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Working Paper 141: Evaluation of the London Deanery Training Course:
Supervision Skills for Clinical Teachers

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Executive Summary

Background

The importance of educational supervision and training for supervisors is recognised in PMETB/GDC standards. In the London Deanery supervision skills training for clinical teachers is integrated within its Professional Development Framework.

The rapid expansion of teaching activity by the Faculty Development Unit of the London Deanery resulted in their call for an independent evaluation to establish the effects of the training beyond immediate post-course satisfaction assessments. Focused on a three-day 'Conversations Inviting Change' supervision skills training course, the primary aim of the evaluation was to seek to understand the benefits and challenges of the educational input in terms of its ability to change and improve supervision practice.

The approach to supervision which is adopted in the training encourages the discussion of ambiguity and complexity in an attempt to develop a particular attitude of mind. From this, the course aims to teach specific questioning techniques used to elicit stories and critically reflect on them. Informed by the work of Tomm (1988), supervisors are encouraged to adopt a perspective of the world as comprising *circular processes* (rather than just linear), whereby the influence players (interactants) have on one another is reciprocal. Within this perspective they are urged to take a *neutral and non-judgemental stance* towards the issue at hand and towards their supervisee. These fundamentals have been summarised as 'the seven Cs': the value of focused *conversation*, the power of *curiosity*, the importance of *context*, the use of *creativity*, the recognition of *complexity* and the need for challenging with *caution* and *care*.

The principal teaching technique is small group *real* supervision practice with course participants adopting the role of supervisor, supervisee and peer observer and with a trainer acting as a coach. In these quadratic interactions (supervisor, supervisee, trainer(s) and observer(s)), the supervisor is encouraged to break and receive feedback from the observers (including the trainer). Other teaching methods include demonstration by an experienced trainer, role play, paired speed supervision, video and power-point presentations of theory and large group discussion. Additionally, new trainers (trainee-trainers) are simultaneously trained by more experienced 'super-trainers'.

Aims and Method

The overarching aim of this evaluation was to examine how participants take on new perspectives and techniques during the course, their sense-making and reflections on the course and their development as supervisors.

The specific three-day supervision skills course took place during June-July 2010 and was attended by 14 participants for all three days. Two trainers, two trainee-trainers and one main super-trainer were also present. With consent, data were collected by means of audio and video recording and field notes.

The evaluation drew on narrative enquiry situated within a symbolic interactionist framework, an approach which was consistent with the course philosophy. Kirkpatrick's model of programme evaluation was used to organise the research questions and to guide the data gathering and reporting. Within this model, LEVEL 1 concerns the participants' reaction or satisfaction with the programme. The focus of LEVEL 2 is the demonstration of learning (perspectives and techniques). LEVEL 3 considers the extent to which new learning is applied to practice. The specific research questions were:

LEVEL 1: REACTION OR SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAMME

1. What aspects of the course are perceived by participants to be more or less effective?

LEVEL 2: DEMONSTRATION OF LEARNING (PERSPECTIVES AND TECHNIQUES)

2. How are perspectives and techniques delivered and received?
3. In what ways do participants demonstrate a change in perspectives and techniques along the lines of the course ethos?

LEVEL 3: EXTENT TO WHICH NEW LEARNING IS APPLIED TO PRACTICE

4. What is the impact of the course on participants and others in contact with them (supervisees, patients, others)?
5. What issues arise for participants as they use the perspectives and techniques from the course?

To address Level 1, data from audio diaries were collected and analysed. Interaction analysis of the video and audio recorded quadratic interactions/ paired supervisions provided Level 2 evidence. Findings relating to Level 3 were derived from a narrative analysis of the audio diaries.

We collected more data on the three course days than we could analyse within our time frame. In total, ten participants provided 201 minutes of audio diaries (ranging from 5 to 58 minutes). For the quadratic interaction /paired supervision, we recorded approximately 401 minutes per supervisor and supervisee plus 466 recorded minutes per feedback (observers plus supervisor and supervisee). Two case studies were selected for the interaction analysis: David and Mary. Our selective use of the data was driven by the research questions. We studied all the data; the extracts subjected to interaction analysis raise points of discussion which were evident elsewhere in the data. All audio diary data were thoroughly interrogated.

Results

LEVEL 1 ANALYSIS

THEME 1: PRACTISING SUPERVISION

The audio dairies provided clear endorsement of the opportunity to practise supervision skills in the paired supervisions /quadratic interaction. Although participants found practising the new questioning techniques challenging, they valued the high quality feedback that was generally provided by the trainers. There was some indication of variability in how that role was performed and some trainers were thought to be more skilled than others. In addition, the value in the observer role was noted. While those in the role of supervisee generally appreciated the benefits of having their own problems discussed, perhaps because of lack of experience or difficult, emotionally charged scenarios, there were occasions when the supervisee could be left with unresolved issues and feelings of discomfort.

There was mixed praise for the speed supervision activities. Seven minutes was insufficient time in which to develop understanding of the techniques and to explore complex problems, so risking unresolved feelings and raising the ethical issue of participant vulnerability. In contrast, it was noted that speed supervision exercises recognise that the normal interactions within workplace settings can be time-limited. In addition, the use of speed supervision within the contact days brought energy to the day.

The diarists reported varied reactions to supervision practice using role play scenarios which appears to be due to a complex interaction of issues including the under-developed nature of the scenario as provided to the supervisee, the relative skill of the supervisor, the open nature of the exercise with numerous observers and the emotional engagement of the participants. The experience of one supervisee was described in terms of interrogation rather than supervision. Our main finding from the data on role-play, however, was to recognise the important part played by the emotions within the interaction, a conclusion that runs in contrast to the underlying assumptions regarding the neutrality of the exercise.

THEME 2: LEARNING THROUGH LECTURES, GROUP WORK, DEMONSTRATIONS AND ROLE MODELLING

While the audio diaries were replete with reactions to practising and observing supervision skills, far fewer comments were voiced about other aspects of the course. Where other learning activities were mentioned, responses varied and it seemed that the specific mix of trainers and trainee-trainers had a powerful effect on participants' learning and their emotional reactions to activities. The transparent role modelling between trainers and trainee-trainers could provide positive endorsement of the approach but only where it expressly concurred with the espoused ethos of the course. We note below how this was not always the case and the effect that had on participants.

THEME 3: ENGAGING WITH THEORY AND TECHNIQUES

The theoretical underpinning of the approach and the questioning techniques were highlighted by a few of the diarists. For the most part, the theory and techniques were something that participants engaged with and understood to varying degrees by the end of the course.

THEME 4: SUGGESTED CHANGES

Changes suggested by individual participants were recorded in their audio diaries. The one popular recommendation was for the inclusion of some kind of recorded reflection within the process of the course. One participant suggested the use of pre-scripted scenarios with the trainer playing the supervisee role. A common criticism concerned the limitations of the big room which became noisy when multiple groups were working simultaneously.

LEVEL 2 ANALYSIS

Conversations involve both content and delivery of talk. Trainers employed variously complex and different styles of delivery and, in relation to Tomm's (1988) model and the 7Cs, we noted four main types of talk-combination:

1. HOLISTIC CONGRUENCE

This is an aligned and holistic position leading to co-production in the interaction. The talk type (relating to Tomm's questions) and the effect of this is in full congruence with the course ethos of an holistic approach and greater attention is paid to the 7Cs through both the content and structure of talk.

2. AUTHORITARIAN CONGRUENCE

This position is aligned to a reductionist, authoritarian and didactic style leading to a unilateral approach within the interaction. In this talk-combination the content of the talk is assertive and lineal and the speaker's position becomes oppositional. The speaker adopts a forceful tone in their delivery. The effect on the respondent is constraining and conservative invoking a corrective and investigative situational frame.

3. HOLISTIC INCONGRUENCE

Aspects of the speakers' talk appear to be in congruence with the course ethos of an holistic approach but the way in which the talk is delivered places the speaker in an oppositional or judgemental position, exerting a constrained and conservative effect on the recipient of their talk. The speaker does attempt to mitigate this incongruence through paralinguistic talk features associated with the 7Cs and so remains unilateral in the interaction.

4. AUTHORITARIAN INCONGRUENCE

The talk type of the speaker is assertive or lineal, but the effects on the respondent and the situational frame are incongruent with that didactic and authoritarian approach. The respondent appears liberated and generative and the conversation continues within an exploratory and facilitative frame. The speaker softens their approach through role modelling of the 7Cs both within the content and structure of their talk features leading to successful co-production within the interaction.

This analysis led us to question the capacity of the Tomm's (1988) model to predict responses and to emphasise the importance of the 7Cs both in the content and structure of talk. Even poor modelling by the trainers and poor questioning skills by the practising supervisor at times elicited detailed responses from supervisees and produced positive outcomes when the 7Cs were attended to through appropriate features of talk.

One of two case studies demonstrated a change in perspectives and techniques along the lines of the course ethos (i.e. Mary). While she struggled with using the course techniques she managed to persevere, resulting in her successfully using an Holistic Congruent talk-combination by the end of Day 3. The other case study, David, revealed how the effective use of talk (i.e. within the Authoritarian Incongruence talk-combination) led to a masking of authoritative questioning, resulting in inadequate feedback. This was probably due to the resulting exploratory and facilitative framing of the conversation upon which his trainer and peers focused. Ultimately, this participant did not show any evidence of working within an Holistic Congruent talk-combination and demonstrated no change over time.

LEVEL 3 ANALYSIS

Here we focused on the impact of the course to affect change. Based on the thematic and narrative analysis of the audio diary data, impact was demonstrated on all four groups under consideration: themselves (n=24 Personal Incident Narratives or PINs), their colleagues and supervisees (n=16 PINs), patients (n=8 PINs) and others (n=4 PINs). Four themes were identified.

THEME 1: CHANGE IN PRACTICE

The extent to which participants narrated a change in practice (rather than mere attempts to utilise the techniques) varied greatly. Of the six participants with at least three PINs over different time periods, five narrated progression in terms of their perceived development, with the remaining participant narrating stability. Amongst the five, positioning analysis revealed that not all progression was equal.

Simon cited a broad application of the techniques and seemed to have embodied this way of being, demonstrating an impact on himself as a person. For others, the change appeared to be enacted rather than embodied where the questioning techniques appeared to be utilised, sometimes in a manner that was contrary to the ethos of the course. For example, Mary appeared to employ the techniques as a way of bringing the interactant around to a

prescribed conclusion rather than enabling them to explore fully the situation for themselves.

Change for Mai was not straightforward. We classified her change position as stable. She appeared to struggle with mastering the techniques admitting a tendency to revert to her *normal mode of working*.

THEME 2: FACILITATING IMPACT

Attempts to apply learning in practice facilitated further impact and learning and action was an important step towards the embodiment of new ways of working. This was particularly evident when participants experienced a direct change in others' perspectives and understandings through use of the questioning technique. This highlighted the wider impact of the course on the supervisee (or other interactant) in terms of the potential *therapeutic benefit* that shifting their perspective brings.

THEME 3: MITIGATING IMPACT

By far the most common concern was the additional time involved as they questioned, explored and empowered their interactants to come to their own conclusions regarding their issues. However, the issue of time was not straightforward: choosing *not* to use the techniques because of time-pressures could result in an unsatisfactory conclusion which would demand further time later.

The level of engagement of their interactant with the process could have a limiting effect. If the other person was reluctant to engage in this form of conversation then it not only took longer, but sometimes became impossible to continue. Impact was also restricted for some participants who experienced difficulty in remembering the specifics of the course techniques.

THEME 4: LEVEL 4 OUTCOME POTENTIAL

Three participants (six PINs) provided us with rudimentary evidence that there was indeed a potential for organisational performance and patient outcomes to improve. Four of these six PINs came from Simon. An extended illustration seemed to demonstrate that by shifting the conversation Simon changed the power relations within an interaction, opening up space for the patient to 'connect' with the issue and gain control over his future actions.

Conclusions

Education is a complex, social event and causal links between a training programme and impact on participants' behaviour in the workplace are not readily assessed. We recognise the *softness* of impact-on-practice data but were nevertheless able to report that the narrative analysis of the audio diary data provided evidence of impact on the participants, their colleagues and supervisees, patients and others. The extent to which participants narrated a change in practice varied greatly. Some applied the techniques with success whereas others struggled. We were also able to present rudimentary evidence that there was potential for improvement to patient outcomes.

In terms of the approach to training, the emphasis on practising the supervision skills was clearly appropriate and good practice that should be acknowledged. However, our analysis also drew attention to the extent to which the trainers' behaviour was not always congruent with the course ethos and the model approach to questioning techniques.

We evidenced powerful emotional responses in all the key learning activities: in the paired supervision/quadratic interactions, in the speed supervisions and in the exercise which used role play scenarios. Emotions were recognised and sensitively handled by the

trainers at times but on occasion the response was insufficient. Sensitive handling of emotional responses is clearly acknowledged within the 7Cs which include *caution* and *care*. Caution refers to the delicate balance needed to challenge the supervisee *enough* but not *too* much. Achieving this balance between destabilising and stabilising is not easy particularly given that the participants were novices and this poses a danger that in practising these skills the supervisees are placed in a vulnerable position. The importance of this is recognised in the need for *care* which includes commitment to the supervisee's wellbeing.

Recommendations

These suggested recommendations should be read in the context of the good practice demonstrated in the course and its achievements in developing the supervision skills of the participants.

1. The course emphasis on practising supervision in the quadratic interactions should be retained (along with the course-team de-brief sessions).
2. All trainers need to strive towards an approach to training that is in harmony at all times with the course ethos. Specifically, trainers' use of the questioning technique and the transparency of the role modelling between super-trainers and trainee-trainers must concord with the course philosophy.
3. An increased emphasis should be given to understanding the dynamics of the 7Cs model (including for both the content and the structure of talk) with the limitations of Tomm's (1988) model being made more explicit.
4. Trainers should be alert to participant confusion and seek to address uncertainty or puzzlement. Confusion may be revealed in a number of ways including in participants' expression and in how, as novices, they employ the techniques which might, for example, reveal them directing supervisees to predetermined ends.
5. Trainers need to be aware of participant compliance and the role of the emotions and the potential implications these have for providing the practising supervisor with restricted feedback.
6. The course doesn't suit all. In recognising this, trainers should advise those individuals who demonstrate a lack of effort or commitment on Day 1 to leave the course.
7. The suitability of the approach, including the complexity of time factors, the appropriateness of speed supervisions, the need to be responsive to the interactants' responses (and possible disengagement, or feelings of interrogation) should be explored in more detail on the contact days.
8. Trainers need to attend to how they address the emotional responses of participants. This might include alerting potential course participants, setting aside time specifically for recognising and addressing the emotional responses provoked by the discussion of real-life dilemmas and, more frequent use of trainers playing the role of supervisee, using their own dilemmas.
9. Venues should have sufficient space or break out rooms to accommodate small group activity without noise levels becoming disruptive.
10. The trainers/programme director might consider the possible integration of some form of reflective process that could be employed between course days. This might include the use of portfolios and/or audio diaries. How to facilitate further reflection, post-course could also be reviewed.

11. Given the inclusion of two trainee-trainers, a super-trainer and two trainers would seem to be required for the duration of the course. In the longer term, the course teams should review the benefits and drawbacks of including trainee-trainers.
12. Where possible, training teams and participants should remain constant for the duration of each course day.

Introduction

Courses and workshops in supervision skills for clinical teachers have been run by the Faculty Development Unit of the London Deanery since 2007. Based on the courses originally provided for clinical teachers in family medicine (which have run since 2003), participants now include GP and dental trainers, clinical teachers and consultants in hospitals, amongst others. A number of training options are available including one day workshops (30 run per year), three-day courses over five weeks (6 per annum), fortnightly seminars, certificate courses for those who want to teach advanced supervision skills and an associated support group for the accredited teachers who have gained the professional certificate. The workshops and three-day courses contribute to the Deanery's Professional Development Framework.

Support and development of trainees, trainers and local faculty is included as a domain in the PMETB Generic Standards for Training (2008a). Effective supervision is a central mechanism through which trainees are supported in their acquisition of necessary skills and experience. The associated PMETB Standards for Trainers (PMETB, 2008b) are principally targeted at educational supervisors. That these standards exist is indication of the importance of supervision and a recent PMETB/GDC recommendation is for the development of a framework for the accreditation of trainers (PMETB/GDC, 2010). Teaching the teachers is no longer an optional extra (Swanwick, 2009).

Key aspects of the supervisor role include regular review of trainees' progress, giving constructive feedback and identifying trainees whose progress gives cause for concern. The role is thus concerned both with the support of learning and development but also with monitoring performance (Halpern & McKimm, 2009).

The rapid expansion of teaching activity by the Faculty Development Unit of the London Deanery resulted in their call for an independent evaluation to establish the effects of the training beyond immediate post-course satisfaction assessments. The primary aim of the evaluation is to seek to understand the benefits and challenges of the educational input of the three-day course in terms of its ability to change and improve supervision practice. Our evaluation focused on one of the three-day 'Conversations Inviting Change' courses.

The Three Day 'Conversations Inviting Change' Course

COURSE PHILOSOPHY AND TECHNIQUES

The three-day course grew out of work on patient consultations which promote a therapeutic, non-directive and non-interpretative approach. The ethos of the supervision training programme, of which the three-day courses are a core element, is based on a number of ideas drawn from narrative studies (Greenhalgh & Hurwitz, 1999), social constructionism and systemic family therapy. Rather than focusing on finding solutions, the approach to supervision allows and encourages the discussion of ambiguity and complexity in an attempt to develop a particular attitude of mind. From this, the course aims to teach specific interactional techniques used for eliciting stories and critically reflecting on them, which are thought to be essential for good supervision.

As we adopt a similar theoretical perspective in our evaluation of the course, we outline the course philosophy here, along with the specific techniques that the course aims to develop. We begin this by acknowledging that the training is based on "a particular attitude of mind and a set of techniques that convey that attitude" and that the attitude is "more

important than the theory" (Launer 2008¹); this is reflected in our evaluation and we refer to this attitude as *perspective*. Based on the theoretical perspectives the course draws on, one of the key aspects of the training is that supervisors are encouraged to adopt a perspective of the world as comprising *circular processes* (rather than just lineal), whereby interactants in the world influence each other reciprocally.² Launer (2008) comments that the skill of circularity in questioning is to use the response to the last question to frame the next. Question stems might be of the type that asks: 'can you imagine a situation...?' or 'what explanation do you have...?'. (This is further explored in the section on questioning techniques below). Furthermore, within this perspective they are urged to take a *neutral and non-judgemental stance* towards the issue at hand and towards their supervisee and any other interactants. It is this perspective (and its development) which comprises an important aspect of our analysis for this evaluation. Other aspects of our analysis focus on the development of the techniques associated with such a perspective and how these are reported and observed within our data.

SYSTEMS THEORY

Based on the work of Bateson (1972) and others, systems theory acknowledges that everything is connected with everything else and as such, no one can ever be outside and objective and that perception can only ever be partial. From this perspective, problems don't belong to any one individual. Indeed, problems frequently arise within interaction. Everything we say encompasses a number of unspoken and interrelated contexts. We are always responding to somebody else in the context of an ongoing conversation or relationship with the other. We are also communicating within the context of prescribed social and cultural rules of conversation. Confusion occurs when these unspoken, interrelating contexts differ between interactants.

Drawing on this perspective of communication which resonates with social constructionist perspectives, the training introduces a number of concepts to participants, including *double binds* or *strange loops* and *charmed loops*. With double binds, also known as strange loops, the interaction between people becomes paradoxical and contradictory, frequently influenced by prior interactions/contexts. The concept of loops (strange or charmed) is based on the interrelatedness of these contexts which can be nested and at different levels, with higher level contexts governing contexts at lower levels. Thus, a strange loop (double bind) occurs when the unspoken contexts between interactants are at odds with one other, often leading to misunderstanding and confusion. A charmed loop can help correct this by explicitly assigning the higher context to the conversation in order to reach an understanding of the intended message being conveyed. The approach to supervision that is taught is aimed at providing the techniques to help supervisors identify and correct these strange loops. Launer (2008) provides examples of questions to use to re-establish an agreement at a higher level of context:

'You started by talking about a case, and now we're concentrating on the way your nurse mismanaged it: do you want to focus now on how to deal with the case or on the nurse's performance?'.... 'When we started this conversation you were clear there was a definite problem to look at: can I check if you think that's still the case – and if so what the problem is?'

¹ Taken from a document by John Launer entitled: Supervision Skills for Clinical Teachers: a short course. The London Deanery. Introduction to theory. (2008) No page numbers.

² This is not to say that participants are required to completely reject a lineal viewpoint rather that they develop a circular perspective *in addition* and utilise this perspective strategically as they orient themselves and their questioning within the supervisor-supervisee interaction (Tomm, 1988).

He also points out that strange loops can arise when the supervisee has reached saturation. In such situations, Launer (2008) suggests that useful questions to ask include:

'how is this conversation going for you? how helpful are you finding it? Are there any other questions I should be asking you?'

Essentially, within the Conversations Inviting Change framework, the supervisors' aim is to be inquisitive, sympathetic *and* challenging as they investigate the range of perspectives on the issue at hand (Launer, 2008).

NARRATIVE THEORY

We give meaning to our experiences in the world through narrative (Bamberg et al, 2004; Charon, 2006; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Sarbin, 1986). From this premise, Conversations Inviting Change endorses a supervision style mainly based on questioning. The use of questions (and particular kinds of questions) prevents the supervisor from becoming overly involved or directive towards their supervisee, facilitating supervisees to generate their own ideas and solutions. The general idea is that the supervisee is given the mental space to consider a greater number of perspectives within their process of sense-making thus providing them with the potential to re-story events and experiences towards the production of a useful new story (Launer, 2002).

A heightened awareness of language and words used is developed as a mechanism for better understanding and probing meanings. This questioning technique focuses on asking questions which invite change. Emphasis is placed on questioning which elicits stories and invites movement from a 'stuck' story to a new one with more flexibility (Launer, 2002). Launer³ explains that the "main idea is that properly structured conversations can lead to the production of a useful new story." Participants are taught to track the exact words and phrases used and making inquiry into these. Launer provides an example and how the supervisors are encouraged to probe:

'when you say you're confused about why he came, what are the different possibilities that go through your mind...?' We particularly encourage interviewers to ask questions about the context surrounding the story. This usually involves seeking some understanding of who else is involved in the case apart from the practitioner being interviewed. It also involves curiosity into the context surrounding the index patient: family, work colleagues, ethics or cultural identity and so on: for example: 'Are there any areas of the patient's life that you might want to ask about to shed light on what she's describing?' The reason for this is that such questions often help the practitioner.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION, ROLES AND IDENTITIES

Premised on a social constructionist perspective, Conversations Inviting Change challenges long established *role based* training whereby the roles given to interactants (e.g. teacher and student; therapist and client; supervisor and supervisee) prescribe/ describe expectations and performance of interactants' within any interactional situation (e.g. lesson; therapy; supervision). In contrast, the course favours a far more fluid notion of identity and interaction, subscribing to the idea that an interactant's identity, and the nature of the interaction situation, is *constructed and co-constructed* through the evolving conversation within the lesson or supervision. So, during the course of an interaction, speakers position themselves and others differently, thereby constructing different micro-situations, or frames, within the larger interactional situation (Davies, 2001).

³ Taken from a document by John Launer entitled: A narrative-based approach to supervision. (no date) 7 pages.

Although at the outset of the course some consideration is given to the traditionally prescribed role and associated expectations, categorisation of the supervisor role (for example as assessor, as facilitator) are not dwelt upon. Rather, the focus is on the *process* of supervision and the interaction between supervisor and supervisee. In particular, rather than a supervisor exerting a directive authority upon a supervisee, the course favours them taking a more responsive approach to the supervisees' needs as these unfold during an interaction or conversation. The shift away from categorisation is reflected in the title of the course where the less prescriptive term 'conversations' displaces the alternative 'supervisions' and 'inviting change' points to negotiation within the interaction. It also gives recognition to invaluable impromptu supervision. This is explored in London Deanery's DVD where colleagues speak with each other in an informal quiet space. Provided the basic principles of supervision are attended to, such unplanned interactions can present ideal opportunities for 'conversations inviting change' (Launer, 2008).

