis, before explaining the research method used to obtain the data that are the focus of this study. The paper then analyses the categorisation work evidenced in these examples of feedback talk, and concludes with a discussion of the findings and their implications for (future) practice.

2. Literature Review: Setting the scene

As part of their induction into the profession, PTs need to develop professional understandings and practise their teaching skills, learning how to talk *to* teachers, how to talk *about* teaching and learning *with* teachers, and how to talk *to* teachers so as to be able to talk *about* teaching, learning and students (Smith 1990). During the professional experience, PT learning is supported and

facilitated by the interactions that they have with their STs. Previous research has recognised that “a large proportion of the work of mentors... is accomplished through talk” (Strong and Baron 2004: 49). However, despite the ubiquity and importance of conversations for learning, only a few researchers have explored the *in situ* construction work of these interactions (Strong and Baron 2004: 49; Wang, Strong and Odell 2004; Vasquez, 2004; Orland-Barak and Klein 2005; Vasquez and Reppen 2007; Keogh 2010; Harris, Keogh and Jervis-Tracey 2013; van Kruiningen 2013). This paper will contribute to the analysis of how PTs and STs engage in professional learning conversations *in situ*.

The professional experience is viewed as a critical component of teacher education programs (Grudnoff 2011; Sim 2011; Van Velzen, Volman, Brekelmans and White 2012). In particular, conversations between PTs and STs during the professional experience are essential for developing the knowledge and skills that PTs require for their future classroom practice (Orland-Barak and Klein 2005; Strong and Baron 2004; Timperley 2001; White 2009). Although the role of STs in such conversations is complex and requires them to negotiate a range of competing and, at times, conflicting responsibilities (Rowe, Mackaway and Winchester-Seeto 2012), they are expected to fulfil two main roles. First, STs need to observe and evaluate the teaching practices as enacted by their PTs in classroom and school contexts in order to support their learning (Keogh, 2010 and Harris, Keogh and Jervis-Tracey 2013). Second, STs take on a mentoring role to support PT learning in applying theoretical knowledge within their classroom teaching practices (Fraser, Garofalo and Juersivich 2011; Ruys, Van Keer and Aelterman 2012). In these two vastly different roles, STs contribute to the development of PTs’ professional identities and learning as future teachers. In their conversations about teaching practice, the speakers assemble shared understandings of what teachers *should do* and *should be like*, interactively assembling the speakers’ categorical memberships as STs and PTs within the category collection ‘school’. As

such, the talk co-constructs moral versions of the participants' assumed-to-be-shared institutional worlds (Jacoby and Ochs 1995; Heritage 1984; Jayyusi 1984).

Research into interactions between PTs and STs has increasingly focused on the "quality of interactions" (Timperley 2001: 111). Substantial literature has prescribed various approaches for STs in offering quality feedback and in supporting PTs' planning activities (see, for instance, Hennissen et al. 2008; Ruys, Van Keer and Aelterman 2012). Much of this research relies on self-reporting interviews with STs and PTs to understand their experiences of the practicum. However, Orland-Barak and Klein show that STs frequently offer an "idealistic image of their practice" in self-reported studies, identifying a "striking gap" between STs' characterisations of their relationships with PTs and the actual talk that was produced *in situ* (Orland-Barak and Klein 2005: 386). Their findings suggest the need to examine real examples of talk to uncover how the relationships between STs and PTs are established when they take place in naturalistic settings.

In this paper, we interrogate extracts of 'naturally occurring'¹ initial turns of talk between STs and PTs to show how these conversational openings have procedural consequence for the speakers' professional relationships and for the talk that follows. Conversation analysis (CA) and membership categorisation analysis (MCA) are used to explore how the speakers use particular conversational devices in the early stages of their interactions to co-construct and normalise shared understandings of their institutional worlds as culture-in-action (Baker 2000). Analysis reveals some of the ways that the speakers interactively achieve their respective institutional roles, rules and responsibilities, conversationally assembling their institutional social identities.

