

Workplace difficulties in teachers' professional conversations
Symposium organized by Kristine Balslev and Soraya de Simone

Professional conversations are considered as a powerful site for supporting the construction of professional knowledge the co-construction of meanings about practices (Orland-Barak, 2006). We consider these conversations as moments where teachers or prospective teachers articulate two worlds: the academic one with the professional one. In these conversations where prospective teachers or teachers speak together or with educators or researchers about workplace experiences, they often talk about difficulties. Talking about workplace difficulties means using specific words and explanations coming from more or less formal knowledge. It involves to position oneself regarding the difficulties and to adopt different attitudes to them (for example undergo or have a control on them). When teachers or prospective teachers talk about workplace difficulties they also often mention ways to overcome them: either by telling how they have come over them or how they will overcome them in the future. Their conversation partners (other teachers, researchers or supervisors) ask questions, reformulate, validate, invalidate or give advice.

We will focus on the way conversation partners talk about problems encountered in the workplace. We are especially interested in the words, or concepts used to describe the problem, the way interlocutors position themselves within their speech and regarding the problem, and finally the resources and knowledge used to solve the problems. We are aware that not all professional conversations foster professional development, therefore our aim is to put in light and to discuss the features that either show or foster professional development within (prospective) teachers.

In this symposium, we will be interested in professional conversations taking place in different contexts: in initial and continuous training, or in the context of researches on professional practices. The most important is that the conversations deal with work experiences (coming from a professional practice or from internships) and that they give access to the construction of professional knowledge, as defined by Vanhulle (2009): foundation knowledge for teaching activity, involving the integration of different types of reference knowledge and linked to professional experience.

The following questions frame the presentations:

- What resources are used to describe work problems?
- How do speakers position themselves while talking about their work problems?
- Which indicators show the articulation between "theory and practice"?
- What discursive indicators show the presence of professional knowledge or the construction of professional knowledge?
- What knowledge is mobilized in order to describe and solve work problems?
- How can the results be used to install or improve teacher education settings?

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Theory and practice articulation in professional discourses: the case of group management in the language classroom

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Professional conversations are considered as one of the most efficient way for teachers to develop their ability to reflect on their own professional practice (Bigot & Cadet, 2011; Vanhulle, 2009) and are subsequently regarded, in the field of teachers' training, as a potentially formative moment (Laurens, 2015; Aguilar & Cicurel, 2014). If results tend to show the efficiency of professional conversations on teachers' practices, researchers still need to dig into those discourses to identify the key articulations between theoretical (i.e.: definition and norms of the task) and practical (i.e.: facts, events, experiences, procedural information) discourses.

Using the methodological model which has been developed by Bulea & Bronckart (2012) and which makes it possible to describe speeches in terms of *theoretical and practical implication* of the agents ("figures of action"), we will focus on the words that teachers use during research interviews to refer to a specific dimension of teaching practice: group management. Indeed, teachers often insist on the difficulty to deal *at the same time* with students' individual needs and with what they identify to be the needs of the group "as a whole" (Dörnyei & Ehrman, 1998). We then propose to observe both the *event* "group management" as it is described and analyzed by teachers and *the actions teachers say they undertake* to deal with it. Among other findings, we will emphasize the following points:

- Theoretical discourses emerge mostly when teachers are asked to *define their usual practice* (which underlines the dialogic characteristics of professional conversations); on those occasions, speech turns management in class is described as a *non-problematic, transversal and inevitable aspect* of their daily work.
- When asked to reflect on *situated conversational events*, teachers most frequently use practical knowledge based on their previous experience ("*usually* I tend to do this or that") and to position themselves as *moderators* and *solution finders*;
- When they feel that their choices of actions resulted in some kind of failure, teachers tend to define class management as a *dilemma* and to express:
 - o *regrets* not to have reacted in a "proper" way, i.e. with an action which is coherent with pedagogical theory ("*I should have done + action + because theory*");
 - o *research of practical solutions* for future practice ("*next time, I will do + action + because theory*");

From this analysis, we can say that the articulation between theory and practice in professional conversations seem to emerge:

- mostly as a *causal link*,
- mainly when something in the class did not go "as planned".