POSITIONING THROUGH QUESTIONS

Integral to this social constructionist viewpoint is the idea that the supervisor is constantly negotiating their position, and thus, cumulatively, their identity as a particular type of supervisor. Through the way the supervisor talks, they may deliver, withhold, accept or refute a particular position to the supervisee. Conversations Inviting Change employs a specific model (Tomm, 1988) which recognises the hierarchical relationship of traditional roles whereby one person in the interaction may enter the conversation in a position of greater authority/power than the other. The model addresses the barriers that such authority/power differentials can foster within interaction. It is built on the premise that positions are occupied by interactants. It focuses on the questioning technique of the speaker in authority, outlining ways in which different questioning techniques can lead to different positions and frames for both interactants. Through the use of this model within the training, participants' awareness of this ongoing positioning is raised, and through this awareness their practice of supervision is developed.

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

The questioning techniques are drawn from the concept of circular questioning, and adapted by the Canadian psychologist Karl Tomm in his descriptions of *Interventive Interviewing* (Palazzoli, 1980; Tomm, 1988). Tomm (1988) suggests that during any interview situation the interviewer begins with a set of *assumptions* about the world (e.g. *lineal* or *circular*) and has a particular *intention* when forming their question (e.g. an *orienting* intention to change their own understanding of the situation, or an *influencing* intention to change the interviewee's understanding).

In addition to commenting on assumptions and intent, Tomm (1988) identifies four question types – lineal, circular, strategic and reflexive – which map onto the assumption and intent that the supervisor adopts at any particular time.⁴ Lineal questions come from lineal assumptions of the world, are designed to orient the supervisor to the issue at hand and are typically of the *who, why, when, where* investigative variety. Likewise circular questions also orient the supervisor but come from circular assumptions and are designed to investigate connections by asking, for example "what do you think x would say?", "How do you think x sees her?" or "When x does that, what does y do?" Strategic questions tend to come from lineal assumptions but have a more influencing intent, for example "have you tried...?" and

⁴ We acknowledge the simplification of typifying the use of specific question type and in our analysis we recognise that questions can be influenced by any orientation and intent, and thus manifest themselves accordingly.

“What about asking x to do y?” Finally, reflexive questions come from circular assumptions and have an influencing intent. Frequently these manifest themselves as constructions of future hypothetical scenarios, for example, asking things such as “What do you think might happen if...?”, “What would you do if this happened again?” and “What would have to happen for you to feel differently?”

Thus, in addition to using simple lineal orienting “who, where, when, why” questions, in line with the perspective of narrative sense-making, Conversations Inviting Change encourage supervisors to move towards using questions that are more influencing: reflexive questions that open mental space for creative hypothetical thinking. For example, “when s/he does this, how would x react?” Or, “if you look at this from a different perspective, what thoughts would you have?” Throughout this process the supervisor is encouraged to keep an open mind, remain curious and be aware of the tone that they adopt when asking questions. Furthermore, they are encouraged to track the supervisee’s use of words to avoid making assumptions and to keep on their wavelength.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER: THE SEVEN CS

Launer has sought to summarise these fundamentals and capture them within ‘seven Cs’. Essentially, the supervisor is seen as one who is concurrently curious and challenging, aware that the trainee's account is not the only ‘truth’ (Launer, 2006). ‘The seven Cs’ represent the value of focused *conversation*, the power of *curiosity*, the importance of *context*, the use of *creativity*, the recognition of *complexity* and the need for challenging with *caution* and *care*.

Identifying the supervision process as conversation gives emphasis to the importance of informality, equality and narrative and how through the process of joint sense-making supervisees might rethink and possibly reconstruct their own story. In recognising the importance of curiosity towards the position taken by all parties involved, the approach advocates an openness within the questions asked, paying attention to the words said and unsaid as well as gesture, voice and tone. This curiosity extends to the supervisor themselves, acknowledging the supervisor’s own position and urges the adoption of a neutral approach. Context considers a range of contextual aspects although focuses on distal and proximal power relations: distal relations include the supervisee’s perception of power and who holds this in their life whereas proximal relations attend to power within the supervisor-supervisee interaction. In appreciating complexity, the approach seeks to move beyond lineal cause-effect thinking, and through questioning, opens up possibilities to see multiple interconnections between people and events. Caution refers to the delicate balance between challenging the supervisee too much and becoming ineffectual. Achieving this balance between destabilising and stabilising requires the supervisor constantly to look for cues from their supervisee and monitor responses accordingly. In all this, the supervisor should show care: respect for the supervisee, commitment to their wellbeing and a demonstration of compassion.

APPROACHES TO TRAINING

The three contact days are divided by a two week time period, designed to enable supervisors to apply their learning and facilitate deeper reflection on, and further development of techniques.

The principal teaching technique is through small group *real* supervision activities by participants⁵ (based on a difficult case or work situation that the supervisee brings), using

⁵ When describing the course we refer to the individuals attending the course as *participants*, and the tutors as *trainers* and *trainee trainers*.

peer observers and with the trainer acting as a coach. In these quadratic interactions (course participant supervisor, course participant supervisee, trainer(s) and course participant observer(s)), the supervisor is encouraged to break and receive feedback from the observers (including the trainer), so-called 'time-out'. Additionally, the layering of the course is such that new trainers (trainee trainers) are simultaneously being trained by more experienced trainers. Thus, participants also learn by listening to the trainer-trainee discussion around supervision techniques, particularly when the experienced trainer is talking through technique options with a trainee trainer whilst s/he is acting as trainer during participant supervisor-supervisee sessions. This additional layering of training the trainers comprises a quintet, but for expediency we generally refer to these as quadratic interactions. Other teaching methods include demonstration by an experienced trainer, role-play, paired speed supervision, video and power-point presentations of theory and large group discussion.

Aims and Methods

Aims and Original Research Questions

The aim of this work was to conduct an external evaluation of the programme, recognising that the educational activity represents a complex, social intervention (Kilminster, 2007; Launer & Halpern, 2006) and that illuminating the impact of the course on the participants' own role as supervisors, their supervisees and colleagues as well as their own and their supervisees work with patients would be particularly challenging (Bakhtin, 1986; Lemke, 1985).

Focused on the three-day course, the main research questions (RQs) were as given in the tender documentation:

1. What does the training contribute to the development of supervision skills in its participants?
2. Is there any direct or indirect evidence that training supervisors in this approach has an impact on (a) the welfare or performance of those under their supervision and (b) the welfare of patients?

These were supplemented by a list of 16 questions (Appendix A; page 78). The overarching aim of this evaluation therefore was to consider the process of participants' developing interactions during the course, their sense-making and reflections on the course and their developing interactions as supervisors.

Methodological approach

To ensure internal validity, the approach to the evaluation was consistent with the course philosophy. Drawing on narrative enquiry situated within a symbolic interactionist framework we adopt the viewpoint that the social world is not a fixed or objective entity, external to individuals and impacting on them in a deterministic way. Rather it is constructed by individuals in and through their social practices, including talk. Narrative is a core sense-making activity, and through narrative we express our identities: who we were, who we are and who we might become (Monrouxe, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Monrouxe & Sweeney, 2010).

The central premises underpinning the symbolic interactionist approach are that (1) people act towards something [e.g. being a supervisor] on the basis of the meanings that something [being a supervisor] holds, (2) the meaning of something [being a supervisor] is constructed and co-constructed through social interaction [e.g. during the course], which includes talk (Ochs & Capps, 2001), and (3) these meanings are brought to [supervising] situations and, through an interpretative process, they are modified and used by people as they act within those situations (Blumer, 1969). Narrative enquiry fits within this perspective as stories are a critical means by which we make sense of ourselves and of others in the social world (Atkins, 2008; Davis, 2002; Diaute & Lightfoot, 2004; Georgakopoulou, 2007; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Schiffrin, 1982; Schiffrin, 1996). Furthermore, narratives are not only found in the 'big' autobiographical stories we tell, but they are also prevalent in the minutiae of everyday conversational interactions (Bamberg, 2003, 2006; Monrouxe, 2009a, 2009b; Wortham & Gadsten, 2006).

We see participants' engagement in the training course as a process of collaborative (and essentially narrative) meaning-making which has the potential to influence their practice. In this work, in order to address the RQs, along with the course providers we acknowledge that identity of a particular kind, e.g. a supervisor, is a conversational

achievement but we employ an inclusive definition of interactional positioning, which extends beyond consideration of questioning skills alone.

The interactional position is a concept that has been in development over several decades and its roots may be traced within a range of disciplines including sociology, psychology and linguistics. From within these disciplines two traditions - *discourse analysis* and *conversation analysis* - have spawned the fine-grained, detailed interactional analytic approach. Each of these respectively focuses on the structure and the content of the interaction, extending social constructionist theory and analysis beyond the evidence of the *reported*, i.e. what is said, to that of the *enacted*, how things are done. These approaches offer an opportunity to increase impartiality, by affording *direct* evidence complementing *indirect* reported evidence. There is a rich source of literature pertaining to *discourse* analysis and *conversation* analysis of institutional/professional interaction and especially within the 'worlds' of medicine and healthcare (Heritage, 2010a, 2010b; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Lingard et al, 2003; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999; Skelton et al, 2002). There is far less research of this sort that specifically pertains to educational research within these spheres.

Our analysis of professional educational interaction has been informed by conversation analysis and the work of (Barkhuizen, 2010; Davies, 2001; Watson, 2007; Wortham & Gadsten, 2006) where the positioning of speaker and hearer, as a positional pair, are examined as they take their 'turns at talk'. Here the structure or formal organisation of the talk in interaction is under scrutiny. Additionally, we are interested in how the content of the talk during language-use contributes to the positioning of the interactant. This takes us into the realm of discourse analysis and meaning making where we look closely at the interaction and the structure of the conversational interaction as well as the content and dynamic process of meaning production. As interactional analysis extends beyond 'what is said' and considers 'how it is said', narrative analysis frequently combines the *whats* and *hows* in a similar manner. Thus our analysis of participants' personal reflections includes a consideration of how individuals construct identities and position themselves (and others) within their talk.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Education is a complex, social event and causal links between a training programme and impact on participants' behaviour in the workplace are not readily assessed. Our approach recognised the *softness* of impact-on-practice data: following the ethos of the course, we do not adopt a linear cause-effect thinking, rather, we focus on the co-construction of meaning both during and following the course contact days.

Kirkpatrick's model of programme evaluation was used to guide the data gathering and reporting (Kirkpatrick, 1976; Tamkin et al, 2002). This framework uses four levels to evaluate programmes. Level 1 is concerned with assessing the participants' *reaction* or satisfaction with the programme: for example, how do participants evaluate different aspects of the course in terms of their enjoyment and perceived benefit? At this level of evaluation we tend to take a more realist than social constructionist perspective and concentrate on the 'whats' of talk (content), rather than the 'hows' (ways in which talk is co-constructed). Level 2 is about *learning*. For example, do the course participants report or demonstrate changes in perspective, knowledge and techniques over time? How do participants learn? Is there any evidence of a shift in the ways in which participants interact over the course of the training programme? Level 3 focuses on *behaviour* change (impact) and the extent to which new learning is *applied to practice*. For example, as a result of the course, do participants narrate a change in their practice as supervisors? Level 4 looks at *outcomes* exploring whether organisational performance (and ultimately patient outcomes) is improved. An evaluation at

this level is beyond the scope of our evaluation; however, future research might focus on this level specifically.

DATA COLLECTION

Research ethics approval was gained from Cardiff University (School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education, email confirmation of this approval was received on 4th May 2010). Data collection principally took place on each of the course days and afterwards in the form of audio diaries. The three course days was attended by two of the research team. With consent, data were collected by means of audio and video recording and field notes. In advance of the first day of the course, participants were sent an information sheet about the evaluation (Appendix B; page 79).

Table 1: Course Attendees

	Research Team	Trainers	Trainee trainers	Supa-trainers	Participants
Day 1	AB, CA	Stella, Annie	Kurt, Chaaya (left early)	Veronica AM, Max PM	16 total (inc one non-consenter) Mia, Shiva and Oba arrived late; David left at lunch
Day 2	CA, LVM	Stella, Annie	Kurt, Chaaya	Veronica (left early) and Julian in and out	14 in total (inc one non-consenter) Diana and Oba absent
Day 3	AB, CA	Stella, Annie	Kurt	Veronica and Julian in and out	14 in total (inc one non-consenter ⁶) Diana and Oba absent

NOTE: All names throughout this report are pseudonyms

The nature of the evaluation was explained face-to-face before the first break on the first day of the course and consent forms were completed during the break. One participant chose not to take any part in the evaluation and this was expressed prior to the first day of the course. One participant did not wish to be part of the video recording. Video recording was confined to the break out room where the camera was operated by one member of the research team. All data were anonymised with identifying names and places removed, this included the use of pseudonyms for those present during the three days. Table 1 summarizes those present on each day.

All participants were invited to submit audio recordings and volunteers were issued with a digital recorder for this purpose. Thirteen of the course participants chose to take up the option of a digital recorder.⁷ When planning the study we made certain decisions about what, when, where, and how to record. Recording original footage was more constrained than we had anticipated because of the refusal of one participant to take part in the evaluation. This affected our data-sampling for analysis.

⁶ From henceforth the report includes no reference to the non-consenter. The non-consenter is excluded from any group counts.

⁷ One of these did not attend subsequent days of the course. Of the remaining 12 participants, 11 provided at least one diary entry.

A comprehensive record of the data was collected. For each of the three course days we recorded: type of data collected (field notes, audio, video); timings of specific activity-types (plenary, demo supervision, quadratic interactions including specific note of time-out, speed supervision, role-play supervision, small group work, whole-group work, lecture, reading etc.); location of the activity (large or small room); group size and participants involved.

We have data from 43 sets of field notes; 17 audio recordings and 10 video recordings. For the quadratic interaction data, there are 23 field notes, nine audio recordings and six video recordings. These data were sampled to identify the data that we would eventually undertake detailed transcription and analysis upon. Interactions for transcription were selected where participants had been recorded at two different time points.

The 'Case Study' table (Appendix C; page 81) details the activity type, frequency and duration in minutes of each individual participant's role in interaction, i.e. supervisor, supervisee or observer. The timings relate to the time each individual interacts within this activity. This table shows that for the quadratic interactions, there are 401 recorded minutes per supervisor and supervisee plus 466 recorded minutes per feedback (observers plus supervisor and supervisee). Some participants featured in recordings more than others and the range was 52 minutes (Paul) to 154 (David). Out of the twelve participants who attended the course and who elected to keep audio diaries only one failed to deliver. Audio diary minutes per participant ranged from 5 minutes for Shiva to 58 for Gwen.

Those participants for whom we had collected the most data interactionally across at least two time points were Roxy, Mary and David. Interestingly, these participants also submitted audio diaries. When we undertook preliminary analysis we noticed that we were able to encompass the range of the different ways in which participants, trainers and trainee trainers received and delivered the course. Although interactionally different things were happening across all three case studies, the greatest variability was between David and Mary: including Roxy as a case study added little. We therefore focused our efforts on David and Mary.

PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

One researcher (CA) began the process of analysis, paying particular attention to the video and audio recordings made during the contact sessions. This observation data, in addition to providing indirect reported evidence, i.e. what participants are saying, provides naturally occurring data demonstrating what people are doing; this is the only source of direct enacted evidence that feeds into our report. The other set of important data comprised self-recorded audio diaries from participants. This data continually arrived during our preliminary development of the coding framework and gradually informed its development over time. Scrutinising the data, CA was able iteratively to build on the preliminary draft coding framework that had begun during the three course visits.

Two researchers (CA & LVM) then listened to and viewed the audio and video data and further developed the coding framework. They discussed and negotiated what the analytic unit(s) of data would focus upon and how to develop the research questions according to the theoretical framework they were using and the data they had obtained. CA and LVM, independently, inductively coded the audio-diary data as and when transcripts arrived. All three researchers (CA, LVM & AB) then came together to negotiate and agree on the development of the coding framework, the revised research questions and the focus of data for analysis.

Following the re-structuring of the research questions according to the theoretical and evaluation perspectives utilised in our research (outlined above), the data were analysed thematically (for Levels 1 & 3, with a narrative approach being taken at level 3 in particular) and interactionally (Level 2). AB thematically coded and analysed the data that informed our Level 1 evaluation and negotiated and developed this with LVM. CA led on the interactional analysis (Level 2) which was subsequently negotiated and developed with LVM. LVM analysed the data that informed our Level 3 evaluation. She then negotiated and developed this with CA.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

At the outset of the evaluation, the team were tasked with a list of 16 research questions (RQs). However, as they stood, the phrasing of these sometimes suggested cause and effect lineal conceptions of the evaluation process (e.g. RQ8: *What effect if any does participation have on the career and personal experiences of participants, including career progression and job satisfaction?*). Furthermore, some RQs were related to others and could be subsumed within them (e.g. RQs 10 & 12: *What elements on the training are perceived by participants to be more or less effective? What do participants perceive that would improve future developments of the courses?*) During preliminary discussions with the course organisers it was agreed that the RQs would be re-phrased to reflect the philosophical approach that the evaluation would take and for brevity.

The original 16 RQs were rephrased, re-organised and collapsed into five main questions along with sub-questions (Table 2).

Table 2: Revised Research Questions

<p>LEVEL 1: Reaction or satisfaction with the programme</p> <p>1. What aspects of the course (e.g. sessions, techniques, timing) are perceived by participants to be more or less effective?</p> <p>LEVEL 2: Teaching and learning techniques and perspectives</p> <p>2. In what ways, within the interaction, are perspectives and techniques delivered by trainers and/or derived by course participants?</p> <p>3. In what ways do participants demonstrate a change in perspectives and techniques along the lines of the course ethos?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Change in performance;</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. Change in perspectives.</p> <p>LEVEL 3: Extent to which new learning is applied to practice</p> <p>4. What is the impact of the course on participants and others in contact with them?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. On participants themselves</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. On doctors under their supervision</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c. On patients</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">d. On others</p> <p>5. What issues arise for participants as they use the perspectives and techniques from the course?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. In their performing;</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. In their perspectives.</p>

All of these are inclusive of and relate to the first 14 of the 16 original questions (Appendix A; page 79). However, here, they are arranged in a way which more readily marries up with Kirkpatrick's hierarchy and worded in a way that is commensurate with the theoretical and analytic perspective we are using. There is still overlap between these revised RQs, because conceptually and in terms of (inter)activity, each of these are highly interconnected.

FOCUS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Audio diaries: All submitted audio diaries were used to inform this evaluation. Specifically these data were used to address Levels 1 and 3 of the evaluation (RQs 1, 4 & 5). Within their audio diaries sometimes participants reflected on the contact day and made specific comments regarding their reaction to the day's events. Additionally, participants narrated events during which they had the opportunity to utilise the techniques learned on the course during their normal daily activities.

Video and audio recordings of course activities: While the research team took every opportunity to record teaching/learning sessions during the three contact days, it was impractical and undesirable to include all of this data in the evaluation analysis. The analysis required a focused and in-depth analysis and the recorded interaction on which we decided to focus is the activity type which we call the quadratic interaction: a practice supervision which includes participants as supervisor, participants as supervisee, course trainer(s) and participants as observer(s) considering a real-life dilemma experienced by the supervisee. We also include the activity type of role-play: a practice supervision which includes participants as supervisor, participant acting as supervisee, course trainer(s) and participants as observer(s) considering a made up dilemma provided by the course team. It is within these settings that course participants were able to enact the techniques they had been learning during the contact days⁸ whilst being closely supported by the trainers. The research team were able to use these data to address Level 2 of the evaluation (RQs 3 & 4). Additionally, these data contained a number of observations from a role-play interaction that also feed into and support our Level 1 evaluation.

Field notes: While we do not report directly the recorded field notes of the researchers they were used to inform our analysis and to enable us to make comments from time to time in order to clarify issues arising.

All data (including audio files, video files, transcripts, field notes) were entered into Atlas.ti for data management purposes and to ease data analysis. The coding framework was developed within Atlas.ti (Appendix D; page 82) and data were coded accordingly. All transcripts were written up for analysis using transcription conventions adapted from Paul ten Have (2007) as set out in Table 3. However, for ease of reading, and because we rarely used the information they provide in our Levels 1 and 3 evaluation, we omit these transcription conventions when reproducing the audio diary data.

⁸ This enactment includes those participating as supervisors, supervisees and observers due to the interactional nature of these interactions.

Table 3: Transcription conventions adapted from ten Have (2007)

Sequencing:	[A single left bracket indicates the point of overlapping talk onset;] A single right bracket indicates the point at which talk ends vis-à-vis another; = Equal signs, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of a next, indicate no 'gap' between the two lines. This is often called latching; - A dash, indicates speech that is cut off
Timed intervals:	(0.0) Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in silence by seconds; (.) A dot in parentheses indicates a tiny 'gap' within or between utterances; # Hatching indicates elapsed time in silence not measured but greater than a tenth of second
Characteristics of speech production:	:: Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. Multiple colons indicate a more prolonged sound.
Transcriber's doubts and comments:	(word) Parenthesized words are especially dubious hearings or speaker identifications; (()) Double parentheses contain transcriber's descriptions in addition to transcriptions.

Results

We structure our results section in line with Kirkpatrick's hierarchy and our revised RQs. We begin by reporting participants' reactions to the course, followed by a consideration of the ways in which the perspectives and techniques are delivered by the trainers and taken up by course participants and whether participants demonstrate changes over time. Finally, we consider the impact that the course has had in terms of the extent to which participants apply their new learning in practice.

Level 1: Reaction or satisfaction with the programme

The audio diaries provided a rich source of information about participants' reactions to the course. Although prompted for their reflections on the course, participants were not directed to talk about any particular aspect so the comments made comprised self-selected, unsolicited topics. Through these course reflections we are able to address the following RQ: (1) What aspects of the course (e.g. sessions, techniques, timing) are perceived by participants to be more or less effective?

In order to answer RQ 1 we analysed the data utilising a fairly realist thematic perspective, in keeping with the aims of level 1: to consider participants' reactions to the course. Thus the data were coded across four main themes: (1) practising supervision skills; (2) learning through lectures, group work, demonstrations and role modelling; (3) engaging with theories and techniques; (4) suggested changes. We detail these four themes below by drawing on data primarily from the audio diary part of the study (note, when we report this data directly "..." indicates missing words). However, in addition to the audio diaries, we also draw on interactional data within our analysis of Theme 1 in order to unpick some of the complexities highlighted across the diaries of different individuals as they evaluated their experiences during the role-play activity.