3. Methodology

Both CA and MCA are forms of ethnomethodology, derived from the work of Harvey Sacks (1970; 1974; 1984; 1992). CA "seeks to describe the underlying social organization ...[including]

interactional rules, procedures and conventions – through which orderly and intelligible social interaction is achieved” (Goodwin and Heritage 1990: 283). That social structural features achieved interactionally is a core idea in ethnomethodologically-derived theorising and research (Maynard 1991).

In contrast, MCA focuses on the interactional ways in which social identities are conversationally negotiated and renegotiated. Particular interactive rules are used as a resource within talk, producing a situated local order that is never static but is, rather, always in flux (Danby and Baker 2000), providing the locus for analysing expectations, judgements, inferences and other practical reasoning or activities as achieved within and through talk-in-interaction (Schegloff 1987). As such, MCA

serves to reveal the ways in which populations and constituent identity groups are categorized, morally constituted and accounted for in practice which in turn can inform questions about the sociological understanding of normative regulation and norms-in-action in relation to the current state of cultural and morality politics where questions of ‘recognition’ have become paramount (Housley and Fitzgerald 2009: 359).

To date, CA, as used and developed by key researchers, has tended to be used more extensively than MCA (Stokoe 2012). However, MCA has benefitted from work by Baker (1997a; 1997b; 1997c; 2000), Baker and Keogh (1997), Baker and Johnson (1998), Housley and Fitzgerald (2009; 2015), and Stokoe (2010; 2012), among others. In addition, Jayyusi (1984: 1991) has made a significant contribution with her work investigating how conceptual understandings are organised and employed through everyday talk. She linked the empirical MCA method with the notion of ‘procedural knowledge’, showing how “categorization analysis can be used to study the situated rationality of the moral precepts which underpin social and cultural order” (Lepper 2000: 6).

All kinds of identities are assigned in talk, referred to in MCA as ‘membership category devices’ (MCDs). These are constituted within interactional turns that provide for a set of activities of various kinds that are expected for those identities, referred to as ‘category bound activities’ (CBAs) (Sacks 1992). MCA has revealed that speakers invoke particular MCDs as ‘inference-making machines’ (Sacks 1992) to interactively achieve and understand the worlds of which they are a part. As Hester and Eglin note, MCA

[D]irects attention to the locally used, invoked and organized ‘presumed common sense knowledge of social structures’ which members are oriented to in the conduct of their everyday affairs ... This presumed common sense knowledge or culture is made available through a method by which the ordinary sense of talk and action is made problematic (for the purpose of analysis) and is conceptualised as the accomplishment of local instances of categorical ordering work. The aim of such analysis is to produce formal descriptions of the procedures which persons employ in particular singular occurrences of talk and action. (Hester and Eglin 1997: 3).

Situated applications of the rules of categorisation, then, reveal knowledge and reasoning about social structures and show how states of affairs are constructed and deployed for local, contexted interactional purposes. Additionally, they reveal how social structures or states of affairs are sustained in everyday interactions. The context-renewing character of talk-in-interaction means that current actions contribute to the ways that the talk that follows will be understood in that it has procedural consequence. The range of activities woven through the moral order may include “practices of describing (moral) positions, (moral) activities and (moral) relations” (Baker and Keogh 1997: 25).

As Baker (1997b) points out, the attributions that are hinted at are as important as any that are made explicit within the conversation: hinted-at categories or activities or connections

between them indicate the subtlety and delicacy of much implicit membership categorisation work. Moreover, such talk says as much about the speaker as the one being spoken about (Silverman 1998).

Having briefly outlined the key notions pertaining to CA and MCA, the remainder of the paper will draw on these complementary tools to explore the language and interaction used in the openings of PT and ST meeting talk.

4. Research Method and Analysis

The data examined for paper originated in a series of professional development workshops about mentoring pre-service teachers, run by university teacher educators for both experienced and novice teachers at an independent girls' secondary school in an Australian state capital. As part of the program, seven teachers who had expressed an interest in learning more about mentoring pre-service teachers during their school-based professional practice placements agreed to have one of their 'naturally occurring' meetings audio-recorded by a non-participating university researcher. The seven audio-recordings were then transcribed using the notations specified in Appendix 1. Three main matters were the focus of the interviews: one focussed on planning for future lessons, one on the marking (assessment) of student work samples, and five on ST feedback regarding PTs' observed classroom practices.