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Interactions at work and professional development : how tutors and students deal with work difficulties during mentoring conversations

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In mentoring conversations a distinction between practical knowledge and formal knowledge is often used. Training modalities should promote the link between theory and practice and articulate « knowledge about teaching » and « knowledge for teaching » (Chaliès & al., 2009 ; Vanhulle, 2009 ; Balslev, 2016).

This research seeks to identify the elements mentioned in mentoring dialogues, because professional conversations are considered as a prevailing place for sustaining the construction of professional knowledge about teachers work (Orland-Barak, 2006). Therefore, we identified in mentoring conversations how tutors interpret their work difficulties and what knowledge they mobilize in their speech with the trainee.

For this communication, the data are based on six mentoring conversations, between two mentors and their trainee. Both mentors have conducted three interviews in three different moments during the last semester of the trainees undergoing training (February, March and April). The conversations have been transcribed and analysed with a grid based on literature dealing with tutors' work (Ronveaux et Vanhulle, 2007; Hennisen & al, 2008 ; Mehran, Chaliès & al, 2009; Vanhulle, 2009 ; Balslev, 2016). The analysis tools are composed of knowledge classification (Vanhulle, 2009) and different kind of abilities used in conversations (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Efklidès, 2008).

Our goal is to understand what elements the mentor takes into account in order to guide the trainee, during their conversations and how they cope with work difficulties. We wanted to see, if these analyses show professional development from the first to the third interview. From these mentoring dialogues emerge how tutors describe their work, and can also show which indicators actors use when they mention professional knowledge. This research gives information for tutors' formation settings. Our questions to foster our investigations are :

- On what elements do mentors focus the trainee during their conversations ?
- What knowledge is mobilized in order to describe work difficulties during mentoring conversations ?

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Time as a major workplace difficulty

K. Balslev

According to Hartmut Rosa (2014), modern life is in constant acceleration. In most domains things are going faster thanks to technology. Nevertheless, modern humans do not benefit from this acceleration but rather suffer from it. In the field of teacher education, especially in triadic mentoring conversations dealing with internship experiences, time is a recurrent topic; at least in those we have filmed for the purpose of a research on the construction of professional knowledge. Chronological time is at the same time a constraint that teachers undergo and an element that they learn to master. In this communication we study words used to talk about time in mentoring conversations and resources used to overcome problems linked with time. We did a first lexicometric analysis of 54 mentoring conversations in the field of initial teacher education and found that this topic was present in all but one mentoring conversation. We then investigated if prospective teachers considered time as a difficulty. In order to answer that question we identified other words linked to "time". Our results show seven ways of considering time: as a limited resource; as a surplus; as related to desynchronicity (for example when pupils do not progress at the same pace); as a to categorize moments and activities; as an adversary; as an ally; as a controllable element. Thus time is often related to difficulties, but not always. We then analyzed in detail a triadic mentoring conversation concerning one prospective teacher. We chose a typical example of such conversations in which the prospective teacher encounters a problem shared by others (how to deal with heterogeneity in the classroom?), succeeds in his internship, with experienced trainers. In this communication we will analyze words and expressions used to talk about time, resources used to solve problems linked with time. The results show that this prospective student uses theoretical definitions, practical and technical solutions to overcome problems linked with time and uses different types of positioning (Rabatel, 2012) regarding workplace difficulties related to time: I-who-acts; I-who-thinks, I-who-learns. In conclusion, we note that time occupies an important place in prospective teachers' concerns; and that two main topics are related to time: planning and differentiation. In addition we found that the question of time rises different tensions that prospective teacher encounter: undergo time vs master time; undergo decisions taken by other vs need to master decisions; take responsibilities vs feel guilty; respect each child's rhythm vs respect the rhythm of the program. We will finally discuss

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to what respect the fact of talking about these workplace difficulties fosters professional development.

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