THEME 1: PRACTISING SUPERVISION

QUADRATIC INTERACTIONS WITH REAL SCENARIOS

The opportunity to practise supervision skills in the quadratic interaction was the most talked about aspect of the course and this received the most positive reactions. We begin by considering participants' reflections on the trainers within these quadratic interactions. Generally, participants appreciated the value of the high quality feedback received from trainers:

I found the supervisor's suggestions at points where the interview was getting stuck to be very helpful. (Simon, reflection on Day 1, Audio Diary)

Furthermore, this positive reaction to the quality of trainer feedback continued after the course had ended:

I particularly valued the times where we were acting as supervisors and getting real-time feedback from the facilitators. (Roxy, reflecting on course, Audio Diary)

It is the focused nature of the trainers' suggestions and comments that were appreciated by participants and which appeared to be valued above those from the other group members:

I found the exercises where we were supervising a colleague, and one of the faculty members was acting as coach and our other group members acting as kind of critical appraisers, very useful. The most useful comments were from the coach as they tended to be much more directed... I guess what I'm hoping for in terms of the next couple of days is a slightly more

didactic approach, kind of what to say, what not to say, how better to phrase what I am trying to get across in my questions. (Roxy, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)

It is unclear from this message just how *directed* the trainer was in the session (and therefore providing focused facilitation) or whether Roxy meant that the trainer was indeed *directive* (which is what she wanted more of). Conversations Inviting Change purports to develop supervision skills through facilitation rather than direction, and the variability in both trainer styles and course participants' preference was noted on a number of occasions, for example:

It's the second day, I somehow found less useful...I think partly it was the facilitation. I think the facilitator we had was a trainee and didn't have that much experience and I don't think it was done all that well. However, somebody in my group thought otherwise, because she said it felt better to be directed a bit more. So it really depends on personal preference, but the general feel of the facilitation with the more experienced organisers is that it has a tendency to be more facilitative and less directive. I found that the person I had was a lot more directive, so I didn't get as much out of it ... I think the techniques they use are very good, I just feel maybe perhaps they should use- it's difficult because I think trainee facilitators need to get that experience, but there needs to be a way of doing that better somehow, I just felt I had a preference for the more experienced facilitators. (Mai, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

The feedback was more useful with some facilitators than others. It was more useful if they interrupted fairly regularly and asked us to rephrase things and suggested slight alterations and just fine-tuned what we were doing. (Roxy, reflecting on course, Audio Diary)

The complexity of the task was also recognised: through being given the opportunity actively to practise techniques as a supervisor, course participants were able to experience first-hand the power of narrative reconstruction and how, through their use of open and reflexive questions, an initial problem can be reconsidered by the supervisee from different perspectives such that the focus of the issue changes over time. The challenge of the exercise for those practising their supervision and the welcome support of the facilitator were particularly commented on:

We then did a small group exercise with the structured group with a supervisor and supervisee and resources to help... I was the supervisor. The supervisee brought a problem regarding his practice and it formed an interesting discussion. What was initially thought to be the problem turned out not to be the main problem and we moved on to what he felt was the main problem that he wanted to discuss. But I think by the time we reached the end of the conversation, we'd moved on again and really the main issue was around his practice partners that he hadn't really identified as a topic to talk about. It was challenging to ask sufficiently open and reflective questions in that session but very helpful to have the support of the facilitators in order to make the most out of the questions and question setting. (Mary, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

Within their audio diaries participants reflected on the new questioning techniques they were practising as supervisors, and how the use of these techniques during the practice sessions facilitated new insights and ways of viewing issues under discussion. Participants also gained insights into the complexity of question-asking and how judicious use of the techniques could get themselves out of difficult situations. Interestingly, this reflection refers to one of the quadratic interactions analysed in depth later in the report and we gain an insight into exactly how 'challenging' Mary found it to ask open and reflexive questions.

It is also important to note that even when participating in these quadratic interactions as an observer, course participants' understanding of the techniques is greatly enhanced. The following excerpt recorded after Day 1 of the course acknowledges how learning occurs through observing the use of the questioning techniques which enabled the

conversation to move in a dynamic and complex manner such that the supervisee's position shifted accordingly:

*It was very interesting to see it being used and I found it really very interesting indeed and especially in the sessions where we observed each other. It was very interesting to see how the supervisee- how conversations led to conclusions which placed the supervisee in a different position to where they were when they first started. I find that really intriguing and that happened **every** time using the techniques proposed. This was even more interesting when we were told categorically not to provide solutions. (Mai, Reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)*

Indeed, Mai's comments suggest that observers are in a unique position. Being sufficiently removed from the interaction (without the added cognitive strain of developing questions and responses to those questions), they might notice patterns within interactions over time: "I find that really intriguing and that **happened every time** using the techniques proposed. This was even more interesting **when we were told categorically** not to provide solutions."

We turn now to consider participants' reactions to being the supervisee within these quadratic interactions. The value of discussing real problems was appreciated by some participants who experienced first-hand how their own thinking had been opened up and how they developed new insight into their issues. One participant went so far as to say that she felt privileged to have the support of her course colleagues when sharing her problem:

I also found it quite helpful discussing a case that had unsettled me this week, and it was a real privilege really to be in the position of having a group of three or four people listening and providing commentary and really helping support me in finding the answer to the areas where I was stuck with this particular patient. I realised that it is quite a privilege to be in that position and it is not a situation that very often arises at work... We have a part of the agenda of our practice meeting to discuss cases, but it is all very speedy and well "what would you do with this patient" and "what would you do and who would you refer this person to" rather than kind of, exploring the more knotty problems that might arise within consultations, and actually having time out to do that seems very, very valuable. (Gwen, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)

I did act as a supervisee in one of the role-plays and I found it quite interesting. It was a case ... a situation that is going on at work at the moment, but I must admit I hadn't necessarily thought how I would behave as the supervisee during this role-played supervision. I found it at times quite challenging, the questions actually making me reflect on what was going on and actually trying to get a completely different perspective. I think that showed me that it can be quite a powerful tool. (David, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)

What is interesting here is how David refers to the practice supervision using real scenarios on Day 1 as 'role-play' even though it is his own problem they are working on. He talks of acting as a supervisee and how he hadn't given this role much thought prior to the session. This suggests that while he considers the supervision practice to be in some ways artificial, he was sufficiently flexible to allow himself to be personally challenged by the questions and to engage with the process of reflection.

However, perhaps due to the course participants' relative lack of experience of these supervisor techniques early on in the course, or due to the difficult emotions participants felt as they explored their own issues, sometimes the supervisee could be left feeling uncomfortable or confused at the end of the session:

My experience as a supervisee was perhaps less satisfactory as I still felt at the end of it that nothing had really moved forward and I was confused when I started and I was confused when I finished. I appreciate that this may well be down to our relative inexperience and the type of case that I brought. (Simon, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)

The second time I was a supervisee I discussed the case of ...I hadn't realised until the supervision that actually my concern about ... this took me back to an incident five years ago ... I hadn't realised that this episode five years ago, that I found quite difficult and traumatic and I thought was now long since forgotten, is actually still very raw. (Gwen, reflecting on Day 3, Audio Diary)

This ethical issue of how the training sessions can leave some participants feeling more confused and upset at the end of the session than at the beginning is an important matter and interestingly, as we will see later, not one that is confined to the supervision practice involving real-world situations and relatively lengthy and supervised practice sessions with trainer feedback.

PAIRED SPEED SUPERVISION WITH REAL SCENARIOS

While course participants generally appeared to enjoy and learn a great deal from the standard quadratic supervision activity, which typically lasted around 30 minutes per session, there was mixed praise for the speed supervision activities. For example, the only participant who spoke enthusiastically of the speed supervision session (which she referred to as *mentoring*) also commented on its artificiality:

The last session of the day was speed mentoring and this in contrast [to role-play] was very helpful. There was a buzz to the room in the energy level again which hadn't been apparent in the previous exercise. (Mary, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

However, other participants were specifically concerned about the lack of time within speed supervision which they considered unsatisfactory, especially for dealing with more complex problems and for developing their use and understanding of the techniques:

I find that the longer practices are much more useful... I felt the short questions were not useful, and I think the key to that is that because there is nobody there to say "yes they're doing it right," - "yes you're doing it right, you're asking the right questions" or "no this is not what we want," so ultimately people were using the skills that they already have and not learning anything. So I don't think I actually used any of the skills learnt on the course for the short session. Similarly the person who was interviewing me, I don't think he used any of the required skills and yet there was nobody there to tell us otherwise. (Mai, reflecting on Day 3, Audio Diary)

Indeed, this issue appeared to be the case for course participants both as supervisors and supervisees. As the supervisee, it was felt that seven minutes was insufficient time in which to explore their issues to any depth, leaving both supervisor and supervisee with potentially unresolved feelings:

The other thing that the organisers ought to be aware of is that however much they plan against, or advise people against bringing up difficult questions, inevitably people do because it's at the top of their minds. So one of the participants actually told me a very personal dilemma she had. This was during the short supervision and really I had no chance whatsoever to deal with it. It may have helped her just to offload but I don't think it helped her at all ... So I think the organisers need to be aware of serious dilemmas being brought up, and some very personal ones. Perhaps there needs to be a method of feeding that back in a confidential level, and a means of dealing with it afterwards. (Mai, reflecting on Day 3, Audio Diary)

The final session we did was speed supervision and spending seven minutes as a supervisor and seven minutes as a supervisee. I felt when I was being supervised that it didn't really feel quite long enough and would have liked longer to explore my dilemma... I just would have

liked longer than seven minutes to explore those feelings really. (Gwen, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary).

These sentiments were repeated by Gwen after Day 3:

The speed supervision we did it on day three, we also did it on day two. I found that less satisfactory as a form of supervision really. I feel I was a bit unfair on my supervisor because having discussed these two live bits of material that were of concern to me in earlier, longer supervisions, I was then, when we had to do the speed supervision, trying to come up with something quickly that we could discuss in our seven minutes. Unfortunately, the issue that was the most live for me at the time was a personal issue ... so I was discussing my anxieties around that. It felt like it was a little unfair really to bring this up, perhaps, in seven minutes when we couldn't really get very far with it. I think it left the person who was supervising me feeling a bit anxious on my behalf. (Gwen, reflecting on Days 2 & 3, Audio Diary)

The shortness of time within which to complete a supervision session brings to the fore the ethical issue of participant vulnerability: opening up discussions around highly sensitive and personal issues are better left for exploration during the longer quadratic supervision sessions (and even then, as we have seen, there is the potential for participant vulnerability). However, in contrast to the earlier assertion that speed supervision was somewhat artificial, one participant did recognise that the normal patient interactions within GP settings were similarly time-limited, thus acknowledging a level of authenticity within the speed supervision sessions, although this also led him to question the utility of his newly developing techniques within these authentic settings:

I'm not sure I found the speed supervision part of the course that much help because it seemed very similar to something that I would normally be doing in ordinary practice and, yes, relatively straightforward problems lend themselves to that technique quite well. However getting sort of fired up with a burst of enthusiasm trying to deal with more complex problems relatively quickly is a bit of a recipe for disaster and grossly overrunning surgeries. (Simon, reflecting on Day 3, Audio Diary)

This last reflection underscores the earlier positive comments around how the use of speed supervision within the contact days can uplift course participants during moments of 'flagging' thereby bringing energy to the day. At the same time it resonates with the earlier concerns regarding complex problems being dealt with quickly, this time within workplace settings.

QUADRATIC INTERACTIONS WITH ROLE-PLAY

On Day 2 of the course participants were given the opportunity to undertake supervision practice using role-play scenarios within quadratic interactions. The course participants split into two rooms and participants in each room ran two or three supervision sessions with different participants as supervisors, supervisees, observers and a trainer as facilitator. The intention behind this role-play exercise is that it enables a larger group of participants to engage in the supervision process due to the scenario being purely fictional and neutral. Furthermore, the scenarios are purposely brief to enable the supervisee to improvise. Within this role-play exercise, one person plays the role of the supervisor and the other plays the supervisee, but the setting is more open and there are numerous observers (rather than just one as in the quadratic interactions with real scenarios). These observers comprise an open forum for generating ideas and offering suggestions for questioning. To facilitate this, the room is laid out in a circular 'goldfish bowl' pattern.

We draw on our interactional data in this section in order to further clarify the situation and to enlighten discrepancies within participants' own reflections on the sessions.

In the excerpt below, we join Group 1 who are situated in the main room: Annie outlines the task and the intentions behind the task to the course participants:

EXCERPT 1: NOBODY'S DILEMMA

*The- the idea is to think about how- how you might supervise somebody who was in difficulty and you didn't know why and also to get that feeling of what it's like to be supervised in that sort of situation so- **without taking out of it any kind of emotive content because it is a role-play-** no- you know **it is nobody's- it's nobody's dilemma- nobody owns it round-** no-one's and so **it makes it easier to try things out** so it is a place to experiment with questions and- **not to worry about the consequences because it's you know- it's in a safe- safe environment** ... and the observers- w-we will- the- the supervisor doesn't need to feel as if they're having to do all the work so we'll help generate questions and so people who are observing can help the supervisor to generate useful- useful questions- the- **the scenario's themselves are quite brief ok and that is intentional** so some people when they read- read the role-play and are told what their- their brief is think "**gosh I-I need to know- I don't know- I don't know enough**" but you can make it up and that is ok (Annie introducing the role-play to Group 1)*

Following this introduction, participants volunteer to play the roles of supervisor and supervisee. The scenario is given out and the person in the role of supervisee leaves the room. At this point the information the supervisor has on the 'dilemma' is read aloud to the group and they begin to debate the issues and suggest questioning techniques and approaches that could be taken by the supervisor. The supervisee is then allowed back into the room and the role-play begins.

Interestingly, two course participants from one group (one role-playing the supervisor and one role-playing the supervisee) and two participants from the second group (a supervisee and an observer) reflected on their experiences in their audio diaries. This provided us with comments from each of the perspectives that course participants might have within the role-play scenario. While the observer from Group 2 commended the technique of question asking developed in the course, referring to it as *quite a powerful tool to get to the answers or solutions to the problems* (Simon, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary), the experiences of the other three participants (playing the supervisor and supervisee roles) were variable.

By attending to the audio diary reports themselves it is difficult to disentangle the possible reasons why participants' reactions to the role-play session were so varied. However, we are fortunate enough to have the quadratic role-play interaction of Group 1 as one of the sessions which we recorded: our comments and interpretation here therefore reflect our knowledge of our reading of this to a certain extent.

The two scenarios acted out in the role-play sessions were the same for both groups and built upon each other such that Scenario 2 followed-on from Scenario 1 (a few months later). It appears that the first scenario was under-developed and that this led to the difficulties experienced within the role-play sessions. The supervisor in Group 1 and supervisee in Group 2 acting in Scenario 1 both reported difficulties caused by the under-development of the scenario. This was compounded by the feeling that the supervisor had much more information in their script than did the supervisee leading to an imbalance of power within the role-play exercise itself as perceived by the supervisee. This lack of information about the scenario, combined with the supervisory technique, led the supervisee to feel that questions were asked in a "*hostile manner*": she was on the receiving end of questions she felt unable to answer. The supervisee felt uncomfortable, not knowing what

she had done wrong in the scenario, and increasingly felt more and more “got at” as the questioning continued, leading her to feel more “interrogated” than supervised:

SUPERVISOR IN GROUP 1, ROLE-PLAY SCENARIO 1

After lunch we were asked to choose on the different topics but unfortunately it wasn't explained how they were going to be arranged and the topic of 'trainers in difficulty' was tackled which obviously I think we were all anxious about to do well, and feel challenged by this. But unfortunately the case scenarios for the role-play really weren't very well thought out. I have done other role-plays at [names place] where the roles were much more extensive, that you went and read them and thought about them before you went into the role and these worked much better. I think this was quietly acknowledged... I think everybody was really quite tired and felt the artificiality of that particular session. There were one or two points that were brought out that were helpful but I think in the main, it would have been better to try and experience this in a different fashion. (Mary, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

SUPERVISEE IN GROUP 2, ROLE-PLAY SCENARIO 1

The session after lunch, there was a role-play of a trainee in difficulty and I opted to role-play the trainee and another colleague played the supervisor. I was given a very brief scenario basically saying that I'd been in a practice for three months, I was engaged and about to be married and go off on an exciting holiday, that there had been one or two run-ins with receptionists and that was basically the end of my scenario. When I was then questioned by my trainer in what seemed like quite a hostile manner...[Pause in speech] I felt a little bewildered because I wasn't really clear what the source of the hostility was and it was apparent that the scenario that he had been given was that I, as registrar, had not been answering the phone when I was on call and this had happened on six occasions. The receptionist had complained to him about it. I kind of felt that as doing the role-play, quite shocked that there had been six episodes of this and none had been discussed with me but the receptionist had been happy to discuss it with him. Actually it did feel quite uncomfortable being in that seat of supervisee not really knowing what I had done wrong. I think having got off to this uncomfortable start, the supervision didn't really feel like it was getting any better. I just felt more and more got at as the supervisee. It was quite interesting to listen to the commentary of the observers, the other doctors in the room kind of commenting on the scenario and one of them commented that you know, it felt more like an interrogation than a supervision. That's certainly how I experienced it as the supervisee. (Gwen, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

The unequal information provided for the scenario information, along with the questioning technique itself appeared to lead to feelings of interrogation by Gwen. One further thing to notice from these two reactions to the role-play event is that while Mary, in the role of supervisor, emphasised the artificiality of the role-play exercise, this was far from the experience of Gwen in her role as supervisee. Indeed, Gwen reported powerful emotions during the role-play: including feeling *shocked*, *got at* and *uncomfortable*. This challenges the premise that no one ‘owns’ the scenario and that it is a ‘safe environment’. Furthermore, we can see similar issues coming through in our data of the interaction from Group 1. It appears that when a participant steps into a role, they do indeed begin to embody that persona and, to a certain extent, they begin to own the scenario. If the person in the supervisory role performs this in a ‘clumsy’ manner and doesn’t acknowledge this engagement, difficulties can occur. In our interactional data of Session 1 in which Roxy played the role of the supervisee, we note that similar uncomfortable feelings were aroused and observers commented that “*empathy is not coming through ... you are accusing her ... you are not sort of embracing her*” (Shiva) and Annie agreed that assumptions underpinning some of the questioning were somewhat insulting (albeit unintended).

By contrast, Scenario 2 was relatively straightforward. Having established the scenario in the initial role-play, Scenario 2 picks up the story a few months later by way of a follow-up from a concerned supervisor. The tone of the supervision was less investigatory (i.e. *explain to me why you keep missing your calls*) and more supportive (i.e. *how are you now and what can we do to help you through this difficult time*). Furthermore, as we will see later in the report, the interaction itself flows better with fewer interruptions and a more skilful use of the questioning techniques. The participants' reaction to the role-play exercise using Scenario 2 was more positive:

SUPERVISEE ROLE IN GROUP 1: ROLE-PLAY SCENARIO 2

I found the role-play the most useful. I am having difficulty with other aspects of the course constantly trying to think of examples of conversations that I might have. It feels artificial and false to me and whilst I understand that you need a structure, I think that more could be gained by, for example, using scenarios where certain information has to be gleaned, or triggers and things that one might do, I think, almost goals that could be achieved. If you use the right questions they will open up. It's almost practising on the facilitators if they had a scenario in their head would be more useful. (Paul, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

Interestingly, we can see within Paul's reflection that even within a role-play scenario, the use of the 'right questions' is key to the successful engagement of the supervisee. As Shiva commented during the debrief of scenario 2 in Session 1 "I think it was non-threatening and it came out as though he was (1.0) compassionate". This is in stark contrast to her analysis of the first scenario.

In order to further unravel the dynamics within the role-play exercise, we note the following interaction between Paul, Annie and Roxy as they reflect on the role-play interaction between supervisor and supervisee and how the careful balance of questioning and supporting can dramatically shift the path of the interaction.⁹ We can also see that the reactions of the supervisor to the supervisee can be felt and experienced by the supervisee during a role-play scenario at an instinctive and emotional level: not merely through the use of the right words and phrases:

EXCERPT 2: INSTINCTIVE REACTIONS

*Paul: Can I just say (.) what I told- when I showed remorse for that because that is not any part of it -but- **there is a visceral change in-in yourself** (.) that's what- that's what changed- you actually (.) visceral- **you seemed to shift (.) visibly to m- to me as a (.) as a supervisee** (.) whereas I'd showed contrition for that (.) you realised actually hang on- you seem to realise that this is not an issue over (.) you know performance or something has gone wrong and so (.) **you actually ph-physically shifted** (.) and (.) and that gave me licence then to tell you- tell you more and so it was your recognition (.) of (.) m-m-my contrition if you see what I mean that over one element that- that **I think [changed your direction]***

Annie: [It was very subtle actually wasn't it]

Paul: Yes

Annie: Is a word that I would use I think (1.0)

Roxy: It was a very (.) very very early on there was (.) it was (.) s-said out-right you know (.) erm (.) "you used to do this (.) this has happened now- that's not- that doesn't seem (.) the

⁹ We refer later to this same role-play exercise in our Level 2 analysis (see page 44 and Appendix E).

you that I knew (.) has anything changed" and that just gave the (.) in road to (.) which you thought a little bit but ((small laugh))

So we can see from the excerpt above that the careful use of supportive and open questioning by the supervisor enabled the supervisee to 'show remorse'. In showing remorse, the emotional reaction of the supervisor resulted in a shift of positioning towards the supervisee who instinctively felt this shift in positioning and reacted positively to this.

Thus, from both audio diaries and interactional excerpts we can see the importance of understanding and acknowledging the role of emotions (of both the supervisee and supervisor). Indeed, while Annie initially introduced the exercise as a 'safe environment' where no one 'owns' the dilemma, she later acknowledged the need to 'de-role' due to the emotionality of the exercise:

EXCERPT 3: QUITE EMOTIONAL

Annie: [-I am- I'm really sorry- no it is ok] 'cause it's brilliant but it's just that I think that it would be very useful to have a [couple of minutes=]

James: [yep]

*Annie: =discussion as it is a role-play I think it's ok (.) can we (.) can I get you to **de-role** then because **actually this is quite (.) s- er- quite emotional** so do you want to just say (.) "I'm not this trainee- [I'm=]*

Paul: [sure] (.) I'm still engaged ((everyone laughs and lots of overtalk)) and I live in ((names place and laughs))

THEME 2: LEARNING THROUGH LECTURES, GROUP WORK, DEMONSTRATIONS AND ROLE MODELLING

In addition to commenting on how they learned through practising supervision skills within quadratic and paired interactions, participants also commented on their experiences of learning via lectures, group work and through the trainers' role modelling interactions as they trained the trainers. However, while the audio diaries were replete with reflections on their experiences whilst practising and observing supervision skills, there were far fewer comments from course participants on other aspects of the course. Lectures were commented on briefly and considered not to be the strong point of the course, although the content and delivery of one lecture was particularly praised:

I enjoyed the presentations, particularly ((names trainer)) I liked his PowerPoint with all the different novels. Seems like a very well read young man who is also quite inspirational as the coach in our small group when we were practising clinical supervision skills. If I were half as talented as him at the end of the three day course I would be very happy. (Gwen, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)

Group work was also commented on by participants who enjoyed the opportunity to have discussions about the theories which underpin the course ethos, thus aiding their understanding of these complex concepts further:

It was another enjoyable day. The morning was particularly good. We covered the paper that we'd read on different forms of questioning and it was interesting and well worthwhile having the further discussion to clarify thoughts and the concepts were complex. We then had a further talk again sort of expounding the ideas on this. (Mary, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

As with the first two days I found the third day very interesting. I found the paper that we discussed, the various theories, very interesting, particularly the narrative theory and needing

to understand the different kind of members of the family or group in terms of understanding the full story. (Gwen, reflecting on Day 3, Audio Diary)

However, not all participants enjoyed the group discussions and not all found the trainers to be inspirational. One participant's audio diary following Day 3 of the course began by echoing similar sentiments to those of others reflecting on the quadratic interactions (and also this particular participant's earlier comments on Day 2) regarding the impact of the trainers' level of experience on the utility of the session:

I think for me the key is the supervision - sorry not the supervision but the facilitators. I think when I had the experienced facilitators it very much improved the course. I thought it was a little bit strange that in the groups, when we split up into groups. In the first part, in the morning where we split into two to discuss the paper, and produce a presentation I thought it was a little bit strange that two experienced facilitators went into the same group, leaving the two trainees in the other. I think that didn't help that group at all. I gather that group had a lot of trouble and a lot of people felt angry and distressed after that session. In our group we had two of the experienced facilitators and it went very well. I think that made a lot of difference. (Mai, reflecting on Day 3, Audio Diary)

Indeed, it is clear from Roxy's reaction that she was a member of the second group:

On the last day the exercise where we read the paper and tried to produce a presentation was awful, absolutely awful. Not helpful, very frustrating, not very focused. (Roxy, reflecting on the course, Audio Diary)

It appears therefore that the specific mix of trainers within and across the various learning activities can have a powerful effect on participants' learning and their emotional reactions to that learning.