Conversational openings determine who the participants are and what they are doing there, situationally speaking (Baker and Keogh 1995: 268). Openings, therefore, provide rich contexts for analyses of how social relations and social practices are locally organised by participants. For the purposes of this paper, three examples of beginning 'feedback' talk between STs and PTs have been selected for analysis to show how they initiate what counts as the topic of the talk that follows, thereby having procedural consequence. Although we make no claims regarding the generalisability of our findings, analysis of these particular extracts are used to exemplify some of the interactive ways that STs and PTs establish their institutional roles, rules

and relationships identified across the data transcribed for the purposes of this research study. In particular, we focus on how the speakers use MCDs to talk their co-constructed institutional worlds into being.

Analysis commences by looking at the initial turns of talk² between one supervising teacher (ST) and her respective pre-service teachers (PT). Interview 1 commenced in the following way:

Interview 1

ST = Supervising Teacher

PT = Pre-service Teacher³.

1. **ST:** Okay (.) um we::ll the first thing that I've
2. got is the feedback (.) sheet fro:m today's
3. lesso:n,
4. **PT:** Mm mm
5. **ST:** U::m grea:t (.) instructions at the beginning
6. as always very clear very confident in front of
7. the classroom .hh and I thought it (.) was also
8. really good how you moved arou:nd (.) a lo[t]
9. **PT:** [Y]ep
10. **ST:** As I've said the:re .hh u::m just a couple of things
11. (.) the wa:y that the tables are set up in our room at
12. the moment for the trial makes it rea[lly] (.) =
13. **PT:** [Mm]
14. **ST:** = difficu:lt because the girls are

15. [doing group work]
16. **PT:** [>with their backs](.) fa:ced to me,
17. [ah ha] [yeah]
18. **ST:** [That's right] [ye:s] (.) so (.) what I wanted to ask you was actually to do with
19. behaviour management and tha(h)t [wa::s] (.) in that kind of situation how do=
20. **PT:** [Yes]

Within the first four turns at talk, ST and PT can be seen to orient to and are in agreement with their conversationally constituted category-bound rights, roles and obligations. As in all but one instance of ST / PT talk included in our corpus, the ST speaks first, taking up the role of identifying the opening topic. In order to achieve this, she refers to notes that she has written on the required “*feedback sheet from today's lesson*” (lines 2 -3).⁴ This action demonstrates her associated right, as ST, to know about and provide feedback information to PT about her classroom practices, thereby setting the agenda for the talk that follows. According to Gardner (1997:132), “*Mm* is a token that can be characterized as a weak acknowledgement token, marking unproblematic receipt of the talk to which it orients”. As such, PT’s “*Mm mm*” in lines 4 and 13 display PT’s agreement with ST’s category-bound right to initiate and lead the direction of the conversation, characterising herself as a recipient of this feedback talk. Through her acknowledgement, the PT contributes to the collaborative construction of talk in which she is positioned as listener. The two speakers’ different and contrasting category-bound attributions are, thus, conversationally constituted in the form of a standardised relational pair (SRP), with ST situated as provider of feedback (as authorised by the “*feedback sheet*”), and PT positioned as receiver of ST’s feedback.

Asymmetrical relations are interactionally achieved, *in situ*, and there is a “direct relationship between status and role, on the one hand, and discursive rights and obligations, on the other” (Drew and Heritage 1992: 49). In this instance, the initial turns of talk immediately set up

an asymmetrical expert/novice relationship between the two speakers, with ST taking on the power and associated right to set the agenda for the talk and to speak about and evaluate PT's teaching practices (Maynard 1991; Remington-Smith 2007).