Within the audio diaries we had very few reflections on other aspects of how participants learned. We did, however, receive two comments on the ways in which course participants learned through observing the trainers in action. The first comprised comments on the planned demonstration of the questioning techniques outlined in Tomm's (1988) paper during which two trainers enacted a live training session with one trainer supervising the second trainer's real life, albeit *fairly mundane*, dilemma:

I thought that was quite a useful exercise giving us the opportunity to think about the different kinds of questions and also the answers that are generated. It was quite interesting that the discussion of a fairly mundane thing such as one of our facilitator's daughter and whether or not she would have piano lessons could generate quite a lot of interesting information. (Gwen, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

Interestingly, while Gwen's reflections refer to a timetabled demonstration of supervision techniques, the second comment we received refers to a more fluid aspect of the course, tapping into the powerful nature of learning through role modelling which is made apparent through the openness about the course structure; course participants are facilitated by both trainers and trainee trainers and these trainee trainers in turn are facilitated by more experienced trainers:

There was also a lot of work done to make the workings of the course seem quite transparent, which I found very interesting and I think quite useful. I mean, for example, we were joined at one point by a facilitator who was obviously learning to be a facilitator, and it was very interesting seeing the interaction between them and the course facilitator. That interaction I think gave an insight into the way we were encouraged to interact with each other and also encouraged to interact with our educational supervisees. (David, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)

While there is a limit to what we can say about this particular aspect of the course (i.e. training the trainers) in terms of the audio diary data, undoubtedly this aspect of the course requires a more focused analysis as it also links into comments participants make around perceived trainer efficiency. Furthermore, given that this layering of training is openly transparent, ever present and course participants acknowledge a level of role modelling, there is the potential for the wider (typically 'hidden') curriculum messages to either endorse and reinforce the course ethos or be in some way out of tune. We therefore focus some of our attention to the issues of the hidden curriculum and how the content of the trainers' message might in some way be incongruent with the enacting of training itself when we consider our interactional data during our Level 2 analysis – Teaching and Learning Techniques and Perspectives – on page 41.

THEME 3: ENGAGING WITH THEORY AND TECHNIQUES

The theoretical underpinning of the approach and the questioning techniques which arose from this were highlighted by a few participants in their audio diaries. For the most part this was something that participants appeared to understand and engage with by the time the course had finished. The following comprehensive comments made by Simon after Day 3 sums up much of what was reported in terms of positive feedback:

Hi, just some brief feedback from my thoughts after the third day of the course. I felt that this time things were actually beginning to fall into place and I actually felt as if I knew what I was doing. After my experiences on the second day where I got very stuck, bogged down in trying to do a supervision on a registrar in difficulty I think I've now got at least some of the skills in order to get out of the stuck loop that I was obviously in. One of the things I think I found helpful was the idea of there being more than one truth. I think perhaps previously I've had a tendency to jump in and assume that the information provided was actually correct, rather than try and get evidence by looking at things from the other person's side or somebody else's point of view. To be honest I still find the jargon and some of the concepts difficult to understand. However, I've now seen that the techniques definitely work at a practical level and it's something that I'm going to try and take forward in my dealings, both clinically and in supervision, at work and away from work ... One of the other things that has had occurred to me at the end of all this process is that during the course of my time in training I don't think I could ever have had anything which would have been thought of now as an episode of supervision. I think it will be interesting to see whether this enthusiasm lasts over the next couple of months once away from these regular sessions and back to the normal routine of general practice and the various conflicting pressures and tugs on you in terms of priorities, obviously only time will tell. (Simon, comments on the course, Audio Diary)

Simon narrates how it wasn't until the end of Day 3 that things began to fall in place for him and that he had begun to master some of the techniques of the course. He also narrated how his perspective had changed in that he recognised the multiplicity of realities and now valued others' perspectives as being equally valid versions of the truth. In line with the intended focus of the course being more on the techniques than on the theories, Simon admits to not fully understanding the conceptual framework but on a practical level he appears to have mastered some of the techniques and is motivated to use them. Furthermore, he now questions if he has ever fully engaged with the process in both his clinical work and his supervision of others prior to participating on the course, which suggests that he can see the utility of the techniques reaching beyond the restricted context of supervisor-supervisee interactions (this is something we pick up on later as we report Level 3 analysis – Extent to Which new Learning is Applied to Practice – page 49). Finally, he is unsure as to whether the course will have a lasting impact due to conflicting work pressures; this particular sentiment was echoed by a number of other participants throughout the course in their audio diaries.

While much of Simon's reflections are positive regarding his engagement with the course and the development of his supervisory skills, not all participants were as positive. One notable message came from Paul after the first day of the course.¹⁰ This particular participant had been initially enthusiastic about the prospect of attending the course given its emphasis on narrative and the broad utility that this approach afforded beyond the supervisor-supervisee interaction:

I was quite excited by the opportunity of attending this course having read the narrative of Approach to Supervision article by John Launer, I thought the course would be quite interesting from a point of view of discussion and narrative based discussion in all sort of relationships and in fact, during the initial opening part of the course where we discuss what we wanted to get out of it, I did mention that I was interested in the application of this course to relationships at large really... So I had some non-clinical examples which I thought I would bring to bear and I thought this would be reasonable given the sort of comments in Launer asking about how this approach could be applied to a number of different situations in life...

However, this participant's agenda differed markedly from that of the trainers: due in part to the fact that this participant was going through difficult times personally (he admits to not being in a particularly good space psychologically) and in part to this clash of agendas, he quickly became disenfranchised:

The problem is when I came to this course on the Thursday, psychologically I don't think I was at a particularly good place ... When we were asked in a group setting to come up with an example and I offered reluctantly I think to give a suggestion, it was dismissed as not appropriate by one of the facilitators. I have to say at the time given my mood that completely disenfranchised me. Whilst I have to say the facilitator was very nice about dismissing my idea, and did so in an appropriate manner, I think she had missed an opportunity and had effectively lost my engagement really ...

Having disengaged at an early stage due to this misalignment of what should be focused on by way of content as part of the activities, Paul became further disenfranchised when he discovered that the trainers did not seem to share his understanding of narrative approaches: Paul regarded the role of emotions within the supervisor-supervisee interaction and the concept of narrative ways of knowing as key to getting to the heart of the matter whereas the trainer(s) felt this aspect should be avoided:

I liked the concept behind the course and the narrative based discussion ... I found the process a bit frustrating because to me when we were discussing certain cases, potential supervision cases, it seemed to me that it was important in narrative ways, asking Socratic questioning methods or counselling question methods, to establish what was at the heart of some issue whereas establishing the emotional impact might have been an important factor and I felt the facilitator sort of suggested that one should stay away from that, and to my mind if you sort of bear in mind Maslow's triangle of functioning, don't think if you're going to get to the heart of some problem, for example, that's communication based, that unless you deal with the emotional aspect of it, that you're going to get higher functioning of an individual ... I just found this frustrating because it was my contention if we want someone in a clinical scenario to function effectively in a group, you have to establish what emotionally is going on perhaps as a result of conflict and address that conflict and I really felt that probably in your line of questioning in this approach, that would be an important thing to address. So I have to say I

¹⁰ In recognition that our reporting of this issue was likely to identify the participant, we contacted him to confirm his ongoing consent for us to use this specific data within the report. This was freely given.

wasn't as invigorated by the day and was left with a sense of frustration at the end. (Paul, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)

This demonstrates how conflicting agendas between trainers and course participants alongside differences in conceptual understandings of theoretical perspectives can have a negative impact on learning. Indeed, we can also see how this particular participant felt that his own emotions within his interactions with the tutor had similarly been avoided as a result of this conflict. However, on Day 2 of the course, Paul managed to resolve this issue:

On the second day I found myself more engaged in the process. Clearly personal factors such as my affect mood at the time come to bear on that, but in no small part my engagement improved because I was given the opportunity to seek redress with the facilitator who disenfranchised me, I felt on the first day of the course. She was receptive to my feedback and acknowledged the affect her actions had had on me and apologised. That gave me closure and allowed me then to engage more fully without any form of resentment. So it gave me closure and I thank the course facilitator for that, and for recognising it, so well done. (Paul, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

Finally, not all participants who had prior knowledge of the theoretical perspectives drawn on in the course had issues with the way in which they were played out. Indeed, one participant who had an in-depth understanding of the theoretical underpinning of the course found it interesting to see theory-in-action:

On the first day of the course I found very intriguing, mainly because I've already done a year, I've done the certificate the first year, a certificate in systems theory which was very interesting but theoretical. In doing this supervision course I can see it in action and a lot of theory which was mentioned in the course, I recognise from my first certificate, it was very interesting to see it being used. (Mai, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary).

THEME 4: SUGGESTED CHANGES

Within their audio-diaries sometimes participants made specific comments regarding changes to aspects of the course that they felt were ineffective or inadequate. We report these here with a number of caveats: these changes were suggested by individual participants based on their own personal experiences and preferences, they were recorded via their audio diaries and therefore not openly debated between participants and finally some of the data we present in this evaluation might appear to contradict the suggested changes made by individuals.

One participant felt that the course could be reduced from three to two days. She felt that the didactic lectures were unhelpful and made a specific suggestion for the use of a reflective portfolio should the timing be reduced:

I'm not sure that spreading it over three days helped me hugely. I think there were aspects of the course that could've been removed and the didactic lectures I didn't find particularly helpful... I think some of the elements could've been removed and then the course condensed down into a couple of days. If I was going to suggest that I think I'd have a larger gap than two weeks between them, so that I'd maybe suggest keeping a portfolio or something in between the two days that you could then reflect on what you'd learnt and how you'd used it in the workplace. (Roxy, reflecting on the entire course, Audio Diary)

What is interesting about this comment is that while other participants have reported that it isn't until the third day that everything begins to fall into place (e.g. Simon's comments in the previous section on theory), this does not necessarily mean that three days are specifically required: as Roxy suggests, time in which to put the techniques learned into practice and to formally reflect on events might equally serve the purpose. Indeed,

independent and unprompted comments by three of the ten individuals who participated in the audio diaries suggested that they had benefitted merely through participating in the evaluation process and reflecting via their audio diaries. Furthermore, one felt that this kind of reflection could be utilised within the course as an additional learning tool:

Doing the audio diary in itself makes you reflect more on the day and I think this is a good thing and consideration could be given to include it as a regular part of the learning process. (Mary, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)

And later:

I think these audio diaries are good as a learning tool so I think you're altering the process by using them to evaluate the course. However I think that consideration could be given to incorporate them as a regular feature of the course and the points from these audio diaries could be brought forward for discussion. (Mary, reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

I've long had an interest in the sort of therapeutic nature of writing things down. Also I guess this kind of thing - recording an audio diary - helping you clarify your thoughts really. (Gwen, reflecting on the course, Audio Diary)

I think keeping the audio diary has been helpful for me because it's made me think about what I've been doing and the skills that I've learned on a regular basis rather than allowing the experience to fade. (Simon, reflecting on the course, Audio Diary)

This final sentiment about how the reflection process via audio diaries *captures reflections* has been reported in other work (Knight, 2007). Furthermore, Monrouxe has recently recommended the use of audio diaries for medical students' narrative reflections within formal learning environments (Monrouxe & Sweeney, in press). The inclusion of some kind of recorded reflection within the process of the course appeared to be a popular recommendation. In addition to the comments above, there were some calls for hand-outs of PowerPoint slides to be made available in order to aid reflection.

One participant suggested that rather than always have course participants bring their own issues to the supervisory activities, the trainers could provide pre-scripted scenarios. This suggestion resonates with the idea behind the role-playing exercise, but here the suggestion was that scenarios could be much more structured with the trainer playing the supervisee role:

I am having difficulty with other aspects of the course constantly trying to think of examples of conversations that I might have. It feels artificial and false to me and whilst I understand that you need a structure, I think that more could be gained by, for example, using scenarios where certain information has to be gleaned, or triggers and things that one might do ... It's almost practising on the facilitators if they had a scenario in their head, would I think, be more useful. (Paul reflecting on Day 2, Audio Diary)

Finally, one participant recorded her feelings about the limitations of the room in which the course was run:

The room itself wasn't very conducive to those group exercises. It was loud and quite difficult to concentrate and I think that that would be worth reconsidering for future dates. (Roxy, reflecting on Day 1, Audio Diary)

We also know that other participants were challenged by the noise when multiple groups worked simultaneously within the one big room and this was evidenced through our field notes. Furthermore, as we see later, during a quadratic interaction that comprised one of our case study interactional reports (Mary, Time 1 Appendix E on page 102), a member from another group requested them to keep the noise down.

CONCLUSIONS FROM LEVEL 1 ANALYSIS

Level 1 analysis relates to RQ (1) What aspects of the course (e.g. sessions, techniques, timing) are perceived by participants to be more or less effective.

THEME 1: PRACTISING SUPERVISION

The audio dairies provide clear endorsement of the practising of the questioning techniques in the quadratic interactions. The opportunity to practice supervision skills in the quadratic interaction was the most talked about aspect of the course and this received the most positive reactions. Although participants found practising the new questioning techniques was challenging, they valued the high quality feedback from those in the trainer role. There was some indication of variability in how that role of the trainer was performed. Some trainers were thought to be more skilled than others, in part a reflection of some participants' preference for more direction (which is out of line with the general course ethos). From the quadratic interactions, participants were able to develop new ways of viewing issues as well as insights into the complexity of question-asking. In addition, the value in the observer role was noted. While those in the role of supervisee generally appreciated the benefits of having their own problems discussed, perhaps because of lack of experience or difficult, emotionally charged scenarios, there were occasions when the supervisee could be left with unresolved feelings.

There was mixed reaction for the speed supervision activities. Seven minutes was insufficient time in which to develop understanding of the techniques and to explore complex problems, so risking emotional difficulties and unresolved feelings that raise the ethical issue of participant vulnerability. In contrast, it was noted that speed supervision exercises recognise that the normal interactions within workplace settings can be so time-limited. In addition, the use of speed supervision within the contact days brought energy to the day.

The diarists reported varied reactions to supervision practice using role-play scenarios which appears to be due to a complex interaction of issues including the under-developed nature of the scenario as provided to the supervisee, the relative skill of the supervisor, the open nature of the exercise with numerous observers and the emotional engagement of the participants. Thus, within the context of the questioning technique the experience of one supervisee was one of interrogation rather than supervision as she felt inadequately prepared to respond to questions about her actions that she could not defend due to the under-developed nature of the scenario provided for them. Additionally, when we considered the interactional data around role-play we also noted that the relative skill of the supervisor in constructing questions which are suitably supportive and open played an important part in the subsequent reaction of the participant role-playing the supervisee. Our main finding from the data on role-play, however, is the important part that emotions play within the interaction: a conclusion that runs in stark contrast to the underlying assumptions regarding the neutrality of the exercise.

THEME 2: LEARNING THROUGH LECTURES, GROUP WORK, DEMONSTRATIONS AND ROLE MODELLING

While the audio dairies were replete with reactions to practising and observing supervision skills, far fewer comments were voiced about other aspects of the course. Where other learning activities were mentioned, responses varied and it seemed that the specific mix of trainers had a powerful effect on participants' learning and their emotional reactions to activity. While the experience of the trainers and the more limited skills of the trainee-trainers could make a difference, the transparent role modelled between trainers and

trainee-trainers could provide positive endorsement of the approach but only where this expressly concords with the espoused ethos of the course. We discuss later that this is not always the case and the unexpected impact this has on participants – this is especially highlighted during the training the trainer moments.

THEME 3: ENGAGING WITH THEORY AND TECHNIQUES

The theoretical underpinning of the approach and the questioning techniques were highlighted by a few of the diarists. Notably, one participant arrived at the course with different understanding of the theoretical issues underpinning the course (i.e. the important role of emotion in narrative approaches). Another had an understanding of systems theory and so felt that the course resonated for her in some way. For the most part, the theory and techniques were something that participants were not aware of prior to the course. Some struggled with theory all the way through. Some appeared to understand and engage with by the time the course had finished, but found the general approach and ‘skills’ easier to manage than the theory itself.

THEME 4: SUGGESTED CHANGES

Changes suggested by individual participants were recorded in their audio diaries. We note that these were not openly debated and might appear to contradict the recommendations that we suggest.

The one popular recommendation was for the inclusion of some kind of recorded reflection within the process of the course. One participant thought that the introduction of a reflective portfolio could mean that the course could be reduced from three to two days. Individuals made requests for hand-outs of PowerPoint slides. Another suggestion was for the use of pre-scripted scenarios with the trainer playing the supervisee role. A common criticism concerned the limitations of the big room which became noisy when multiple groups were working simultaneously.

Level 2: Teaching and learning techniques and perspectives

This analysis gets to the essence of the training course: what questions are asked and how talk is framed is the key to holding conversations inviting change. The audio and video recorded data, along with the use of case reports, provides us with a means through which we can analyse the varying ways in which participants adopt particular positions within the interaction and how they demonstrate learning over time.

Our level 2 analysis addressed the following research questions:

3. In what ways, within the interaction, are perspectives and techniques delivered by trainers and/or received by course participants
4. In what ways, within the interaction, do participants demonstrate a change in perspectives and techniques along the lines of the course ethos?
 - a. in their performance?
 - b. in their perspectives?

Thus, level 2 analysis differs significantly from our level 1 analysis as we align ourselves with the course ethos and adopt a social constructionist perspective. In doing so, we utilise interactional positioning analysis and focus on the quadratic paired supervision (including role-play) as the analytic unit. The quadratic paired supervision involves four types of interactant: a participant supervisor who works with a participant supervisee, a trainer¹¹ and participant observer(s).

The main idea behind *conversations inviting change* “is that properly structured conversations can lead to the production of a useful new story ... promot[ing] an interviewing style based mainly on questioning ... helps interviewers to avoid becoming over-involved or directive, and allows interviewees to have enough mental and emotional space to generate new ideas and solutions”.^(see footnote 3, p14) By drawing on the framework adopted by the course we can examine how particular types of questions and ways of framing talk positions the interactants and potentially ‘closes down’ or ‘opens up’ mental and emotional space (Palazzoli et al 1980; Tomm 1988). Given the complexity of this work, the detailed framework and resulting analysis is produced in full in Appendix E. The aim of this section is to describe briefly our analysis and focus on the key messages derived from it.

POSITIONING ANALYSIS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Using interactional positioning analysis enables us to focus on *how* individual interactants position themselves in relation to other interactants through their talk. We can examine, turn by turn, how interactants are constantly constructing and re-constructing a frame of reference within which they operate: potentially opening up or constraining new ways of thinking, new ways of storying.

We have summarised our approach to the analysis of interaction which utilises the framework adopted by the course in Table 4. Essentially, during the training course there is an emphasis on the practical questioning techniques within Tomm’s (1988) framework and the resulting effects that these questions might have (Columns 1–4): the four question types (e.g. lineal, circular), positions of the speaker (e.g. judgemental, accepting) and the resultant probable positions adopted by the respondent (e.g. conservative, liberated).

¹¹ When we refer to the trainer, we also include trainee-trainers and super-trainers.

Table 4: Application of Tomm's framework to all talk types in course - 'Conversations Inviting Change'

Tomm's Framework - practical techniques and effects				Course - ethos		Data - performance observed				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Proposed Talk Type	Proposed Effect on Speaker	Proposed Effect on Responder	Proposed effect - Situational Frame	Proposed Approach	7Cs [HOW]	Talk Features: Content/Structure; Paralinguistics	Observed Interactional Position of Speaker	Observed Interactional Position of Responder	Observed Interactional Frame	Observed Interactional Approach
assertive (strategic)	oppositional	constrained	corrective	↑ reductionist; authoritarian; didactic	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>lesser</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓-conversation → ↓-curiosity → ↓-contextualisation → ↓-creativity → ↓-complexity → ↓-caution → ↓-care →</p>	<p>directives; open/closed questions; minimal responses; overlapping talk; reflexive talk; tentativity, e.g. hedging, hesitation; repetition; → Meta-communication; Modality/Modulation</p> <p>↓ vocal stress; intonation; pitch; modulation; rhythm; laughter ↑ ↓ bodily position; posture; movement; gaze; gesture; expression ↑</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>lesser</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓-oppositional/judgemental → ↓-accepting/creative → ↓-constrained/conservative → ↓-liberated/generative →</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>greater</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑-corrective ↑-investigative ↑-exploratory ↑-facilitative</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑ unilateral</p>	
lineal	judgemental	conservative	investigative							
circular	accepting	liberated	exploratory							
reflexive	creative	generative	facilitative	↓ holistic; systemic; egalitarian/ democratic	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>greater</i></p>					<p style="text-align: center;">↓ coproducer</p>

This approach is in line with the course ethos (Columns 5 – 6) which aims to be holistic, systemic, egalitarian and democratic and reflected within the 7Cs.

The course aims to increase the use of certain types of questions (circular and reflexive) over others to achieve a more balanced and co-productive approach to supervision (Column 11). When analysing this approach to supervision, the data we use is respondents' actual talk and bodily responses, through which we can directly observe and evidence the interactional positions people adopt and the resulting interactional frame (Columns 7 – 10).

AN ILLUSTRATION

To demonstrate this analytic approach we provide an illustration (our full analysis is reported in Appendix E). In this training interaction, through careful attention to the particular features of talk, we see how this trainer skilfully achieves a co-productive approach to her training as she demonstrates the course techniques to participants. The transcription conventions we use are drawn from Paul ten Have (2007) and were outlined earlier in Table 3 on page 24.

The scene is a role-play practice supervision which took place on the second course day in the main training room. Prior to the actual supervision role-play, the supervisee (Paul) is requested to step-out of the room to consider the role that he has been assigned. Whilst he is absent, the supervisor (David) then reads out the scenario he has been given by the trainer (Annie) to work with:

EXCERPT 1: MISERABLE AND DISENGAGED

- 1 **David:** *(.) er it's three months later (.) the attitude to nurses seems rather miserable*
2 *and disengaged (.) and there has been two occasions when drugs were written*
3 *up incorrectly (.) obviously taking into account change behaviours and*
4 *implications*

Before Paul returns, the remaining group members join with Annie and David to discuss how David might approach his supervision. Annie begins to comment on their discussion. As she does so we see how she and David creatively co-produce the scene for supervision:

EXCERPT 2: YOU CAN STATE WHAT YOU'VE NOTICED

- 5 **Annie:** *So that's- that's a- so perhaps a- a- sort of amalgamation of all of those*
6 *is- is partly what you were saying before but maybe without (.) being quite so*
7 *(.) erm (.) you know without making the assumption that they are down in the*
8 *dumps but saying that you have noticed 'cause you- you c=*
9 **Shiva:** *=yes-*
10 **Annie:** *=you can state what you've noticed (.) so "I have noticed (.) that (.)*
11 *you seem different-you used to be (.) this wonderful de-de-de- person (.) and*
12 *you don't seem to be like that anymore and there has been (.) that (.)*
13 **David:** *OK*
14 **Annie:** *so that- so that's not saying you are down in the dumps it is saying I've*
15 *noticed that you (.) your behaviour (.) what- what it is about your behaviour*
16 *that's changed rather than (.) the mood yeah*
17 **David:** *we can try that*
18 **Annie:** *Shall we (.) I mean*

As Annie offers her last bit of advice, before this practice supervision starts, she occupies an oppositional position and invokes a corrective frame (lines 5-14). Thus Annie describes the exact way in which the course techniques should be translated into practice using statements

(lines 5-8 and 14-16) and directives (lines 10-12). The delivery of this message is an example of didactic training but the net effect is neither reductionist nor authoritarian due to Annie's attention to the 7Cs; particularly to her application of *care* and *caution* in her manner of delivery. Her use of modulation, hesitation and repetition shows particular awareness of the current interactional *context* in which she and David are operating. We now explain how we come to this conclusion.

Firstly, notice how tentatively Annie presents her statement (lines 5-6), hesitating and hedging her talk using qualifiers: "*perhaps*", "*sort of*", "*maybe*", "*quite so*." Later, notice how her potentially didactic instruction is modulated with "*can*" as opposed to "*must*" (line 10). Here she not only reduces David's obligation to act in a particular way but she also involves him in decision making about what is to be done. So although she delivers a very clear and unambiguous message, it is not done in a bald way. What is already a non-threatening quality in her talk becomes enhanced by her soft tone, regular rhythm and gentle expressions and gestures. In accord with the holistic course philosophy, Annie employs circular and reflexive talk and works hard to connect with David's prior talk: "*So that's - that's a- so perhaps a- a- sort of amalgamation of all of those is- is partly what you were saying before but maybe without (.) being quite so...*" (lines 5-6). It is through the creativity of her talk that Annie demonstrates sensitivity to the complexity of this trainer-trainee context. She approaches her conversation with David with caution: "*you seem...*" (line 11) and "*I've noticed that...*" (lines 14-15). She also acknowledges the contingency of the potential practice supervision to bring both context and curiosity into play: "*I have noticed that...*" (lines 10-12). Again, this is done from a position of authority which is softened by modulated talk: "*you can state*" (line 10) rather than a straightforward instruction "*state*".

Additionally Annie demonstrates further caution, care and creativity in the content of her talk (so not just in the way in which she talks) by making explicit connections with best practice: dilemmas not being attached to individuals. The general tactic she suggests for the pursuit of curiosity is that David avoids statements involving assumptions (lines 5-8) about moods and feelings (lines 14-16) in favour of adopting a comparative approach grounded in observation of interactions – working with evidence rather than hypotheses.

By the end of her quite long turn at talk, David does not occupy a constrained position, as might be suggested by Tomm's (1988) model. Rather, he responds to Annie as if she has occupied a creative position and invoked a facilitative frame. We notice from both tone and content of David's response that he appears to have adopted a generative position, leaving him ready to explore a different interaction/context and identify circular patterns: "*we can try that*" (line 17). Annie consolidates David's response by re-iterating the inclusive "*Shall we...*" (line 18) which suggests they are embarking on a joint democratic venture. The net effect is that Annie has promoted a negotiated training activity, becoming a **co-producer** with David in this interaction.

COMPLEXITIES OF TALK

The above example illustrates the complexities involved in analysing particular examples of talk. The inter-relatedness of different ways of talking – that is, questions, directives, statements, hedges, softeners etc., means that the proposed effect on both the speaker and the respondent may not be easily predicted. For example, according to Tomm's (1988) framework, lineal and strategic forms of talk are most likely to have conservative and constraining effects on the respondent (so the actual effect is fully aligned with the predicted effect). However, in our example above we see the exact opposite whereby the actual effect is misaligned with the predicted effect: David adopts a liberated and generative position within a facilitative frame.

In other words, from our analysis we note that the course techniques are delivered and received both through the words that they use (content of talk) and the way in which they deliver those words (structure of talk). Tomm's (1988) framework is delivered through the content of the speakers' talk, and it is through this framework that the course techniques are frequently situated. Furthermore, it is through both content and delivery that we noticed aspects of the 7Cs coming through. Careful examination of the transcripts shows that the speakers employ variously complex and aligned/misaligned styles of delivery – and while some have their 'preferred' style, we note that a mix of styles is used depending upon the complexity of the context itself. This complexity includes the specific activity type within which they are working and the various levels of engagement of the interactants. In summary, we noticed four main types of delivery:

1. HOLISTIC CONGRUENCE

This is an aligned and holistic position leading to co-production in the interaction. We refer you back to the lower section of Table 4. In this talk-combination the talk type and the effect of the talk type is in full congruence with the course ethos of an holistic approach and greater attention is paid to the 7Cs through both the content and structure of talk. Thus, the talk type is circular and reflexive, the speaker's position demonstrates a greater degree of acceptance and creativity, there is a greater liberating and generative effect on the respondent and the situational frame appears more exploratory and facilitative.

2. AUTHORITARIAN CONGRUENCE

Once again this is an aligned position, but this time the alignment is to the reductionist, authoritarian and didactic approach leading to a unilateral approach within the interaction (see the upper section of Table 4). In this talk-combination the content talk is assertive and lineal, and the speaker's position becomes oppositional. Such positions are often strengthened through paralinguistic features of talk whereby the speaker adopts a forceful tone in their delivery and many aspects of the 7Cs, which are foregrounded in the Holistic Congruence talk-combination, tends to become backgrounded. The effect on the respondent is constraining and conservative invoking a corrective and investigative situational frame. This happened infrequently, and was more apparent in training the trainer situations.

3. HOLISTIC INCONGRUENCE

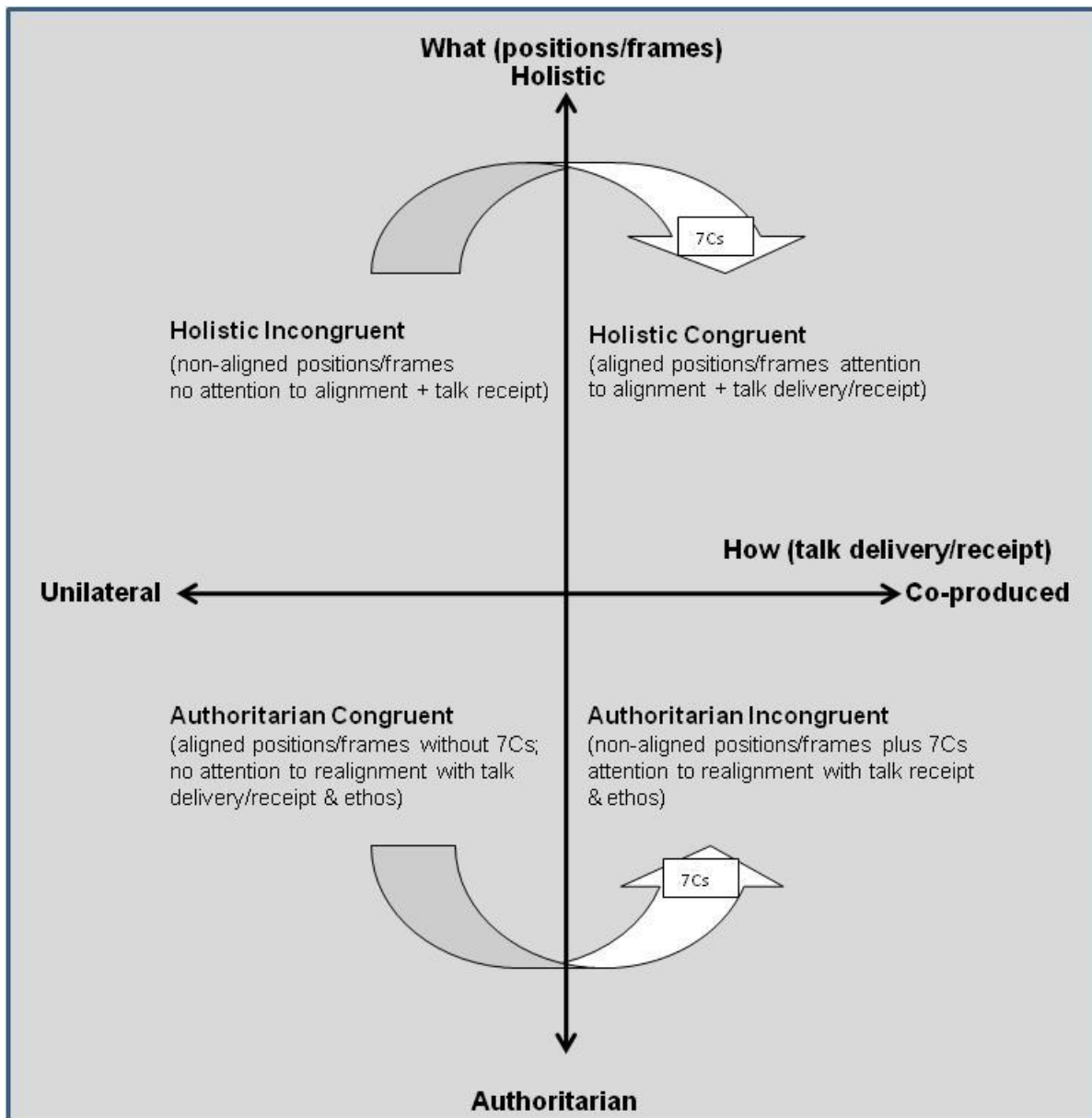
Here aspects of the speakers' talk appear to be in congruence with the course ethos of an holistic approach but the effects on the respondent and the situational frame are incongruent. Thus, while the content of the talk type might be focusing on the use of circular and reflexive questions, the way in which the talk is delivered places the speaker in an oppositional or judgemental position, exerting a constrained and conservative effect on the recipient of their talk. Furthermore, the speaker does not attend to this incongruence. This lack of attention is evident through omissions of particular talk features (which we saw in our above example are associated with the 7Cs) and so the speaker remains unilateral in the interaction.

4. AUTHORITARIAN INCONGRUENCE

Our final talk-combination demonstrates another form of incongruence which we have already encountered in our example above. Here the talk type of the speaker is essentially assertive or lineal, but the effects on the respondent and the situational frame are incongruent with that didactic and authoritarian approach. The respondent appears liberated and generative and the conversation continues within an exploratory and

facilitative frame. In the data we observed that as the speaker begins to occupy a didactic position, the need to soften this approach is recognised and attended to. Thus, despite the speakers' own, apparent didactic position, the incongruent holistic positioning of the responder is developed through role modelling of the 7Cs both within the content and structure of their talk features. This role modelling effectively softens the interactional positioning of the responder and of the interactional frame within which the conversation is held which leads to successful co-production within the interaction.

Figure 1: The four talk-combinations



The Holistic Congruence and Authoritarian Incongruence talk-combinations include an attention to the 7Cs through role-modelling resulting in an interactional approach of co-production. As speakers employ these approaches, they tap into a host of talk features which modify their prevailing talk delivery. Such talk features act either as 'softeners' or introduce greater force to the message. They include paralinguistic talk (hesitations, hedges, pitch, tone), meta-communication (commentary about the talk being used) and a range of other linguistic features, such as lexical qualifiers, modality and modulation. In the case of

Holistic Congruence (aligned positions and frames) these talk features complement and maintain the speaker's existing, holistic position within an aligned holistic approach. Where the speaker's talk-combination is Authoritarian Incongruence (non-aligned positions and frames) the talk features counteract with what is a prevailing didactic approach to maintain the supervisee's intended holistic position and frame. The speaker does this by using the talk features indicative of the 7Cs and attending to how their talk is received by the supervisee (See Figure 1).

Following close examination of our full data set we found that as speakers deliver their supervision/training they do not adhere to any one of the four approaches we have identified. Rather, they shift between these approaches. Since the four approaches mark the extremes of intersecting continuums (congruent-incongruent and holistic-didactic) we witnessed speakers' shifting positions at varying proximity to these extremes; at different times in the interaction, they positioned themselves differently within the quadrants to exhibit greater or lesser co-production and holism.

DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME

So far in this section we have focused on RQ3 and the interactional nuances within the course delivery and receipt. However the data that were analysed in depth comprised case studies of course participants over time. We now turn to consider RQ4: what do we learn about the ways in which participants demonstrate a change in perspectives and techniques along the lines of the course ethos. Our understanding of this question is partly entwined with our previous discussion around the four different talk-combinations and the requirement for detailed feedback to course participants.

Appendix E outlines our detailed analysis of two case studies - David and Mary - across two time frames. Focusing specifically on the analysis of the two occasions which see David in the role of supervisor, we find no direct evidence of development of skills over time. David has become familiar with the terminology associated with the course philosophy and this course participant talks of how he wants to be able to practise what he understands this philosophy to be: essentially the 7Cs. He seems receptive to new perspectives, however, throughout this practice session, David is seen to struggle with adopting the questioning techniques which are promoted on the course and which are derived mostly from Tomm's (1988) model. As David practises the questioning techniques, the complexity of his questions demonstrates the extent of his difficulty and confusion, yet this is not addressed by anyone involved in this practice supervision, including the trainer. At this point David uses an Authoritarian Incongruent talk-combination. We noted that he generally used quite linear questions, but these were 'masked' by a soft mitigated style and so frequently produced the desired response. This raises the question of ambiguity not only about the success of course participants putting the theory into practice but also about the level of understanding of the foundational ideas by all involved.

Turning now to comment on Mary, her performance at Day 2 Time 1 demonstrated that even by the second day of the course she had great difficulty in adopting an investigative, orienting approach: she frequently adopted lineal questions to reach a very particular goal. Thus her approach was replete with lineal pre-suppositions/assumptions about the individual, who she placed at the heart of the problem. Mary infrequently employed circular assumptions or explorations of her own (so lacked curiosity or contextualisation). Mary herself indicated how she had wanted to open up her questioning to explore the greater context, and desired to take a more exploratory circular approach with her subsequent questioning. Yet, she continually reverted to lineal hypothesising and investigative questions, demonstrating either a lack of understanding or insight. However,

by the end of Mary's last practice supervision on Day 3 there is some evidence that she was managing to use the technique successfully employing an Holistic Congruent talk-combination. To what extent she fully understood or was committed to the course ethos, as opposed to employing the techniques instrumentally, was unclear and would only truly be observable over a longer period of study.

CONCLUSIONS FROM LEVEL 2 ANALYSIS

What our analysis has shown here is that linear questions can sometimes elicit extensive and creative responses from the responder through content and linguistic features in tune with the 7Cs (for further discussion and examples of these in a variety of training and practice supervising contexts see Appendix E). This facilitative response impinges on the capacity of Tomm's (1988) model to successfully predict responses and expands on Launer's assertion that the course "promotes an interviewing style based mainly on questioning". Without an explicit understanding of how this comes about, the trainers may provide the practising supervisor with 'restricted feedback', so endangering the fine-tuning of questioning skills and potentially the longer term impact of the course on the development of participants' supervision practice. In other words, we have seen evidence of speakers acting within the Authoritarian Incongruence talk-combination being praised and acknowledged for using circular and reflexive talk when their talk comprised assertive and lineal questions and assumptions because the resulting effect on the responder appeared liberating and generative (see Appendix E, Role-Play supervision practice including Excerpts 4, 5 and 6). While we acknowledge the outcome is in harmony with the course ethos, we are concerned that this restricts the nuanced development of participants over time potentially rendering any supervision conversation 'effective' so long as it is delivered with particular linguistic and paralinguistic features. We believe that it is particularly important that all trainers are skilled at picking up on these nuances of talk and that participants are appropriately supported through detailed feedback about their talk-combinations.

Indeed, there is deep appreciation by the trainers of the complexity of the trainer-trainee interaction: it is demonstrated that successful training is not just about asking questions but also about the detail of how questions are asked and how talk is delivered. Undeniably, all the trainers go beyond the Tomm (1988) model and enter into the more sophisticated realm of the 7Cs. However, while the trainers intuitively know how to do this, they are not always able to express this clearly and meaningfully as they interact with the course participants. By and large the 7Cs proved a very complex technique to master and it has been witnessed that not all trainers were equally able to demonstrate it structurally and linguistically. Ultimately, apart from one instance that we have witnessed, the trainers do not hold explicit conversations with the course participants regarding the additional conversational and interactional features they use. Thus for some of the course participants this message is at best delivered implicitly. Without explicit guidance they may remain uncertain about the precise nature of the new supervision skills they are learning and the importance of the 7Cs in training.

Level 3: Extent to which new learning is applied to practice

Having considered the issue of what and how learning occurs during the course itself (Level 2), to evaluate the ultimate value and return on expectations of the course we now turn our attention to Level 3 activities: to what extent do participants apply what they have learned during the course when they are 'back in the workplace'. In doing so, we also consider participants' perceived difficulties they face as they apply their new-found techniques in practice.

In this section we consider research questions 4 and 5. RQ4 is concerned with the impact of the course on (a) the participants themselves, and those in contact with them - (b) doctors/colleagues during supervision, (c) patients, and (d) others. The focus of RQ5 is issues that arise for participants as they use the perspectives and techniques from the course, (a) in their performing and (b) in their perspectives. In order to consider these questions, we draw exclusively on participants' audio diaries and specifically the personal incident narratives (PINs) of their attempts to utilise their new knowledge in the 'real world'. Further, when considering these narratives, we also reflect and comment on an aspect of Level 2 evaluation: the development of participants' learning over time as evidenced through these narratives. Indeed, through the implementation of their learning within the contact days themselves, some participants developed their mastery of the techniques during non-contact days within the time-period of the course and beyond.

Within the audio diary data we received a total of 36 discrete PINs whereby participants (n=10) narrated events during which they utilised or attempted to utilise the questioning techniques developed during the course. These PINs were coded according to the research question (i.e. RQ4 impact of the course and RQ5 issues arising).

Participants narrated events that demonstrated an impact on all four groups under consideration: themselves (n=24 PINs), their colleagues and supervisees (n=16), patients (n=8) and others (n=4)¹². From this we can see that the utility of their learning during the course was applied broadly. Indeed, participants narrated how they tried out their newly learned questioning techniques in a range of personal and professional situations: with clinical colleagues, administration staff, patients, medical students, friends, family and even removal men and fellow holiday makers.

Within their PINs we identified four themes that demonstrate this impact in addition to identifying the issues that arise for participants as they bring their learning into action: (1) change in practice; (2) facilitating impact; (3) mitigating impact; and (4) level 4 outcome potential. Drawing on PINs that demonstrate the impact of the course on a range of individuals (course participants, colleagues, patients and others) we now consider each theme in turn.

THEME 1: CHANGE IN PRACTICE

Participants narrated their attempts to change their practice towards working with their newly learned techniques: sometimes these techniques were brought into a new arena (e.g. practising techniques when conversing with family and friends), but more frequently these new techniques were utilised within their workplace environment and replaced old ways of doing things. Interestingly, participants frequently narrated these as 'tentative' attempts to 'try out' the technique:

¹² Due to the complexity of the narratives and how learning occurs through interaction, some PINs were coded for impact on the participants' themselves in addition to another group. The numbers therefore do not add up to 36.

*Rather than focusing directly on the issue as presented, I thought I would try looking further at what her concerns were and **so tried** a much more reflective approach. (Simon, reflecting on a conversation with a colleague, Audio Diary)*

*I thought it was an interesting opportunity **to try and use** the questioning approach to **try and draw out** the trainee what it was that they - where they saw themselves as going, what it was that they wanted from the future. (David, reflecting on a conversation with a medical student, Audio Diary)*

*In work so far **I've tried to use** some of the open question techniques with my juniors. (Roxy, reflecting on her conversations with junior doctors in educational settings, Audio Diary)*

***I have tried to use** the questioning. I haven't been in my clinical job. However just talking to some people yesterday I'm conscious that I used questioning much more in the conversation to explore around the experience. It made the whole interaction much more interesting. I'm not sure that I would have questioned quite so persistently before going on the course. (Mary, reflecting on a conversation, Audio Diary)*

However, the extent to which participants narrated a change in practice (rather than mere attempts to utilise the techniques) varied greatly. Given the longitudinal nature of the audio diaries, for six participants we had at least three PINs across different time frames so were able to analyse their narratives of change over time: Gwen n=4, Mary n=8, Sanjeeda n=5, Mai n=3, Shiva n=4 and Simon n=8. Utilising Gergen's (1994) rudimentary forms of narrative progression, we were able to undertake an initial analysis to examine the extent to which these participants' PINs demonstrated progression, stability or regression with respect to change over time.¹³ Of these six participants, five narrated progression in terms of their perceived development, with the remaining participant narrating stability (i.e. no change).

Following this initial rudimentary classification, we then analysed how narrators presented change (or lack of change) by considering the ways in which participants position themselves and others within their narratives (Bamberg, 2003; Monrouxe & Sweeney, 2010; Watson, 2007; Wortham & Gadsten, 2006). This analysis revealed that for some, the questioning techniques appeared to be utilised in a manner that was contrary to the ethos of the course (in particular, that through the use of circular and reflexive questioning, supervisees are given the space in which to come to their own understandings without influence from the supervisor who adopts a neutral stance) and this appeared to be an enacted rather than embodied change. However, for others, a deep change in practice along the lines of the course ethos appeared to be narrated. We present detailed case reports to demonstrate varied application of the techniques.

CASE REPORT 1: EMBODYING NEWWAYS

We begin by presenting a case (Simon) whose narratives demonstrate this deep change over time. Simon narrated eight events in which he reported utilising the techniques he developed during the three contact days. These involved conversations with registrars, patients, family members and fellow holiday makers thereby demonstrating how Simon did not confine himself to applying his learning within a strict supervisor-supervisee

¹³ **The Stability Narrative** links events so that the individual's trajectory remains essentially unchanged in relation to the outcomes of the course; **the Progressive Narrative** links events so that the individual's trajectory is evaluated as being 'better' over time in relation to the outcome of the course; **the Regressive Narrative** links the events so that the individual's trajectory over time is detrimental in relation to the outcomes of the course.

relationship. He began to send PINs of how he was applying the technique between days 2 and 3 of the course. At this time he narrated on two separate occasions how he had applied the techniques to (1) patients (a mother and son) and (2) a colleague. The following excerpts from Simon's narratives have been edited to remove identifying material. In addition the editing has removed other remarks which we bring in later in this report in terms of his concerns about the techniques. Here, we focus specifically on change in practice:

*This happened during one of my evening surgeries, a mother came in with her 12 year old son... I was looking at the interaction between mum and son and it struck me that something wasn't quite right. **Tried some gentle probing questions** with the son to begin with, however he was not terribly forthcoming so **tried a similar approach** with his mother ... **we discussed what they would like to get from the consultation** and within the limits of what could be done within a general practice consultation, **we made some plans** for the future...I felt better placed in terms of **having some appropriate types of questions to ask and knowing a little more about what I was perhaps expecting from any questions that I was asking.** (Simon, PIN 1)*

*I was having a discussion with my registrar at the end of a morning surgery about some cases that had cropped up over the course of the morning that she'd wanted some advice on ... this was a topic that we had discussed in the past so I was slightly confused when she raised the issue again. **Rather than focusing directly on the issue as presented, I thought I would try looking further at what her concerns were and so tried a much more reflective approach.** After **some gentle questioning** she volunteered the fact that one of the things that she was having some difficulty with was the fact that she felt she was dealing with things differently in general practice from the ways that she would have done in hospital. After **more gentle probing**, she felt that one of the things that was happening was that she had a lot more responsibility in general practice and was making a lot more decisions on her own... **we explored** what it was about this situation that bothered her and she felt ... **She decided** that she wants to ... I think that the tools that the last couple of days have given me in terms of **types of question, when to ask the questions** has been a benefit. (Simon, PIN 2)*

So, even at this early stage in Simon's learning, he is finding the questioning techniques useful. Furthermore, when he appears to be getting nowhere in his *gentle questioning* with the 12-year-old boy, he turns to his mother to see if this approach works with her (PIN 1). He also narrates a change in his usual practice – “*rather than focusing directly on the issue as presented*” (PIN 2), bringing his newly acquired techniques into play. Through his use of the adjective *gentle*, Simon suggests he is using a facilitative frame within his questioning – “*gentle probing questions*” – which appear to bring forth change in his interactants' understanding of the issue at hand: in PIN 1 this shifted from the issue of the son's 'clicky joints' to a referral to family therapy sessions, and in PIN 2 from advice on prescribing to the issue of managing uncertainty in general practice. Interestingly, Simon uses the personal pronoun *we* followed by a verb, suggesting a collaborative approach within the interaction: *we discussed* (PIN 1), *we explored* (PIN 2). Within this collaborative frame, Simon and his patients jointly decided on an action – *we made some plans for the future* (PIN 1) – and his colleague was empowered to tackle her newly-discovered issue of uncertainty – “*she decided that...*” (PIN 2). For Simon, he felt that the course had provided him with useful *tools* in terms of having appropriate *types* of questions, knowing *when* to ask them and *what* to expect of them.