In lines 5 to 8, having both oriented to and agreed on their respective roles in this talk, ST gives her feedback by describing her observations of PT's teacherly practices. These are presented as a three part list (see Jefferson 1990), namely those of PT's abilities to give "*instructions at the beginning [that are] as always very clear*", of being "*very confident in front of the classroom*", and that it was "*really good [that she, the PT] moved around a lot*". In this way, ST conversationally presents particular descriptors that produce a particular moral version of what it is to be a 'good' (pre-service) teacher. In delivering her feedback, she lists a range of attributes that pertain to membership of the category 'good teacher' in her worldview. As such, she not only provides feedback to PT about what she did in the classroom but also constructs a specific version of what the institutional identity of a 'good teacher' looks like. The minimal acknowledgement tokens produced by PT in receipt of this feedback (lines 4, 9, 13, and 20) suggest an acceptance of this category work.

Similarly, in Interview 2, ST was the first to speak, addressing PT by name ("*Charlotte*"), making her the direct recipient of the talk, and directing the topic of talk, in the following way:

Interview 2

1. **ST:** Okay Charlotte um, abou::t ou:r (0.4) the lesson that
2. you di::d (.) um the year eights, (.) yesterda::y,
3. (.) .hh ↑u::m, (.) I just thought we'd have a chat
4. abou::t (.) all the posi↑tives, (.) strengths that
5. I sa::w, (.) .hhh u::m(.) it wa::s a great

6. le[↑]sson, (.) u::m I felt tha::t (.)probably:: (.)
7. your <biggest strength> is the fact that you can
8. come up with such a good variety of different
9. teaching[↑]strategies,
-
36. **ST:** I< think is grea::t, (.) or a::re
37. great that that y- you're able to do .hh is ma:ke
38. su:re tha:t um everything (.) you give the ki::d(0.4)
39. speaking of year eights is really age appropri[↑]a::te,
40. (.) so all of the little activities that you have them
41. [↑]doing .hh u::m you know the (.) post it notes on the
42. boa::rd the,(0.6).hh I remember from your first prac
43. acting out being (0.4) gasses [and liquids] and and
44. **PT:** [Ha ha ha Yeah]
45. **ST:** solids .hhh [u::m] you=
46. **PT** [Yeah]
47. **ST** =know is grea::t

This extract of talk establishes ST and PT as members of a standardised relational pair (SRP), each member having particular and exclusive attributes pertaining to their positions within the conversation (Stokoe 2012). As happened in interview 1, ST establishes the topic of the talk (“*about our lesson*”), positioning herself as the more powerful speaker with the right to establish the topic of the talk, to hold the floor, and to evaluate PT’s classroom practices. PT positions herself as listener, accepting ST’s institutional rights. The talk, thus, co-constructs an asymmetrical ST/PT relationship. According to Silverman and Peräkylä (1990), the frequent use

of “um”s, hesitations and pauses indicates delicacy within talk. In this instance, potential delicacy is suggested by ST’s frequent “*um*”s, her lengthened vowel sounds, and her many hesitations and pauses, including a pause of 1.4 seconds in line 1 which can be indicative of a trouble spot (Jefferson 1989). While it is unclear why this particular opening is interactionally ‘delicate’, the level of hesitation suggests that ST faces a level of discomfort in delivering this feedback.

The interactional work produced by ST at the opening of this talk clearly indicates that there will be a focus on positive aspects of PT’s practice in her evaluation, “*I just thought we’d have a chat ... about all the positives ... strengths that I saw*” (lines 3 - 5). ST continues her turn by describing what she saw as a “*great lesson*” and that “*probably*” PT’s “*biggest strength*” is “*the fact that [is able to] ... come up with such a good variety of different teaching strategies*”. As in Interview 1, the observations shared by ST in Interview 2 not only account for her evaluation of PT’s classroom practices but simultaneously talk into being a moral version of what it means to be a ‘good (pre-service) teacher’. ST’s preface, in line 4, indicates that the activity she is engaging in is describing positive aspects of PT’s teaching practice rather than adopting a different type of evaluative stance that might discuss PT’s teaching more critically.

In her long initial turn at talk (consisting of 47 lines), ST includes a number of positive descriptors of PT’s classroom practices (such as, for example, giving the year eight students “*age-appropriate activities*” in lines 38 to 40). If silence is seen as a theoretical choice, as argued by Silverman, Baker and Keogh (1998), it is noteworthy that PT is positioned and maintains her position as a listener until line 44 when she can be heard to laugh. The positioning of PT as a listener is strengthened by a lack of pauses at transition relevance places (TRPs) (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) in ST’s talk. Pauses of more than 0.1 seconds in ST’s talk only occur within turn-construction units (TCUs) which have the property of ‘projectability’ in establishing when the unit will end and bringing into play TRPs in lines 1, 38 and 43 (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998).