Moving on to consider the narratives recorded by Simon two weeks following the course, we note that he is still using the techniques within his daily practice. Indeed, his opening reflection on why he was late in submitting his audio diary reveals the extent to

which he is beginning to embody his new approach to supervision by taking it beyond the confines of a formal supervisor-supervisee situation:

*Hi, I was just going to say this is reflections on the last week, and then I realised its actually two weeks have gone by. Sitting here, wondering why that should be. Part of it I think, is related to the time that's gone by since the course and perhaps some of the immediacy of that has faded. Part of it may be it's been a particularly busy two weeks and opportunity for lengthy supervisions has not really presented itself. I also think that part probably relates to the fact that **some of these techniques seem to have become part of my normal practice and perhaps I'm not actually recognising these events as being episodes or supervision.** I'm thinking particularly of the brief discussions we have at the end of surgeries, or when a registrar wants advice about a particular subject. (Simon, PIN 3)*

Simon went on to narrate an event during which he used his techniques in a group, rather than a one to one interaction. Simon begins his narrative constructing the event as a tutorial. However, as he develops his narrative, describing the ways in which he utilises reflexive (which he calls reflective)¹⁴ and circular questions to open up space for a registrar to re-frame her understanding of the issue at hand, he begins to refer to the event as a supervision during which his supervisee demonstrates a marked shift in her perspective:

*My main opportunity for supervision over the last two weeks would have been last Tuesday when I did a two hour **tutorial** with the four registrars currently attached to our practice... one of the more experienced registrars had decided to touch on the subject of depression in the elderly. Her presentation was very much based upon guidelines that seemed to lack very much personal insight. **I tried to focus on reflective and circular questions** in order to look at the problems more widely to try and get her to think about how she might expect to feel if she'd just had a bereavement or the death of a long term partner, if she had been unable to carry out those activities which currently she took for granted ... during the course of the **supervision**, it was interesting to see how her point of view seemed to change from "isn't it surprising the number of older people with depression" to "isn't it surprising that not everybody who is elderly is depressed, and what's special about those people that don't suffer from major episodes of depression as they are becoming older". (Simon, PIN 3)*

This shift in narrative positioning from someone who is running a group tutorial, to someone who is engaging in a one-to-one supervision within his newly developed understanding of the techniques learned on the course is interesting. His re-framing of the interaction this way might be due to the inherent didactic nature of this technique: as Simon noted later in his narrative, he had difficulty transferring this to group interactions as others would 'chip in':

*There were five of us present there, so one of the things that tended to happen would be that **during a reflective pause**, somebody else would chip in and this would, at times, take things off at a tangent. (Simon, PIN 3)*

Overall this particular narrative is interesting – Simon begins by talking about how the techniques are becoming embodied and part of his normal practice – but later his account indicates his uncertainty about his competence in mastering the skills he was taught on the course, tentatively saying "I tried.." when describing his use of questions. While these aspects of embodiment and tentativity might appear at odds with one another, we interpret his tentativity as being due to the newness of the situation, rather than the techniques themselves, and his use of them within a group context for the first time.

¹⁴ Here we see a misunderstanding about terminology so that 'reflective' is being used by Simon where 'reflexive' is the term used on the course. Given that the type of questions Simon describes using seem to be 'hypothetical future', this would support this idea.

We now turn to the final PIN recorded by Simon in his audio diary towards the end of September, 2010. He recorded a lengthy diary entry lasting around 8 minutes during which he gave further reflections on his experience of the course itself and briefly recounted three events during which he used the techniques learned on the course: one involving fellow holiday makers, one with a patient and the third with a family member. We discuss his interaction with the patient later when we report on Theme 4, Level 4 outcome potential; here we focus on his narrative around using the techniques with a family member.

What is noticeable about this narrative (and the diary entry as a whole) is that Simon does not struggle to find examples of when he's used the techniques and cites a broad application of them to his life in general. This suggests he has embodied this way of being to a certain extent and demonstrates an impact on himself as a person (rather than merely on his supervisory skills). His interaction with his son demonstrates how he has shifted his approach in terms of becoming less directive and more facilitative to others. Indeed, this is a particularly interesting and relevant narrative since previously, during the 3 day course, Simon had reported that he and his son had had a particularly awkward exchange about his son's difficulties at work. During this time, Simon had then reflected how he might have handled the situation differently and been less directive. We now see how he reports this shift in positioning:

*In regard to a **fine example** of using them, the thing that comes most recently to mind is an example with my eldest son who's currently working as ... and the possibility of a job coming up which would mean going and working for [names company] instead. Although not directly asked my impression was that he wanted to discuss the pros and cons of going for this job or continuing in his current post which has certain advantages in terms of being based at [names location] and therefore being convenient for both him and his girlfriend. **I tried to concentrate on the reflexive and circular questions**, trying to get him to think about what he could see himself doing in a year's time, how he felt his girlfriend's work situation and aspirations would impact upon him, particularly if he decided to go for a new job and was then posted to be based abroad. There was also the issue of possible rejection. Obviously if he does apply for the job and doesn't get it then it would not help his self esteem. We spent time discussing the pros and cons of possible decisions and at the end of discussion **he had come to a decision which felt right for him and one which he felt he had made rather than being influenced by somebody else**. I think that the skills learned on the course were helpful to me because I feel, perhaps **in past times, I would have been a little more directive** rather than trying to ensure that he was making his own decision and making it for his own reasons. (Simon, PIN 8)*

So, following from the earlier interaction between Simon and his son, Simon talks of how he tried to employ the skills he had learnt on the course and how the outcome was much more favourable: his son was empowered to arrive at his own decision "*which felt right for him...rather than being influenced*". Furthermore, Simon is able to reflect on his change in positioning (from being directive to becoming facilitative) being directly attributed to having participated on the course.

CASE REPORT 2: PLAYING WITH NEW WAYS

While we found evidence that five of our six longitudinal audio diary case studies narrated progression, positioning analysis revealed that not all progression was equal: some participants' narratives suggested that although participants were utilising and incorporating their newly-found techniques, the broader ethos of the course had not been fully embraced. Indeed, the techniques appeared to be employed as a way of bringing the interactant around to a pre-scribed conclusion rather than enabling the interactant to fully

explore the situation for themselves. We turn now to Mary in order to see how this comes through within the narratives.

Mary recorded eight PINs demonstrating how she utilised the techniques she had learned in her daily practice. Once again, the techniques were used in a variety of personal and professional situations: with colleagues (n=2), students (n=1), patients (n=4) and personal interactions (n=1). The first narrative Mary recorded comprised general reflections on the techniques and a brief comment regarding how she had begun to incorporate them within her interactions with others (once again this narrative has been edited to preserve anonymity):

*I'm intrigued by the notion of just exploring people's problems by asking questions and really removing any emphasis of your own ... I've previously [used] other techniques ... which includes summarising. Depending on how you summarise and where you place the emphasis I think this does influence and lead the conversation. So not having this resource and just relying on questions provided, **we don't cheat, we use leading questions** which allows the person to choose their own way through their problem and the conversation. This in some ways is more powerful for them and prevents you influencing them, possibly even in a detrimental way. I have **tried to use the questioning**. I haven't been in my clinical job however just talking to some people yesterday I'm conscious that I used questioning much more in the conversation to explore around the experience. It made the whole interaction much more interesting. I'm not sure that I would have questioned quite so persistently before going on the course. I plan to use it with colleagues as far as I can and will certainly **play with it** [with colleagues] ... (Mary, PIN 1)*

PIN 1 was recorded on 29th June 2010 between the first and second days of the course and so provides us with Mary's initial observations and intentions. She admits to previously using a summarising technique which can influence the other interactant: Mary asserts that by not using this as a resource, and relying on questions, will enable the interactant to "choose their own way through their problem". What is interesting, however, in this narrative is the way in which Mary draws on the metaphor 'supervising as a game', whereby she won't "cheat" (i.e. summarise) and she will "play" with the techniques in other interactions. Her use of this metaphor suggests that she is not fully on-board with the process at this point: an entirely natural reaction given the early stage at which she has recorded her thoughts and experiences.

Following Day 2 of the course, Mary recorded another event, this time using her developing questioning technique with a patient who was requesting a specialist referral:

*My little story is regarding using questioning with a patient who wanted to be referred on to a specialist service **that was felt to be both inappropriate by myself and her referring GP**. Normally I would probably have either tried to engage with her or just ignore her request, depending on how many times we'd addressed this. Whereas on this occasion **I used questioning** and I questioned and got her to think about what she wanted to get out of the consultation with an expert **which of course she couldn't come up with a valid reason**. Interestingly or I will see with interest if this changes her behaviour or not. I'll be seeing her in a few weeks' time. (Mary, PIN 3)*

While Mary narrates her own shift in behaviour towards using questions to invite change in a confident manner (i.e. "I used" rather than "I tried") it seems that this was not entirely undertaken in a neutral and value free manner. Indeed, Mary freely admits that she had her own agenda – she and her referring GP felt that the specialist service was inappropriate. She therefore used questioning to get the patient to see for herself the appropriateness of her request – "which of course she couldn't come up with a valid reason". This strategic use of

questioning here appears somewhat at odds with Mary's earlier assertion that the technique is designed to enable interactants to *choose* their own way through their problem.

Following Day 3 of the course, Mary narrates a further way in which she plans to utilise the questioning techniques she is learning: this time she plans to use it as a learning tool for junior doctors to understand issues around workload and time management. It is clear from her enthusiasm that Mary has embraced her learning experience and is beginning to incorporate this new learning into a broad array of activities and events:

*I'm [doing an activity] and I have to do various exercises. One of the things that have occurred to me that would be a good exercise to do is to do some questioning. So set up an exercise by questions for the junior doctor to explore what elements of the problems are their own responsibility and what they can action and do about it. I think **by leading them through, by using a question structure, such as we were playing with**, could be a very valuable way of doing this without antagonising them... So I think the concept of sort of asking yourself questions, such as "what events have most irritated you over the last 24 hours" or "what event did you spend the most time doing in the last 24 hours and whether that, you know, was appropriate time", "what contribution did you have for the excessive time spent on this" could be a very useful way of getting people to think about how they actually manage their time...(Mary, PIN 4)*

This is an interesting addition to the ways in which the techniques can be used. However, Mary's narrative suggests that she still has quite a directive approach to questioning – "*leading them through*" – and the questions she uses appear to be more lineal than circular or reflexive. Furthermore, rather than embodying this new way of thinking and behaving, her narrative suggests she is still "*playing with*" the ideas.

Mary continued to contribute her reflections, and recorded the following narrative (PIN 6) about one month post-course. Once again this narrative is about her utilising the technique with a patient in her care and emphasises how her own behaviour is changing:

*I used the questioning technique. It was quite interesting. I wasn't sure whether it was going to work 'cause he had memory impairment. But he had been given - he was a faller and he had very weak legs and he needed to do exercises. He'd managed to mislay the exercise sheet and had done nothing in between - from the last session, I'm not quite sure how long that was - over a week. **So instead of** just trying to reinforce the importance of the fact, that if he wanted to remain in his own home then the thing that threatened that the most was his falling and therefore he should do strengthening exercises, **I tried a different approach**. I was asking him to try and sort out his problems. **So I used quite directive questioning** with him, but **made him seek the solutions**. He **sometimes needed help** but he did put it together in the end. We worked out a strategy whereby he could do the exercises and I provided him with two sheets rather than just one sheet, so he could keep one by his chair and one by his bed. So I'll be interested to see whether this makes any difference whatsoever the next we review him. Anyway, it was **quite an interesting little exercise**. (Mary, PIN6)*

It is unclear from this narrative exactly which type of questions were employed but the suggestion is that still, at this stage, that questioning per se is considered as positive: it appears to be achieving the desired treatment outcomes. Further, Mary acknowledges that she leads the patient towards desired and pre-determined outcomes – which is not the essence of the course philosophy that the trainers have tried to encourage, i.e. they have emphasised a neutral stance from the position circular rather than lineal assumptions. And while the approach may be less confrontational than the approach she previously employed, it seems still to be *directive* rather than *interactive* and *exploratory*. One final point to make about this particular narrative is, once more, Mary appears to narrate the event within the play-frame as "*quite an interesting little exercise*", suggesting that Mary is continuing to play

with different ways of incorporating her learning and utilising the techniques she has learned in a strategic manner in order to achieve the outcome she desires.

The final event that Mary narrates occurred toward the end of August 2010. The event involves a patient who felt she was complying with her medication dosage, despite Mary's suspicions that she was not:

*But an **interesting little story** from today with a patient, a lady who had extremely poorly controlled blood pressure and diabetes who was repeatedly on four different anti-hypertensives. I heavily suspected she wasn't concurring with the medication, but she initially denied this, also denied it to our very excellent staff nurse, but **I just persisted with my questioning**. I always ask patients anyway how they take their own medicine, rather than just what they're on. I just **gently challenged her** that she didn't always take the medication, because I'd noticed the different dates on the boxes. I **just persisted with asking her questions** and it was quite interesting that **eventually she did admit**. The way that she coped with so many tablets was to take them alternate days. So to her mind she could say that she was taking her medication and concurring with it. But she was only taking half the dose. So it was quite amusing and it will be interesting to see whether she now is able to take her medicines in a better fashion. **We actually managed to negotiate** the ones that she was actually taking regularly and we've increased that by one tablet, and I will be intrigued to see whether this actually significantly improves her blood pressure control. **It will be quite entertaining to see her next time.** (Mary, PIN 8)*

Once again it is difficult to be sure but the suggestion here is that circular questioning has been employed as Mary talks how she "gently challenged" the patient. Furthermore, the revelation that "The way that she coped with so many tablets was to take them alternate days" suggests an exploratory frame for interaction was created whereby Mary did not adopt an oppositional position, exerting constraint. Rather she appears to be more accepting, trying to understand the patient's perspective. In doing so, it is possible that she liberated the patient. Indeed, her use of the pronoun *we* and talk of *negotiation* suggests a highly collaborative position was adopted: "*We actually managed to negotiate the ones that she was actually taking regularly and we've increased that by one tablet*".

In the main, therefore, it appears from this narrative that Mary utilised the questioning techniques within an ethos that is broadly in line with that of the course although from her opening and closing remarks ("*interesting little story*" and "*entertaining to see*") it still appears that she constructs the events within a play-frame. This stance, and indeed the overall framing of the narratives through her use of the game metaphor, strongly suggests that Mary utilises her newly-found techniques strategically: playing with them in different contexts, continually moving beyond the boundaries to accomplish what she considers is achievable for the good of the patient within the constraints of the interaction. Indeed, this strategic playing with the techniques appears to summarise Mary's ways of incorporating them in her daily routine.

CASE REPORT 3: LAPSING INTO OLD WAYS

The final case we report on is the only participant who narrated stability (Gergen, 1994). This is not to say that she was the only participant who experienced little or no change, rather, she was the only participant who submitted three or more PINs which mentioned utilising the techniques in practice. Mai submitted four audio diary entries in total with the final one following Day 3 of the course. While she reported positively regarding the utility of the techniques in her last recording, she did not give any examples of her putting them into action at that point; her concluding remarks suggest that she was very open to change:

I certainly would like to practise a lot more, yeah, and I think I'm generally very interested in the concepts, the theory behind it and how that can be used in different situations and not just for supervision but also for difficult consultations. (Mai, reflecting on the course, Audio Diary)

However, the three PINs she narrated suggested that change, for her, was not straightforward and she appeared to struggle with mastering the techniques. The first PIN comes after Day 1 of the course:

*Last Thursday I did meet up with my ST1 whom I'm the educational supervisor for her second six months review. Now this was interesting because **I did try - well my aim was to try out some of the techniques but I don't think I was that successful.** I had it in the back of my mind some of the questions which were used in the session but I seem to **self lapse into my usual way of supervising and found it hard to bring the questions around** that I wanted to ask. I did ask this in the first day session, you know because we had the benefit of being able to break and turn around and talk to our tutor and discuss how we were doing and then reframe our questions which of course in a normal supervision session you don't have the benefit of that. So I hope they're going to teach us how to deal with - help us get those ideas vocalised really. I did ask that at the end of the first session and they did say that they made a - you know it was a very brief thing but the facilitator did say that you could ask, if you had dilemmas in your head or if you were stuck with the questions, then **one technique is to vocalise it. But I did actually try that.** Yeah so anyway I don't think my first supervision session after the first day of the course was all that successful in terms of using the techniques of the course, of what the course was teaching. **So I quite quickly fell into my normal pattern.** Maybe the - I'm having another supervision session actually after the course this week, so maybe it will improve. (Mai, PIN 1)*

So we can see that, despite her attempts, Mai lapsed into her old ways of supervising. This is hardly surprising given that this is such an early stage in the course. She reflects in her narrative that she also got stuck during the first contact session in a similar way and how, unlike the practice sessions, in real supervisions they don't have the luxury of pausing and re-phrasings questions. Mai told us how she did try the technique of vocalising her difficulty in formulating a question, but it seemed not to work for her. Between Days 2 and 3 of the course Mai recorded another audio diary. This narrative was relatively brief (around 2 mins) during which she reflected on the techniques she is learning in a reasonably enthusiastic and positive manner, despite still struggling with implementing them:

*...the things that have been taught on the course I think gives me a fresh perspective and I've never thought of supervision as being something which has a structure as such. Coming to the course's made me think again about that and whether it should be something I ought to develop a bit more formally. Yes I think I would be interested to do that **as a separate role** really. My first exposure to supervision after the course has led me to think **it's not as easy as it looks** and so I think yes, I would **need to practise and assimilate into my way of thinking a little bit more** before I'll be able to process it properly. So yes I think it is*

something which I would like to develop and it's difficult at the moment but I'm sure that will come with time... (Mai, PIN 2)

From this excerpt of Mai's PIN 2 we can see how she is struggling to incorporate her new knowledge into her *way of thinking*. She highlights her need for further practise in the techniques. Interestingly, she talks of doing this as a *separate role* – almost acting the part rather than embodying this new way of approaching supervision. This is also highlighted in her final PIN recorded immediately prior to the third contact day (although she did record one further audio diary following Day 3, this did not contain a personal incident narrative). She begins her audio diary by saying that she “*somehow found [day 2] less useful*” and alluded to having difficulties with the trainer who was a trainee-trainer who she felt had not had much experience and this was detrimental to her learning. However, in terms of the course itself, she was generally happy and felt it was a good experience. She then began to talk about her experiences in implementing the techniques in her own practice, once again admitting tendency towards her *normal mode of working*:

Yeah, in terms of what has happened so far in the two weeks, I still have a tendency to ... I found myself very much in my normal mode of working. But then halfway through decided when it was getting difficult, decided that I suddenly remembered some of the elements of the course and used it. I think it was to good effect. So I still have to get the teachings of the course into my normal way of - so under my skin as it were, and for it to become more part of me. I think I definitely have a lot to work on... (Mai, PIN3).

What is particularly interesting about this narrative is the way in which Mai narrates her supervision event. She “*found herself working*” in her normal mode. This suggests she hasn't moved on from her initial state whereby she confessed to lapsing into her old ways. She then says she “*decided when it was getting difficult, decided that I suddenly remembered*”. This sudden remembrance of aspects of the course suggest further that she didn't begin by attempting to use the techniques and then lapse, rather, that she had forgotten that there was another way of doing things until she hit difficulties within the interaction. Once again she emphasises that she hasn't assimilated this new way of supervision and is at the opposite end of the spectrum to Simon who appears to have embodied the new ways: Mai admits that the teachings of the course are not under her skin, or indeed, a part of her.

So we can see from the three cases presented above that participants narrated their attempts at applying their new learning claiming various degrees of success. While some narratives demonstrated ways in which the new ways of working became embodied and second-nature, others struggled. Furthermore, the scope for acting the part, playing with the techniques and using them strategically, and not always within the strict ethos of the course, was also highlighted.

THEME 2: FACILITATING IMPACT

While participants learned their new techniques primarily within the course contacts days, participants' narratives suggest that attempting to apply their learning in practice facilitated a further impact of the course on themselves: in particular during those moments when participants experienced a direct change in others' perspectives and understandings through use of the questioning technique. This highlights the wider impact that the course has, both on the supervisor – in terms of embedding their learning – and on the supervisee (or other interactant) in terms of the benefits that their shifting perspective on knowledge and events brings to them:

I have been trying to practise the skills we learnt in the supervision course at home with my son who's a third year medical student and currently having his final exams... The second

session I had with my son was discussing the hypertension guidelines and management of hypertension. He simply wanted to learn the basic step [unclear] way how you deal with hypertension according to the new guidelines and stick to that...**I gently asked** him that if the patient is pregnant, how will that make a difference and that actually did throw him a bit...and **gently in a similar way by questioning him** I introduced different scenarios. At the end of the session when I asked him what he had learnt, he did not answer that he had learnt hypertension guidelines but actually that he had realised that management of hypertension is not as straightforward as he initially thought. **He was thinking laterally and looking at the patient as a whole.** So it was quite a satisfying experience for both of us. I learnt from that session that initially **if I had forced him** to think about thinking laterally too much, it probably would have just put up his back and he would have just gone to his room and looked at his book. But **by allowing him** to just talk about the thing that he wanted to talk and then once he felt that he had learnt enough for his exam **that was the time to probe him more** and just help him to think more laterally. Again the questioning technique helped me a lot because I **simply kept on asking questions in a non-threatening gentle way** and that **allowed him to express his own views.** (Sanjeeda, reflecting on a conversation with her son, Audio Diary)

It almost seemed more sort of natural, I was able to, I think, stick to a very much sort of questioning approach to **try and explore the area.** I've been trying to ask some **very simple questions to start with**, some lineal questions just to try and get a little bit of context, a little bit of better understanding. As we went through **we were able to change the questioning style** and it was nice **for me to be able to allow my colleague to be reflecting more**, to give her almost a little bit of distance on the situation and try to come up with some thoughts about how she could tackle these problems. I think it was also interesting, I found it quite effective, where she started is almost I think wanting to have a wee bit of a rant to let out steam and hadn't necessarily been able to formulate a question that she wanted an answer to. I think this exercise was very effective but not necessarily solving her problems but **allowing her to better understand her problems.** (David, reflecting on a conversation with a colleague, Audio Diary)

The significance of such learning though action cannot be understated: it is an important step towards the embodiment of their new ways of working through instigating shifts in others' understandings through the simple act of questioning.

Other facilitative aspects of the impact of the course that were mentioned were the *cascading effect* and the potential *therapeutic benefit* of implementing their new techniques. For example, Gwen narrated an event during which she implemented her new ways of conversing in her conversation with a friend:

I went and saw a friend of mine ... She's been ill for a few years with ME and has been doing a reduced number of hours in her workplace... She's been having quite a stressful time recently having lost her mother last year and had asked for sabbatical and was told that sabbaticals were for well people and that she should consider medical retirement. It's quite shocking to hear this and quite useful to explore that with her. I would hope that perhaps some of the day's learnt skills may be rubbed off on the conversation I had with her. It was also quite useful to talk about the dilemma I have in my practice...that kind of discussion felt quite therapeutic, so perhaps these skills are having a wider application. (Gwen, reflecting on a conversation with her friend, Audio Diary)

It is interesting that Gwen discusses the therapeutic nature of these conversations given the therapeutic context from which they are derived. Moreover, Launer has recently commented on the therapeutic potential of these interactions within the postgraduate arena. Furthermore, the 'rubbing off' of these techniques on others was not merely a hoped-for

consequence by our participants. Some PINs reported a direct cascading effect of the techniques (or general approach to conversation):

I asked one of my colleagues to have a chat to me about that which he did. I actually found it quite helpful to vent out my feelings. I asked him to - I gave him a little bit of background regarding what we had discussed in the course and he tried to follow those guidelines and actually we both found that it was quite useful. (Sanjeeda, reflecting on a conversation with her colleague, Audio Diary)

*One thing I found quite interesting was that the least vocal person in the room actually came up a couple of days later and mentioned that she had been to see her own grandmother who she realised was depressed, and said that she had used what we'd been discussing **and some of the questions that had been asked** during the session to actually... she had said that she'd used **some of the questions that had been raised in the session as a basis for a discussion with her grandmother**. So I guess this was an unexpected bonus. (Simon, reflections on his conversation with a group of junior colleagues, Audio Diary)*

While we cannot be certain about the fidelity of the course ethos or techniques as implemented by those who have been influenced in this way, this cascading effect does suggest that the impact of the course might ripple outwards and have the potential to touch individuals who are second or third removed from direct contact with the course participants.