By not producing pauses at TRPs, ST maintains the floor for an extended turn, establishing her position as one who has the right to determine speaking rights.

It is ST, once again, who first ‘finds’ the topic of talk in Interview 2, building up a version of this PT as an effective teacher through providing a list of positive attributions pertaining to her observations of PT’s classroom practices. In both interviews, STs are speaking *as* experienced mentor teachers *about* their observations of their PTs’ classroom practices *for* their PTs as direct recipients of their talk, thereby demonstrating their category-bound rights, as STs, to provide evaluative feedback. Furthermore, PTs in these instances do not challenge these category-bound rights. They are both positioned and position themselves as recipients of STs’ feedback. In both instances, the conversations constitute moral versions of what makes a ‘good (pre-service) teacher’ by STs’ references to particular category-bound attributions pertaining to being an effective teacher. As such, the speakers position themselves and each other within a particular moral order of ‘school’, normalising their shared institutional worlds and associated activities and attributions by interactively talking them into being.

In nearly all the ‘feedback’ interviews collected for the purposes of the research project, it is ST who introduces the topic of the talk that follows. Interview 3, however, deviates from this pattern. Although ST was the first to speak, she seems to have been referring to previous unrecorded talk rather than initiating the agenda. In this instance, it is PT rather than ST who first sets up the reason for the talk in turn 2:

Interview 3:

- 1 **ST** °Oka:y let them get going°(1.0)
- 2 **PT** Um, (0.4) what did you think of, (.) yesterday’s
- 3 lesson
- 4 **ST** Well >I mean< (.) I thought (.) I thought it, (.)

5 it was effective I thought it was a good lesson, um
6 (.) .hh how did you:: (.) I mean obviously (.) the
7 lesson (.) yesterday afternoon >was a little bit<
8 different from (.) other ones you've been doing so
9 fa::r (.) .hh um, (1.4) how would you descri:be
10 (0.4) the process that you (.) sort of (.)
11 carried out the decision to do (.) to do the lesson
12 that way

13 **PT** [Um]

14 **ST** [It] was a little bit more sort of group focused
15 a:nd

16 **PT** Yeah

17 **ST** And I suppose (0.4) a (.) m- more practical kind of
18 tasks than

19 **PT** Yeah

20 **ST** The normal theory lessons so how would you
21 des[cribe] (that)

22 **PT** [Well] there are a few things I (would like)
23 first of a::ll (.) I guess (.) I trie::d (.)
24 (>last time I had to) do a lot of< that sort of
25 stuff >with them< when I was working with Helen's
26 year eight cla:ss, (.) .hh a::nd I haven't
27 (0.4) <rea::lly done mu-> >any of that< stuff
28 with the year eights (so far) it's just been
29 teacher talk (.) and, (.) >I ↑think< (.) pa:rt of

- 30 that's (.) because (.) I was a little scared
 31 in terms of the students' results because, (0.4) I
 32 felt like (.) in one particular area which was (.)
 33 algebraic f- fractions

PT identifies the topic of talk by means of her request for feedback in lines 2 and 3 (“*what did you think of ... yesterday's lesson*”). ST responds by providing an answer in the form of the second part of a question/answer adjacency pair when she gives feedback, evaluating what she saw in lines 4 and 5 (“*Well >I mean< (.) I thought (.) I thought it, (.) it was effective I thought it was a good lesson*”). ST’s repetition of “*I thought*”, and her hedging and pauses are very similar to the markers of delicacy identified in the feedback given by the ST in Interview 2, suggesting a level of hesitancy that may be associated with the role of providing evaluative feedback. It is also possible that PT’s initiation of the topic of talk (lines 2 – 3), which still positions ST as one who gives feedback and PT as the recipient may, perhaps, reflect a different relationship between these participants.

Previous research has indicated that “differential speaking rights are assigned to participants based on their institutional roles” (Freed and Ehrlich 2010: 7), and that the right to ask questions and allocate turns in interaction designates power, thereby constituting asymmetry in institutional relationships (Heritage and Clayman 2010; Liu 2013). While the topic for discussion in all the three interviews is ST’s perspective of PT’s classroom practice, it is PT in Interview 3 who initiates this topic of talk. However, PT’s initial question in Interview 3 (lines 2 - 3) works, in effect, to hand the floor to ST for her description of observations of PT’s classroom practices. As such, ST and PT in Interview 3 adopt the same institutional roles as those in Interviews 1 and 2 – the one who gives feedback and being the feedback recipient, respectively. PT’s self-selection in line 2 and her extended turn in lines 22 - 33, however, mark this interaction as somewhat different from the previous two.

Following PT's preface, ST in Interview 3 leads the talk, working alongside PT to co-construct their asymmetrical relationship as the observer/evaluator and observed/student. ST's questioning moves in lines 12, 14 - 15, 17 - 18 and 20 - 21 evoke notions of the traditional 3-part (question/response/evaluation) sequence pertaining to pedagogical classroom talk as revealed by Mehan (1979). ST first poses a question by means of asking PT to describe why she chose her approach to the lesson. ST, however, does not provide space for PT to respond. Instead the onset of her expansion (lines 14 - 15) is produced in overlap with the onset of PT's turn (line 13). In responding to this expanded question, PT produces minimal polar response tokens "*yeah*" (lines 16 and 19), which closely resemble the asymmetrical interactional relationships established in the openings of ST's and PT's talk in Interviews 1 and 2.

The ways that these questions are formulated also have procedural consequences. In line 4, ST shares her positive evaluation of PT's lesson. She indicates that she thought the lesson was "*effective*" and "*a good lesson*". ST's use of "*I thought*" three times in lines 4 and 5 suggests that her feedback is a little tentative, perhaps implying that, despite her positive evaluations in the opening, she may be holding back from delivering a more critical appraisal. Within our research data, STs tend not to deliver potentially negative feedback on PTs lessons directly. Rather, they ask questions which require PTs to evaluate their own practice (Harris, Keogh and Jervis-Tracey 2013). In this instance, ST's preface to her question, "*I mean obviously ... the lesson ... yesterday afternoon was a little bit different from other ones you've been doing so far*" (lines 6 to 9), suggests that she may be adopting this approach. Her insertion of "*obviously*" in this preface softens this scenario, providing a normalised view of the difference as something reasonable and, perhaps, to be expected. Her preface also assumes that PT will agree with her evaluation of this lesson as being "*a little bit different*" from previous lessons.

ST in Interview 3 maintains her turn from line 1 to line 12, despite providing a 1.4 second pause in line 9. By producing an "*uhm*" immediately prior to this extended pause,

however, she has signalled her intention to maintain the floor. ST uses her long turn to both deliver her feedback, illustrating her institutional role as an evaluator, and to position PT as recipient of this feedback. ST continues her turn to as *“how would you describe (0.4) the process that you ... sort of ... carried out the decision to do ... to do the lesson that way”*.

PT responds with an *“um”* in line 13, which is overlapped with ST as she expands her account. The additional information provided by ST in these lines could be heard as functioning in two ways. First, these turns could provide a straightforward clarification of what ST has meant by the lesson being *“a little bit different”* (lines 7 – 8). She suggests that the differences came from the lesson being *“a little bit more sort of group focused”* (line 14), and involving *“more practical kind of tasks”* (lines 17 – 18). A second function of these expansions may be that she is producing scaffolding for PT to build her response to the question of how she would describe the process of doing the lesson that way. PT’s use of *“yeah”* in lines 16 and 19 shows agreement with ST’s version of events and offers minimal responses, rather than taking the floor for an extended turn. ST then offers a reformulation of her question in lines 20 and 21 (*“so how would you describe that”*). By maintaining the floor for an extended period and then prompting PT’s next turn through her question, ST positions herself as having the right to set the agenda. PT concurs with these rights by offering only minimal acknowledgement tokens until she is explicitly invited to take the floor in line 21.