THEME 3: MITIGATING IMPACT

While participants talked about aspects of their engagement with their new techniques that enhanced the impact that the course had both for themselves and others, within their PINs participants also narrated their concerns about the new techniques which mitigate the potential impact of the course. By far the most common concern was the additional time involved as they questioned, explored and empowered their interactants to come to their own conclusions regarding the issues they had:

*Actually the **appraisal took far longer** than my appraisals normally take, probably my appraisals normally take two, two and a half hours, and this appraisal took about three and a quarter hours, which is perhaps one of the longest I have done. (Gwen, reflecting on a conversation with a senior colleague, Audio Diary)*

*It would be nice to have a way, which I feel quite guilty about, because I think it would be good if I was able to actually ask her the questions and let her come out with the answers; but to be honest, **in the busy surgery that is not often possible**. During the tutorial I have used the techniques quite a bit, because then **we have the luxury of having the whole morning to ourselves**. I usually ask her what she knows about the topic and then she tells me about it and then questioning her gradually we try to come up with a final answer of how much she knows and then try and fill up the gaps in the knowledge later on. (Sanjeeda, reflecting in conversations with a junior colleague, Audio Diary)*

*I have also had a little bit of experience with questioning techniques. I am using this more often now and I'm finding it useful, **but it does take time, so when there is pressure of time, this technique is not being used**. Perhaps this is because we are not so familiar with this technique and it will take time for us to get used to it when it becomes almost a second nature. (Shiva, reflecting on her post-course experiences, Audio Diary)*

I feel this can be awfully time consuming... but I'd be interested to see how techniques from this approach can be applied in a shorter space of time as well as in longer educational supervision environments. (David, reflecting on his conversation with a junior trainee, Audio Diary)

However it's a technique which is difficult to shoehorn into the usual 10 minute consultation slot. (Simon, reflecting in his experiences in GP settings, Audio diary)

Participants frequently discussed how this new technique demands that the interactants devote more time to the process: thus they talked about the *pressure* of time, *the luxury* of time and the difficulty of *shoehorning* the technique. However, one interesting reflection came from Mary as she narrated the all-familiar issue of time pressures impinging on her decision to use the techniques:

*I certainly had a patient on Friday I could have used it with but **unfortunately, due to time pressures, that wasn't permissible**. I was wondering at the end of the time though because **they kept calling me back and calling me back** whether if I had started with a questioning approach whether that might have been quicker. So **perhaps I should have used it**. Interesting reflection. (Mary, reflecting on a conversation with a patient, Audio diary)*

This issue of time therefore is not as straightforward as it might seem: there are often hidden factors that arise outside the initial conversation that might prolong the actual time taken to discuss an issue. Due to the apparent consensus that this technique requires more time than does a directive approach, the issue of what these hidden factors are and what they might mean in practice could be explored in more detail with course participants during the contact days. Indeed, the course techniques do not always require lengthy conversations. While we noted during our Level 1 analysis that speeded supervision training sessions were not as highly valued, it was interesting to see that at least one participant was able to benefit from a 'speedy' seven-minute supervision conversation:

As the supervisor I discussed with a colleague who works in the [department] of the deanery an [error]... Her dilemma was really whether or not she should discuss this with her supervisor and the outcome of our seven minutes supervision was that this would be a good idea. (Gwen, reflecting on her conversation with a colleague, Audio Diary)

One possibly related issue that participants narrated as having a negative impact concerned the level of engagement of their interactant with the process. If the other person was reluctant to engage in this form of conversation then it not only took longer, but sometimes became impossible to continue:

*Something else which certainly crops up, at least in the consultation, the use of the techniques, is that **the person on the other side of the table needs to be receptive** to what we're trying to do with this, otherwise there's a tendency for the stock reply "well you're the doctor, you should have the answers, that's why I've come to see you". (Simon, reflecting on his conversations with patients, Audio Diary)*

The issue of engagement can be due to thinking that other people have the answers, or disengagement can come about through other ways. For example, as highlighted by Gwen when talking about the role-play exercise, there is always the possibility through the use of continual questions, the interactant might develop the feeling that they're being *criticised* in some way:

*I think in terms of what I learnt in both the two days within the course so far and also with this episode and other episodes is the - I think **the complexity of the questions** that we can ask and **how I intend a question to sound isn't necessarily how it's heard**. I gave it a fair amount of thought when I was having a conversation with my colleague because it's not something I'd always thought about. It's something I'd always - I think I speak sort of fairly clearly. I think that my communication skills are good but I think I **perhaps underestimated the potential gap between my intentions behind asking a question and how it can potentially be heard**. I think particularly in this sort of case, when I was talking to someone*

*who felt quite under pressure, felt quite stressed and I think perhaps almost felt quite guilty that they were having to sound off about a senior colleague and felt quite inadequate that they'd been made to feel quite stressed. I think it was very interesting thinking about the questions and being aware that **where I might ask a question expecting it purely to be a nice open question inviting comments and reflection** on the situation, that this could almost **actually be taken as being a covert criticism** if I hit a rather vulnerable point.* (David, reflecting on a conversation with a colleague, Audio Diary)

This reflection is interesting on a number of levels. Firstly, it brings the issue of emotions to the fore once again. David's interactant appears to be clearly stressed and under pressure at the time of the conversation. He reports that the relationship between himself and the interactant is very much an equal one. The combination of prior relationship to his interactant and her emotional situation at the time of the conversation might have contributed to the vulnerability she might have felt as David used open questions, inviting her to reflect on the situation.

One final aspect that was reported to mitigate the impact that the course has is the difficulty that some participants experienced in remembering the specifics of the course techniques:

What makes it difficult to apply? Forgetting – Forgetting what the essence of the knowledge is, identifying appropriate situations and time that you can apply things. When you recognise a problem then, yeah, it's relatively easy to start using questioning techniques to explore them. Recent examples; well, I think I've given you my recent examples. (Paul, reflecting on his use of the techniques over time, Audio Diary)

I think with the passage of time obviously some of the finer points have been lost but I think I still maintain the broad thrust of what we learned on the course. (Simon, reflecting on how he uses the techniques, Audio Diary)

We can see that, rather than forgetting everything, it seems that the nuances may be lost –the 'essence' and 'finer points' seem to fade.

THEME 4: LEVEL 4 OUTCOME POTENTIAL

While we do not explicitly examine Kirkpatrick's Level 4 of evaluation, whether organisational performance and patient outcomes is improved, three participants provided us with rudimentary evidence that there was indeed a potential for this (six PINs). Furthermore, of these six PINs, four came from Simon (our first case study in this section – the participant who appeared to embody the ethos of the course and put his learning into practice more often). Furthermore, he recorded the most audio diary entries (n=9) and the recordings he made appeared to be much more comprehensive and detailed than other participants. For example, some participants reported using the techniques with patients, but were not necessarily explicit regarding the immediate outcome of their conversations or did not follow up their progress with us in the diaries. Simon, however, was explicit and on one occasion he did follow up progress with us. We now present his (relatively lengthy) PIN and brief follow up on the PIN in full:

*I'd like to mention a diabetic patient I saw during the diabetic clinic I was running with one of the specialist nurses. **We discussed the gentleman briefly before he came in.** Looking at his blood test results and his current medication, **we felt that probably the only option for him was going to be for us to suggest he started on insulin.** The gentleman came in and we started to discuss how things had been going, how he was finding his diabetic management and as he was not someone I had personally seen before, we went into his family history and lifestyle in a bit more detail. Overall, his lifestyle and diet seem to be reasonably*

appropriate. However, his main social outlet appeared to be to go down to the local pub on a Friday and Saturday night and drinking in the region of seven or eight pints of beer. I started to discuss this with him **and also our concerns about his standard of control overall**. It was obvious that **I was beginning to get a bit of resistance** in terms of what he would consider doing. In spite of the fact that he said, yes, he would cut down on his alcohol intake I got the impression that this was very unlikely to be the case. At that point I thought about **taking a more reflective course** and I started to ask him about where he'd see himself in a couple of years' time and **moved the conversation** around to lifestyle changes he'd had to make in the past and how he had coped with them. I tried to get him to consider other occasions where he was no longer able to do things that he'd previously been doing, for instance, playing football, and whether that had then meant that he would have to stop all involvement with football in his life. **He seemed to connect with this** and appreciated that it was unrealistic of him to expect that the only way he would be able to manage his social life was to avoid going to the pub, particularly as most of his friends would be participating in that sort of activity rather than anything else. **We discussed** ways he might be able to continue this but moderate his alcohol intake, **very much focusing on his suggestions** and looking at what he could and would be prepared to do differently in the future. **At the end of the consultation I felt that he was somewhat happier about the situation and I also felt a bit more positive that he was likely to take onboard his responsibilities**, in terms of the management of his diabetes and the lifestyle issues that we had been discussing. I doubt that we worked any miracles but it was quite interesting to see that **the very experienced diabetic nurse had been slightly surprised by the turn of events and the way the consultation had been going, but that she was quite interested in the techniques used**. The plus sides as far as I could see – possibly this gentleman is going to have a more realistic chance of thinking of ways of modifying his lifestyle in a way that would be both acceptable to him and also likely to bring about some positive changes in his health overall. Downside – once again it is relatively time consuming and doesn't - at least in my hands anyway - seem to lead to clinics running on time. (Simon, reflecting on his conversation with a patient, Audio Diary)

I've seen the diabetic chap on one occasion since I last completed a diary entry. Slightly, to my surprise, he has managed to significantly curtail his alcohol intake though it is still higher than would be absolutely ideal. I'm due to see him again at the end of next week and hopefully the improvement will have been at least maintained and preferably slightly improved on. (Simon, reflecting on the outcome of his conversation with a patient, Audio Diary)

So we can see from Simon's reflections on the time he first encountered the patient with diabetes the consultation began in a fairly authoritative and directive manner with Simon and the specialist nurse having a conversation about the patient and making decisions regarding his treatment prior to having met with him: "*We discussed the gentleman briefly before he came in... we felt that probably the only option for him was going to be for us to suggest he started on insulin*". Thus, as Simon narrated the event he began by using the inclusive *we* – meaning 'myself and the nurse' – excluding the patient. On meeting the patient he began to discuss with him his pattern of heavy social drinking, continuing with his use of the inclusive *we* and thus continuing to be quite directive and exclude the patient: "*I started to discuss this with him and also **our** concerns about his standard of control overall*". This directive frame appeared to be met with some resistance from the patient so Simon began to take a more reflective (reflexive) approach by exploring with the patient any lifestyle changes he had made in the past and how he had coped with those. By shifting the conversation in this way Simon changed the power relations within the interaction, opening up space for the patient to 'connect' with the issue and gain control over his future actions. At this point, Simon uses the inclusive *we* once more, although this time including the patient in the act of

discussion. Furthermore, by “*focusing on his suggestions*” Simon managed to empower the patient to make the lifestyle suggestions that were required for him to manage his diabetes without the need for insulin treatment. Finally, this interesting conversation appears to have had a sustained and positive impact on patient care as reported by Simon at a later date: *he has managed to significantly curtail his alcohol intake.*

One other observation we make here is the reaction of the specialist nurse in the original consultation – *the very experienced diabetic nurse had been slightly surprised by the turn of events and the way the consultation had been going, but that she was quite interested in the techniques used* – pointing to the potential for a further cascading effect as the nurse witnessed the impact of the techniques in action.

CONCLUSIONS FROM LEVEL 3 ANALYSIS

To what extent do participants apply what they have learned during the course when they are ‘back in the workplace’? What are the perceived difficulties faced as participants apply their new-found techniques in practice? Based on the narrative analysis of the audio diary data, impact is demonstrated on all four groups under consideration: themselves (n=24 PINs), their colleagues and supervisees (n=16), patients (n=8) and others (n=4). Given the longitudinal nature of the audio diaries, for six participants we had at least three PINs across different time frames so were able to analyse their narratives of change over time.

THEME 1: CHANGE IN PRACTICE

The extent to which participants narrated a change in practice (rather than mere attempts to utilise the techniques) varied greatly. Of the six participants with at least three PINs over different time periods, five narrated progression in terms of their perceived development, with the remaining participant narrating stability. Amongst the five, positioning analysis revealed that not all progression was equal.

Simon narratives demonstrate deep change in practice over time, along the lines of the course ethos. He cites a broad application of the techniques and seemed to have embodied this way of being, demonstrating an impact on himself as a person (rather than merely on his supervisory skills).

For others, the change appeared to be enacted rather than embodied. This analysis revealed that for some, the questioning techniques appeared to be utilised in a manner that was contrary to the ethos of the course (in particular, through a neutral stance and the use of circular and reflexive questioning which open space). For example, Mary appeared to employ the techniques as a way of bringing the interactant around to a pre-scribed conclusion rather than enabling them to explore fully the situation for themselves. Mary used a gaming metaphor in her narratives which strongly suggested that she utilised her newly-found techniques strategically: playing with them in different contexts, using them to accomplish what she considered was achievable for the good of the patient within the constraints of the interaction.

Change for Mai was not straightforward. We classified her change position as stable. She appeared to struggle with mastering the techniques admitting a tendency towards her *normal mode of working.*

THEME 2: FACILITATING IMPACT

The narratives suggest that the attempts to apply their learning in practice facilitated a further impact on themselves. Learning through action was an important step towards the embodiment of their new ways of working. This was particularly evident when participants

experienced a direct change in others' perspectives and understandings through use of the questioning technique. This highlighted the wider impact that the course has, both on the supervisor – in terms of embedding their learning – and on the supervisee (or other interactant) in terms of the benefits that their shifting perspective on knowledge and events brings - the potential *therapeutic benefit* of the techniques.

Other facilitative aspects of the impact of the course that were mentioned were the *cascading effect* of implementing their new techniques. This cascading effect suggests that the impact of the course might ripple outwards and have the potential to touch individuals who are second or third removed from direct contact with the course participants.

THEME 3: MITIGATING IMPACT

By far the most common concern was the additional time involved as they questioned, explored and empowered their interactants to come to their own conclusions regarding their issues. However, the issue of time was not straightforward: reflection on action suggested that sometimes choosing *not* to use the techniques because of time-pressures only resulted in an unsatisfactory conclusion when employing the techniques might have achieved a more fruitful outcome. This potential trade-off is worthy of further exploration.

One possibly related issue that participants narrated as having a negative impact concerned the level of engagement of their interactant with the process. If the other person was reluctant to engage in this form of conversation then it not only took longer, but sometimes became impossible to continue.

One final aspect that was reported to impede the impact that the course had was the difficulty that some participants experienced in remembering the specifics of the course techniques. However, the analysis demonstrated that rather than forgetting everything, it seemed that the finer points may be lost.

THEME 4: LEVEL 4 OUTCOME POTENTIAL

Three participants (six PINs) provided us with rudimentary evidence that there was indeed a potential for organisational performance and patient outcomes to improve. Four of these six PINs came from Simon. An extended illustration seemed to demonstrate that by shifting the conversation Simon changed the power relations within the interaction, opening up space for the patient to 'connect' with the issue and gain control over his future actions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The primary aim of this evaluation was to better understand the benefits and challenges of the training in terms of its ability to change and improve supervision practice. We think that we have achieved this principal intention. The evaluation has provided a wealth of rich data which has enabled us to address the various research questions. We have been able to offer evidence and comment on the aspects of the course that were thought to be most effective (RQ1), how the perspectives and techniques were taught and learnt (RQ2&3), the application (or impact) of the learning on practice (RQ4) and issues related to the application of the new skills (RQ5). Inevitably the limited funding and hence the amount of time available to devote to this work and specifically the data analysis has meant that we have had to be selective in our reporting. This is particularly true of the interaction analysis which was especially time-consuming and which is reported in detail in Appendix E.

We collected more data on the three course days than we could analyse within our time frame, although it was never our intention to subject all these data to interaction analysis, not least because this process is very labour intensive. While we have been selective, what we present is located within our appreciation and understanding of the breadth of data and we have been able to interrogate thoroughly the audio diary data. Although we only report some of it, we have studied all the data and we can say with confidence that the extracts subjected to interaction analysis raise points of discussion which are evident elsewhere in the data. Detailed field notes were also made and although not reported in the evaluation, they provided an excellent reference point when the evaluation team were developing the analysis. Our selective use of the data has been driven by the research questions. As a result, we barely comment on aspects of the course for which we have data but which are not central to the research questions. These include, for illustration, the course-team planning and reflective discussions that took place in the lunchtime and directly after the end of each day of the course.

The conclusions we draw should be understood within the context of these limitations. A further limitation of the evaluation is its selective focus on just one supervision skills training course. The London Deanery runs a variety of programmes which are repeated at various points during the year. We were steered to adopt this selective focus and this was aligned with our intention to implement a deep rather than a broad approach to data collection and analysis. Despite the focus on a single programme, we anticipate that the findings will have wider resonance across the London Deanery's supervision skills framework although the extent of this resonance must be for the London Deanery itself to judge.

Before presenting our recommendations, we organise our conclusions around three aspects: the trainers, the participants and organisational matters. In doing this we review all the research questions. There are extensive areas of good practice and clear demonstration of the success of the course for some participants. Our recommendations point to possible areas of good practice to consolidate and concerns that might be addressed. We end by indicating where there may be need for further research.

TEACHING APPROACHES AND THE TRAINERS

The training encourages a particular attitude of mind which appreciates that the world comprises circular and interconnected processes and where people are seen as influencing each other via reciprocal affiliation. The questioning techniques that are taught are designed so that the supervisor is able to elicit stories and critically reflect on them, adopting a neutral and non-judgemental stance towards the issue at hand and towards their supervisee. These

fundamentals have been summarised as the 7Cs: the value of focused *conversation*, the power of *curiosity*, the importance of *context*, the use of *creativity*, the recognition of *complexity* and the need for challenging with *caution* and *care*.

The principal approach to teaching on the course is through practice supervision / quadratic interactions (participant supervisor, participant supervisee, trainer(s) and participant observer(s)). Practising the skills in these quadratic interactions was well received by the participants. Some were able to improve their questioning techniques, develop new ways of viewing issues and gain insight into the complexity of question-asking. A central part of this teaching process was the high quality feedback that was generally provided by those in the trainer role which the participants welcomed and valued. That the emphasis of the course is on practising the supervision skills is clearly appropriate and is good practice that should be acknowledged.

Our analysis has drawn attention to the extent to which the trainers' approach was congruent with the course ethos and this warrants further attention here as a preface to our recommendations. The trainers' interactional behaviour is undoubtedly complex and the way in which trainers model the explicit course principles (based on Tomm's (1988) model and summarised in the 7Cs) has been indicated mainly in our interaction analysis. In these concluding remarks we consider congruence in relation to power relations – between participants and trainers and the super-trainer/trainee trainer interaction - and in relation to a more specific focus on the questioning techniques as modelled by the trainers. We then highlight the way in which such analysis is complicated by the position the participants usually adopt – particularly in the quadratic interactions – which is that of a 'compliant and eager to please' interactant in addition to attending to emotional elements within this uptake.

The model (Tomm, 1988) which underpins this approach to supervision seeks to address the barriers which arise from relationships which are underpinned by a hierarchy of power or authority. Clearly such relationships include the trainer (expert)/supervisee (novice) relationship and another example might be the doctor/patient relationship. One of the conclusions we draw from the interaction analysis is that the trainers on the course vary in their approach and that they are not all always wholly successful in their attempts to address the barriers arising from their position of authority or congruent with the course ethos. The trainers' and trainee-trainers' position of power over the course participants was sometimes quite starkly revealed in their behaviour which could at times be authoritarian and didactic and so not always modelling the position which the course philosophy espouses. Illustrations of this include the way a trainer might *direct* participants to what they *need* to do. We expected to see instances of the questioning techniques being utilised by novice participants in a manner that was contrary to the ethos of the course, as they developed their new skills. What we note is that it was much easier to take a directive approach when in the trainer role. It takes great skill to be exploratory and facilitative when trying to change participants' ways of questioning and certainly the trainee-trainers needed support in developing this skill.

In our examination of how the trainers model the questioning technique, we note the two elements in play: the words used by the trainers (content of talk) and the way these are delivered (paralinguistics and meta-communicative elements of talk). We have demonstrated that incongruence between the content and structure occurs at times: although the content may be *exploratory* and *facilitative*, the way it is delivered could be authoritarian. We recognise that an element of *lineal* assumption is inevitable within a training activity, where there are set course outcomes. However, both the presence of contradictions between talk content and how it is delivered and any incongruence in how the trainers model the questioning technique can cause confusion. Addressing confusion

could facilitate the development of participants' deep understanding of the course's fundamental philosophy. Where confusion is not addressed, their understanding may remain questionable.

The transparency of the role modelling between super-trainers and trainee-trainers provides positive endorsement of the approach but only where their behaviour expressly concords with the espoused ethos of the course. The interaction between the super-trainer and the trainee-trainer (e.g. on page 105) provide illustration both of the difficulty of being exploratory and facilitative when trying to change participants' ways of questioning as well as demonstration of how power relations are played out. The participants respond to what they see and thus, in their behaviour, the trainers were necessarily demonstrators of the techniques and course goals. Whether the complexity added by the super-trainer/trainee-trainer interaction serves to elucidate or add to the novices' confusion and uncertainty is open to debate. The appropriateness of training trainee-trainers alongside the participants is questionable where the behaviour modelled is at odds with the course philosophy and the questioning techniques.

The potential negative effects of adopting an approach to questioning which is at odds with the course ethos is mitigated by the participants themselves, particularly when in the role of supervisee (e.g. Simon coming to the aid of Mary on page 106). What our analysis has shown here is that even limited, linear questions can sometimes (although not always) elicit extensive and creative responses from the supervisee. Especially in the paired supervision/quadratic interactions, the supervisees were generally keen to please or responded emotionally to the meta-communicative and paralinguistic aspects of talk. As a result, even limited questioning skills could produce positive outcomes. This facilitative response impinges on the capacity of Tomm's (1988) model to successfully predict responses and may provide the practising supervisor with restricted feedback, so endangering the development of questioning skills and the longer term impact of the course on the participants' supervision practice. It is particularly important that all trainers are skilled at picking this up and that trainee-trainers are appropriately supported in doing this.

One final comment we wish to make concerns the limitations of Tomm's (1988) model with respects to the more fluid 7Cs model. We have noted that sometimes trainers are creative in their conversation - grappling with complexity - and performing in such a way which foregrounds caring and caution. Sometimes they grapple with the complexity of situation, presenting themselves as a trainer in a different way, utilising more paralinguistic elements of communication as they struggle with a different kind of complexity demonstrating more caution than care. Each interaction suggests that trainers are embracing different elements of the 7Cs: sometimes more care and caution was fore-grounded; at other times, curiosity was fore-grounded during interactional difficulties. Indeed, we note there was a specific interactional difficulty between trainer-trainees which differed from that between trainer and participants when a softer approach was often adopted. Indeed, we have seen through the interactional data that the trainers were modelling and delivering techniques which were in no way restricted to Tomm's (1988) model. What they appeared to be doing in the interactions when they shifted positions between lineal and circular assumptions with paralinguistic aspects of talk also shifting - suggesting that they were attending very closely to the 7Cs - was appreciating complexity and demonstrating that it is not just about asking questions but also about the ways in which these questions are asked that also matters. Thus the trainers were achieving a very complex activity in training to which the Tomm (1988) model alone does not do justice. Indeed, the trainers went beyond the Tomm (1988) model and entered into the more sophisticated realm of the 7Cs. Furthermore, it appeared that while they intuitively knew how to do this, they did not

appear to be able to express this clearly and meaningfully as they interacted with the course participants. Ultimately, apart from one instance that we have witnessed, the trainers did not hold explicit conversations with the course participants regarding the additional conversational and interactional features they use. The course participants themselves only implicitly received the message that there was so much more detail in talk beyond mere words. By the end of the course, this was barely touched upon and they were only at the beginning of this discovery.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Perhaps the most important question in the evaluation is whether the training makes a difference to supervision practice and how this might affect performance and patient care. We begin this section by drawing our conclusions on this. In the second part of this section we turn our attention to emotions. Emotions were seen to play a prominent part in the interactions and we feel it is imperative to comment on this phenomenon not least because it will explain why we reference this in our recommendations. We consider here the extent to which the trainers recognised and responded to the emotionally charged reactions of participants during their engagement with the course activities.

Education is a complex, social event and causal links between a training programme and impact on participants' behaviour in the workplace are not readily assessed. We recognise the *softness* of impact-on-practice data but are nevertheless able to report that the narrative analysis of the audio diary data provided evidence of impact on the participants, their colleagues and supervisees, patients and others. The extent to which participants narrated a change in practice varied greatly. Of the six participants that we focused this part of our analysis on, five narrated progression in terms of their perceived development, with the remaining participant narrating stability. But amongst the five not all progression was equal. This varied from a narrated demonstration of a broad and embodied application of the techniques, to others where the change appeared to be enacted rather than embodied. We also noted, in our interactional analysis, that while one participant appeared not to have developed overtime with respect to the course techniques, another participant demonstrated change during the time of the course.