An attribution category-bound to the role of PT is the ability to reflect critically to inform their future practice (Harris, Keogh and Jervis-Tracey 2013). In this instance, PT’s accounts (lines 22 – 33) describe her previous knowledge of the approach (*“I had to do a lot of that sort of stuff with them when I was working with Helen’s year eight class”*), the reason for the difference with other lessons (*“I was a little scared”*), and an account for these reasons (*“the students’ results”*). As such, PT is demonstrating prior experience and using a ‘teacherly’ concern with students’ results to justify her decision to implement particular teaching strategies. Her turn

complements the evaluation provided by ST by accounting for what she has seen. Despite the somewhat unconventional beginning to Interview 3, both these speakers can be seen to orient to and enact their respective category-bound rights and obligations.

So it is that within their beginning talk that STs and PTs in these cases co-construct versions of ‘good’ teacherly practices. At the same time, the speakers co-construct and agree on their respective institutional roles, rights and responsibilities as STs and PTs, STs speaking *as* supervisors *with* PTs *about* their practices, and PTs listening and speaking *as* learners, talking as members of a standardised relational ST/PT pairs within an asymmetrical institutional relationships. Having analysed the three extracts of talk-in-interaction (above), the paper now moves on to identify and summarise the main interactive ways the speakers assemble their shared institutional worlds, in and through their initial turns at talk.

5. Discussion of findings

Analysis has revealed the ways in which the speakers’ institutional identities are assigned and accepted, as different categorial members within the category collection ‘school’. So it is that STs and PTs talk as members of a particular standardised relational pair, adopting the rights and responsibilities associated with membership of their respective categories.

Throughout our data corpus, STs are seen to orient to the task of providing feedback in relation to PTs’ classroom practices by commenting on, evaluating and questioning the classroom strategies that they had observed in PTs’ lessons. STs assume the lead role in the talk by identifying the specific topic for talk, thereby orchestrating the ways in which the talk proceeds. PTs position themselves and are positioned as recipients of feedback, addressing the requirements of PT membership incumbency by demonstrating the associated category-bound attributes of effectively reflecting on, critiquing and making plans for future classroom practices. PTs are able, thus, to demonstrate a developing professionalism. So it is that the speakers speak *as* STs and PTs *with* each other *about* teaching and teacherly practices, accepting, orienting to and aligning with

each other's respective roles, rights and responsibilities within asymmetrical institutional relationships.

Not only do the speakers talk *as* STs and PTs, they also talk-into-being particular category-bound roles, rights and responsibilities. As members of their respective teacher categories, STs assume the right to provide feedback, to evaluate and to question PTs about their pedagogic classroom practices. PTs co-construct the asymmetrical relations associated with this SRP by positioning themselves as listeners, recipients and respondents in the opening couple of turns of talk.

A second layer of categorial work is co-constructed in these conversations, namely the co-construction of attributes that constitutes effective teaching practice. In Interview 1, ST evaluates PT positively by describing her "*instructions at the beginning as always very clear*", and acknowledges PT as being "*very confident in front of the classroom*", linking these attributions explicitly to PT, rating her classroom approaches highly, and as indicative of effective teacherly practices. In her beginning talk, ST also appraises the way in which this PT moved "*around the classroom*" positively. Similarly, in Interview 2, ST suggests that PT's "*greatest strength*" is her ability to "*come up with ... a good variety of different teaching strategies*". PTs involved in all three interviews respond, acknowledging and agreeing with their STs' versions of good teaching. In this way STs' selection of feedback about PTs' lessons shapes a particular version of what a 'good teacher' looks like in practice. STs' evaluative comments construct attributes that will shape PTs' understandings of attributes associated with the category 'good teacher'. As such STs are not simply providing feedback. Rather, they are actively sharing a particular view of the institutional world of which they are a part (Hester and Eglin 1997).

In all the interviews collected for this study, STs assumed the more powerful speaker position within asymmetrical ST/PT relationships, using particular MCDs including, for instance, those associated with setting up of the topic of the talk that followed. STs assumed their category-

bound right as STs to evaluate what they had observed of their respective PTs' teaching approaches and practices in earlier lessons, questioning them about their reasons for adopting such classroom practices. There was no evidence of 'trouble' in any of the initial ST/PT interview turns at talk included in the entire data cohort. Rather, there was a tendency for agreement, as demonstrated by PTs' compliance with STs' versions of events. The use of hedging, hesitancies and frequent pauses by both speakers demonstrated a potential delicacy that appears to be associated with delivering evaluations.

6. Conclusion

As argued above, one way in which pre-service teachers' learning can be facilitated is by having professional conversations with supervising mentor-teachers within the institution of the school. In this paper we demonstrate that STs and PTs involved in feedback talk engage in multi-layered categorial work. By using CA and MCA to frame scrutiny of the *in situ*, turn-by-turn initial utterances of STs and PTs in 'feedback talk', this paper has shown how these speakers co-construct particular institutional roles, rights responsibilities and category-bound attributions very early in their interactions. Their use of particular MCDs interactively assemble and achieve shared moral institutional orders of teachers and of teacherly practices, talking the institutional worlds, of which they were a part, into being as culture-in-action. The talk shows evidence of some of the conversational ways that PTs engage in the co-construction of asymmetrical institutional roles, rights and responsibilities as STs and PTs, and how they simultaneously develop particular understandings of what it means to be a good teacher. As recipients of ST feedback, they are learning how to talk *to* teachers, how to talk *about* teaching *with* teachers, and how to talk *about* teaching (see Smith 1990: 124-125).

Analysis revealed that the speakers co-construct asymmetrical institutional relationships within and through the talk, STs tending to lead the conversations, setting the agenda and leading the talk that follows, and PTs tending to confirm the STs' versions of their

observations of PTs' classroom practices. Evidence of ST/PT agreement within this institutional setting is, perhaps, not surprising. What it is to be an effective (pre-service) teacher is made 'commonsense' and normalised within and through the situated talk-in-interaction. However, the level of PT compliance might limit opportunities for extended pre-service teacher learning. The asymmetrical institutional relationships constructed by PTs and STs in the openings of these interactions suggest that the PTs are positioned and position themselves as listeners and, as such, are not given substantial opportunity to share their views or test their ideas. Furthermore, STs, who are seen as holding greater institutional power, produce evaluations that build lists of attributes associated with being a 'good teacher'. As a result of their institutional roles as evaluators, their construction of attributes of 'good teachers' hold the potential to shape PTs' future professional practice and may limit alternative perspectives of what constitutes good teaching practice. We argue that school-based professional experiences would benefit from changing school mentoring processes to facilitate the establishment of more equal and democratic relationships than those revealed in the conversations that were the focus of this paper, thereby perhaps providing increased opportunities for enriched pre-service teacher understandings and learning.

Notes

- ¹ The meetings are viewed as 'naturally occurring' in that they would have taken place whether or not they were going to be used for research purposes.
- ² The numbered lines of the transcripts are the first turns at talk to have been audio-recorded. Any pre-sequence that may have worked as a first move in the organisation of the talk that followed was not recorded and so remains unavailable for analysis.
- ³ The notations ST ('supervising teacher') and PT ('pre-service teacher') are used to denote the speakers. Please note that STs and PTs are different in each interview.
- ⁴ The 'feedback sheet' is regarded as an official document in that it was a standardised university-provided template for STs' observations of their PTs' classroom practices.

Appendix 1: Transcription Conventions

=	latched turns (no intervening pause)
[	heard as interruption or overlap
:	extended vowel or consonant
(1.0)	approximate pause in seconds
.	.5 second pause
,	pause of less than .5 seconds
(())	transcriber's description
()	untranscribable
(school)	uncertain transcription
.hh, hh	In breath (note the preceding full stop) and out breath respectively sound
<u>loud</u>	emphasis
MUST	reading from text
!	exclamatory intonation
?	interrogative or upward intonation
...	beginning or continuation of talk omitted
so-he-is	words said very quickly; words running into each other
>word<	inwards arrows show faster speech
<word>	outwards arrows show slower speech

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