We have also been able to present rudimentary evidence that there was indeed a potential for organisational performance and patient outcomes to improve. We provide an extended illustration which demonstrates how Simon was able to open up space for the patient to 'connect' with the issue and gain control over his future actions. The structure of the course, with two week intervals between course days, facilitates learning through action – the practising of the techniques in workplace (and other) settings. The importance of learning through action cannot be overstated. Using the questioning techniques gave participants direct experience of how others' perspectives and understandings could be changed. Not only did this serve to embed their learning but also it demonstrate the wider impact that the course has in terms of the potential therapeutic benefit for supervisee (or other interactant) as they are helped to shift perspective and move on 'stuck' situations. The impact reach was also extended through cascading processes whereby the questioning techniques touched individuals who were removed from direct contact with the course participants.

Despite these illustrations of successful application of the techniques attached to this approach to supervision, participants were seen to struggle with adopting the questioning method. It was evident that some of the participants were unable to put the theory into practice and for a few we may question their level of understanding. Ultimately this raises questions about whether this course is suitable to all supervisors or potential supervisors.

However, we recognise that determining and implementing selection criteria would be unlikely to be either feasible or desirable. Alternatively, it might be appropriate to recognise that some participants may 'drop out' or indeed be encouraged to do so, at the end of day 1.

Impact was also contingent on time factors and the receptiveness of the interactant. We have noted how participants reflected on the time the new technique demands and how that impinges on their decision to use the questioning approach (e.g. see comments on the theme 'Mitigating Impact', page 65). We also signalled how the time issue was more complex than a simple assumption that this approach takes longer than a more directive approach. We reported instances in which participants chose *not* to use the techniques because of time pressures, only to later reflect that it might have *saved* time as the more directive approach did *not* result in a satisfactory outcome which led to the individual calling again on the supervisor's time. The complexity of time factors might be explored in more detail on the contact days. Indeed, we noticed that practice sessions on each of the days frequently ran over time and these might be drawn upon to illustrate the point.

In a wider discussion of the suitability of the approach, including the appropriateness of speed supervisions and the reality of role-play, the trainers might draw attention to the need for the interactant to be receptive to the approach and the need for the supervisee to be sensitive to their *disengagement* and the possibility that the questioning approach leaves the interactant with unresolved emotions or the feeling of being covertly criticised (see comments on speed supervision on page 28 and role-play on page 29). This links to the issue of the emotional nature of the response and how it is addressed by the trainers.

Turning to consider the part played by participants' emotions, we evidenced powerful emotional responses in all the key learning activities: the paired supervision/quadratic interactions, in the speed supervisions and in the exercise which used role play scenarios. Our analysis of the quadratic interactions demonstrates that although those in the role of supervisee generally appreciated the benefits of having their own problems discussed, there were occasions when the supervisee could be left feeling uncomfortable. The likelihood of this was greater in the speed supervision which, because of the short time available, ran greater risk of leaving feelings unresolved. Furthermore, the supervision practice using role-play scenarios showed how emotionally engaged the participants becomes, with one supervisee reporting strong feelings of interrogation.

That strong emotions are provoked by the interactions is not surprising. What is interesting for the evaluation is that the approach to supervision is one which encourages the avoidance of talking about emotions and the mood of the supervisee in favour of talking about behaviour and interaction. Trainers explain that supervision does not generally set out to explore the supervisee's feelings. Although it is noted that emotional aspects often emerge during supervision conversations, participants are encouraged to help the supervisee take an observer perspective on the issue. The trainers promote an approach which avoids attaching the dilemma or stuck situation to the individual. Although this stance might defuse situations, the questioning approach can nonetheless raise strong emotions and it is the way in which these are handled that merits attention. Emotions were recognised and sensitively handled at times (see Excerpt 3: Quite Emotional on page 33) but at other times the response was insufficient and emotional feelings ignored (see Gwen's audio diary comments on page 28). Additionally, our data revealed that the trainers were not always aware of participants' emotional states. Participants disclosed to us through the audio diaries that speed supervision was potentially an emotionally charged exercise during which no trainers were present.

Sensitive handling of the emotions is clearly acknowledged within the 7Cs which include *caution* and *care*. Caution refers to the delicate balance needed to challenge the supervisee *enough* but not *too* much. Achieving this balance between destabilising and stabilising is not easy particularly given that the participants are necessarily novices and poses a danger that in practising these skills their supervisees are put in a vulnerable position. Trainers need to be alert to this and consider how best to address this. The importance of this, certainly from the supervisors' perspective is recognised in the need for care which includes commitment to the supervisee's wellbeing.

ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

In this section we provide brief commentary on matters of an organisational nature that were raised by participants during the course of the evaluation. We use this as opportunity to draw on our wider reading of the data although most of our comments can be directly referenced to data that has been reported in Level 1 analysis drawn from the audio diaries. We structure our comments around four aspects: the venue, the course structure and duration, staffing and, attendance.

The venue was the one aspect of the course that attracted widespread criticism although this was very specific in focus and related expressly to use of the main room for small group work. Essentially a number of the participants found it disruptive to be trying to work in a small group (quadratic interactions) alongside another two small groups. They were challenged by the level of noise that resulted from multiple groups working simultaneously within the one big room (see the request whispered to Veronica at the start of the quadratic interaction on page 103). Indeed, as researchers we also found this aspect of the course to be the most challenging and frustrating at times: whilst listening to the audio/video recordings for analysis it was sometimes difficult to make out what people were saying above the general buzz of the room.

Comments were also offered about the course structure and duration. We have reported how the overall structure, which provided practise-time between the course-days, was valued. Learning through action is a key way that the participants could develop their skills. It brought them new insights and could be reported and commented on at the next course day. In connection with this, a number of participants suggested that some kind of recorded reflection should be included within the process of the course and there was notable support for the use of audio diaries. Whether the introduction of a reflective process has implications for the duration of the course and the possibility that it might be reduced from three to two contact days is open to debate as is the need for some further contact between participants post-course through, for example, establishing a formal network which may meet periodically or share experiences via other media.

Integrating a reflective process into the course programme could support a longer period between the course days and this in turn might facilitate more flexible approaches to the sequencing of courses such that it becomes no longer essential to run all three days of the course before starting the first day of the course with another group. For example, the first day of a 3-day course could be run and then the first day of *another* 3-day course could be started *before* the days 2 and 3 of the first course are completed. This might facilitate trainee-trainer development by shortening the time they have to wait for another 'go' at a Day 1.

Another aspect of the course structure was the way in which the lunchtimes and the end of the day were used by the course-team for reflecting on events and planning next steps. This approach enabled a sharing of experiences across the team which otherwise would not happen as team members work with different small groups of participants. It also enabled the team to respond flexibly in their planning rather than rigidly stick to the original

plan or sequence of events. They could also respond flexibly to timing issues. Central to these de-briefs was their use in providing feedback to the trainee-trainers and discussing issues. These discussions took place away from the course participants who were unaware of them taking place.

The staffing composition also merits brief comment. The ratio of staff to participants is generous, in large part because the course combines trainee-trainer experience and includes super-trainers who play a dual role in training course participants and in training the trainee-trainers. If these were separated from the course, the ratio of trainers to participants in this course was 2:16 (Day 1). The two questions that arise are firstly, whether one trainer might be sufficient in the context of the presence of trainee-trainers, and secondly the impact of combining trainee-training. These are worthy of further debate. From our reading of the data we would suggest that provided that the super-trainer/trainee-trainer interaction is not inconsistent with the course ethos, the impact of combining the course with trainee-trainer training is positive and adds to the overall trainer:participant ratio. However, training the trainers does create additional strain on the contact day in terms of the time it takes during the various activities and that this means not all groups have equal time in which to undertake such activities. For example, this was the case during the quadratic interaction which we report on Day 2 in our second interactional case study (on page 102) where the time-outs were not only used to facilitate the course participants' supervisory skills, but were also used as opportunities to train the trainers. We also note that the interaction between the super-trainer and trainee-trainer has the potential to consolidate learning or confound the participants, depending on the extent to which the behaviour is congruent with the course philosophy and techniques.

The attendance, both of participants and trainers, warrants some reflection (see Table 1: Course Attendees on page 20). Over the three course days we observed participants arriving late, others leaving early and trainers coming and going. Generally the principal trainers were notified in advance of these movements. Nonetheless, they can cause disruption and certainly the trainers engaged in conversation about arrival times and the issue of 'how late was too late'.

Recommendations

These suggested recommendations should be read in the context of the good practice demonstrated in the course and its achievements in developing the supervision skills of the participants.

1. The course emphasis on practising supervision in the quadratic interactions should be retained (along with the course-team de-brief sessions).
2. All trainers need to strive towards an approach to the training role that is in harmony at all times with the course ethos. Specifically, trainers' use of the questioning technique and the transparency of the role modelling between super-trainers and trainee-trainers must concord with the course philosophy.
3. An increased focus should be made regarding the emphasis on the 7Cs model, with the limitations of Tomm (1988) model being more explicit. Emphasising the 7Cs model might also bring forth an opportunity for the course to include the explicit exploration of how paralinguistic and meta-communicative aspects of talk can facilitate supervisory conversations but how this can also serve to 'mask' an authoritarian approach.

4. Trainers should be alert to participant confusion and seek to address uncertainty or puzzlement. Confusion may be revealed in a number of ways including in participants' expression and in how, as novices, they employ the techniques which might, for example, reveal them directing supervisees to predetermined ends.
5. Trainers need to be aware of participant compliance and of the role of emotions and the potential implication that these have for providing the practising supervisor with restricted feedback.
6. The course doesn't suit all. In recognising this, trainers should advise those individuals who demonstrate a lack of effort, commitment on Day 1 to leave the course.
7. The suitability of the approach, including the complexity of time factors, the appropriateness of speed supervisions, the need to be responsive to the interactants' response (and possible disengagement, or feelings of interrogation) should be explored in more detail on the contact days.
8. Trainers need to attend to how they address the emotional responses of participants. This might include alerting potential participants prior to the course, setting aside time specifically for recognising and addressing the emotional responses provoked and, more frequent use of trainers playing the role of supervisee.
9. Venues need to be used which have sufficient space or break our rooms to accommodate small group activity without noise levels becoming disruptive.
10. The trainers/programme director might consider the possible integration of some form of reflective process that could be employed between course days. This might include the use of portfolios and/or audio diaries. How to facilitate further reflection, post-course could also be reviewed.
11. Given the inclusion of two trainee-trainers, a super-trainer and two trainers would seem to be required for the duration of the course. In the longer term, the course teams should review the benefits and drawbacks of including trainee-trainers.
12. Where possible, training teams and participants should remain constant for the duration of each course day.

FURTHER RESEARCH

The work presented here could be extended in a number of directions. The findings reported could be tested out through observation of a number of further courses. Level 3 analysis of *behaviour* change (impact) and the extent to which new learning is *applied to practice* is notoriously difficult and although we do provide some valuable evidence in this report, we have been restrained by time and resources. Further research is needed to understand more about how some participants were able to embody a changed approach to supervision and what were the facilitating and restraining factors in play.

Further research is also needed in looking at the longer term impact: are the questioning skills maintained and developed over time or do they diminish and, if they do

diminish, what aspects are retained? Methodological strategies might include the use of audio diaries and narrative interviews. A focus on 'successful' participants could also be used to investigate impact on supervisees and patient outcomes (Level 4). Data from multi-source feedback might be of some value here. An evaluation at this level was beyond the scope of our evaluation.

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Appendix A Original Research Questions

- (1) What does the training contribute to the development of supervision skills in its participants?
- (2) Is there any direct or indirect evidence that training supervisors in this approach has an impact on (a) the welfare or performance of doctors under their supervision and (b) the welfare of patients?
- (3) What are the actual learning outcomes of participation in a course?
- (4) What particular ideas and skills are learned through participating?
- (5) How well do the reported learning outcomes match the specified objectives?
- (6) What effect if any does participation have on people's practice as supervisors in the workplace?
- (7) What effect if any does participation on the course have on how trainees perceive the quality of their supervision?
- (8) What effect if any does participation have on the career and personal experiences of participants, including career progression and job satisfaction?
- (9) What practical, ethical or other issues arise for participants?
- (10) What elements on the training are perceived by participants to be more or less effective?
- (11) What do participants perceive to be the optimal length of training, and what are the constraints on this?
- (12) What do participants perceive that would improve future developments of the courses?
- (13) What additional activities if any do participants consider are needed to further consolidate or develop their learning?
- (14) What can be learned from the interactions of the participants and the teaching team, including any tensions arising from different constructions of supervision or different models of supervision practice?
- (15) What perceptions do other stakeholders like colleagues and teams have as a consequence of staff participating in the course?
- (16) What recommendations can be made for further research?

Evaluation of the London Deanery Training Course: Supervision Skills for Clinical Teachers – “Conversations inviting change”

Information Sheet for All Participants

Thank you for your interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate then, before you consent, on Day 1 of the Supervision Skills course, you will have the opportunity to ask questions about the evaluation and your participation in it. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind.

What is the aim of the project?

The rapid expansion of teaching activity by the Faculty Development Unit of the London Deanery has led them to call for an independent external evaluation of supervision skills teaching. The aim of the evaluation is to facilitate a better understanding of the value of the training by identifying how the course impacts on participants’ learning and their role as supervisors. We will explore participants’ reports of their learning, revealing barriers and facilitators to change. This study will provide information that could contribute to the future development of the programme. Please note that the evaluation is of the training programme *not its participants*.

Who are the participants?

The focus of the evaluation is the June/July 3-day course *Supervision Skills for Clinical Teachers – “Conversations inviting change”*. Everybody involved in that course - the course participants, the trainers and facilitators - is invited to participate in this study.

Why me?

You are a course participant or a trainer/facilitator on the course. Each person taking part in the June/July 3-day course, by agreeing to participate, offers an invaluable contribution to this evaluation.

What are participants asked to do?

The Supervision Skills course will be run as ‘usual’ and our intention is to observe and video/audio record some of this. Course participants are also invited to record a weekly audio diary to reflect on whether and how their learning from the course impacts on their practice as a supervisor or in other more general ways. They will be invited to keep an audio diary from Day 1 of the course through to September. Recording equipment will be provided for this and you will be shown how to use it.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

You may withdraw from any recorded session or ask for the video/audio recording to stop at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself. If you chose to withdraw after participation, your data will be excluded in the final analyses.

What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

1. We will observe, take field-notes and video/audio record participants' interactions at each contact session during the 3 day training course.
2. We will observe and video-record the de-brief sessions held between trainers and facilitators.
3. We will collect the audio diaries.

Selected parts of the recordings (video/audio) will be transcribed and anonymised. Data from the audio diaries will be *confidential* to the Cardiff researchers, Alison Bullock, Christine Atwell and Lynn Monrouxe. Only these three members of the research team will have access to audio diary data. All other data will be confidential to the Cardiff team and those participants, trainers and facilitators present.

We anticipate that this study will contribute to future educational developments. The full report will make recommendations for course development and suggestions for further research. In the report and in the event of any future publications all data presented will be anonymous and individuals will not be identifiable. You will be sent a copy of the results of the project and be given the opportunity to comment.

The data collected will be stored securely, it will be password protected on encrypted equipment and transcripts will be kept in locked cabinets; only the three members of the research team will be able to gain access to it.

Are there any advantages or disadvantages to participating in the study?

Anybody who finds the video/audio recording of the course disruptive can signal this to the researcher and the recording will be stopped. Some people initially feel self-conscious when recording starts, but our experience is that most people become unaware of it in a very short time. We anticipate that some people will benefit from having the opportunity to record audio reflections.

What if participants have any questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact:

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*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee
of the School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education, Cardiff University.*

Appendix C Case Study Table

ID	diary tot	DIARY MINS	DAY 1 SPVS'OR MINS	DAY 2 SPVS'OR MINS	DAY 3 SPVS'OR MINS	TOTAL SPVS'OR MINS	DAY 1 SPVS'EE MINS	DAY 2 SPVS'EE MINS	DAY 3 SPVS'EE MINS	TOTAL SPVS'EE MINS	DAY 1 FDBK MINS	DAY 2 FDBK MINS	DAY 3 FDBK MINS	TOTAL FDBK MINS	OBSVD MINS TOTAL	DIARY + OBSVD TOTAL
Gwen	7	58							21	21	9		6	15	36	94
Roxy	2	5.5		25	32	57		26	17	43	0	16		16	116	121.5
Mary	7	24		71	17	88			7	7	9	6	10	25	120	144
Sanjeeda	3	15.5						49	32	81	9	5	8	22	103	118.5
Simon	9	29			17	17		45		45	9	0	7	16	78	107
David	3	11.5		69	21	90		25	17	42	0	6	16	22	154	165.5
Mai	4	20	27			27			6	6	14			14	47	67
Shiva	3	5	39		7	46	27		9	36	9	12		21	103	108
Philippa			35		15	50						28		28	78	78
Paul	2	11			5	5		20	5	25	5	6		11	41	52
William	3	21.5					39			39	20	28	15	63	102	123.5
Mehra	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	43	201														
FA1	n/a										34	12		46	46	
Oba	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a		35	n/a	n/a	35		n/a	n/a		35	
Diana	n/a			n/a	n/a		21	n/a	n/a	21	5	n/a	n/a	5	26	
Kurt											9	28		37	37	
Chaaya																
Veronica												28	16	44	44	
Max																
Julian																
Stella											34	15		49	49	
Annie			21			21					5	12	15	32	53	
		201	122	165	114	401	122	165	114	401	171	202	93	466	1268	1179

Appendix D Coding Framework Developed in Atlas.ti

1	Trainers
1.1	FT1
1.2	MT1
1.3	MT2
1.4	FT2
1.5	FT3
2	Trainee Trainers
2.1	MF1
2.2	FF1
3	Course Participants
3.1	FD1
3.2	FD2
3.3	FD3
3.4	FD4
3.5	FD5
3.6	FD6
3.7	FD7
3.8	FD8
3.9	MD1
3.10	MD2
3.11	MD3
3.12	MD4
3.13	FA1
3.14	MD5
4	Course
4.1	de-brief
4.2	role-play
4.3	paired supervision
4.3.01	ps-supervisor
4.3.02	ps-supervisee
4.3.03	ps-observer
4.3.04	ps-super-supervisor
4.3.05	ps-super-super-supervisor
4.4	speed supervision
4.5	presentation
4.6	lecture
4.7	reading
4.8	'whole-group' work
4.9	exercise intro
4.10	feedback
5	Interaction process - how (specific observable mechanisms of talk)
5.1	meta communication
5.2	Questioning
5.2.01	Open Qs
5.2.02	Closed Qs
5.2.03	Lineal Qs
5.2.04	Problem explanation Qs

5.2.05	Problem definition Qs
5.2.06	Strategic Qs
5.2.07	Leading Qs
5.2.08	Confrontation Qs
5.2.09	Circular Qs
5.2.10	Behavioural effect Qs
5.2.11	Difference Qs
5.2.12	Reflexive Qs
5.2.13	Hypothetical future Qs
5.2.14	Observer perspective Qs
5.3	asserting
5.4	hypothesising/assuming/presupposing/expecting
5.5	lineal hypothesising/assuming/presupposing/expecting
5.6	circular hypothesising/assuming/presupposing/expecting
5.7	reflecting
5.8	tentativity
5.9	Hedging
5.10	Hesitation
5.11	minimal responses
5.12	metaphorical talk
5.13	affect
5.13.01	positive emotions
5.13.02	negative emotions
5.13.03	conversational/informal expression
5.13.03.1	Para-linguistics
5.13.03.1.1	kinesis
5.13.03.1.2	prosodics
5.13.03.1.3	Laughter
5.13.03.2	monitoring
5.13.03.3	accusing
5.13.03.4	observing
5.13.03.5	clarifying
5.13.03.6	revealing
5.13.03.7	reviewing
5.13.03.8	personalising
5.13.03.9	approving
5.13.03.10	checking
5.13.03.11	repetition
5.13.03.12	overlapping talk
5.13.03.13	pick-up talk
5.13.03.14	instructive talk
6	Interaction content - what (more general interpreted features of talk)
6.1.01	'stuck situation'
6.1.02	goal/agenda setting
6.1.02.1	goal/agenda setting1
6.1.02.2	goal/agenda setting2
7	Narrative
7.1	Narrative - structural components
7.1.01	N1 abstract

7.1.02	N2 orientation
7.1.03	N3 complicating action
7.1.04	N4 evaluation
7.1.05	N5 resolution
7.1.06	N6 'coda'
8	Narrative - content[gross coding]
8.1.01	Course Eval
8.1.02	Research Eval
8.1.03	-ve narrative
8.1.04	+ve narrative
8.1.05	usage difficulties
8.1.06	usage avoidance
8.1.07	usage confusion
8.1.08	way of life
8.1.09	disengagement
8.1.10	familiarity
8.1.11	transparency
8.1.12	support narrative
8.1.13	assessment narrative
8.1.14	cooperation narrative
9	Techniques/devices
9.1	'comparator'
9.2	'correlative'
9.3	'explicative'
9.4	'intensifier'
9.5	'reflection trigger'
9.6	'space opener'
9.7	'Charmed Loop'
10	Seven Cs
10.1	C1 conversation
10.2	C2 curiosity
10.3	C3 contexts
10.4	C4 complexity
10.5	C4 complexity1
10.6	C4 complexity2
10.7	C4 complexity3
10.8	C5 creativity
10.9	C6 caution
10.10	C7 care
11	Stance/position of interactant
11.1	Judgemental
11.2	Oppositional
11.3	Accepting
11.4	Creative
11.5	Frame for supervision
11.6	Investigative
11.7	Corrective
11.8	Exploratory
11.9	Facilitative

12	Impact on co-interactant
12.1	Conservative
12.2	Constrained
12.3	Liberated
12.4	Generative
13	Research Questions
13.1	How do participants demonstrate a change in ideas and skills along the lines of the course ethos?
13.2	How participants demonstrate change in Performance?
13.3	How participants demonstrate change in conceptual understanding?
13.4	Impact of course
13.4.01	Impact on doctors under their supervision
13.4.02	Impact on patients?
13.4.03	Impact on trainees themselves
13.4.04	Impact on others
13.5	What issues arise for participants as they use the ideas and skills?
13.6	How are ideas and skills imparted/derived within the interaction
13.7	multi-truths/perspectives
14	Audio Diary Level 3 analysis
14.1	ACTING as supervisor
14.2	BECOMING and embodying new ways
14.3	CASCADING one person to another
14.4	CHANGE in practice
14.5	CIRCULAR questions
14.6	DIRECTIVE approach
14.7	FILE DETAILS Audio Length: 12 ..
14.8	GAME metaphor
14.9	In fact, kind of trying to put..
14.10	INFORMATION GATHERING
14.11	INTERROGATED feelings
14.12	LAPSING into old ways
14.13	LEVEL 4 reported benefit
14.14	MEMORY FADES so forget techniques
14.15	PRONOUN USE 'I' 'me'
14.16	PRONOUN USE 'we' 'us' 'our'
14.17	REFLEXIVE questions
14.18	skill potential
14.19	SUPERVISEE's shifting 'problem'
14.20	THERAPUTIC feeling
14.21	TIME factors- long
14.22	TIME factors - quick
14.23	TWO WAY PROCESS

Appendix E Level 2 - Full Analysis

Our level 2 analysis addresses the following research questions:

3. In what ways, within the interaction, are perspectives and techniques delivered by trainers and/or received by course participants
4. In what ways, within the interaction, do participants demonstrate a change in perspectives and techniques along the lines of the course ethos?
 - a. in their performance?
 - b. in their perspectives?

Our analysis here similarly seeks to uncover links between the language used by interactants and the positioning of the speaker and hearer during an interaction. Unlike Tomm's (1988) framework, we make no claims to evidencing an interactant's conceptual positioning, since we do not recognise that talk is a direct conduit to conceptual process; instead we focus on the language used by the interactant and the potential effect this exerts upon the recipient. We draw parallels between the two key hierarchical relationships on the course: trainer and trainee; supervisor and supervisee, which share a similar interactional context of power differential. As is evident in the data, we recognise that conversations consist of diverse language use and even within single turns at talk the four proposed question types are interwoven within a co-text which includes a variety of talk types. We try to unpick the more complex way in which conversations and positions are achieved. Hence, whilst the range of conversational features that we consider includes the questioning techniques, these are invariably interwoven with directives, imperatives, declaratives,¹⁵ and so on. We also look at how modality¹⁶, as well as other qualifying features within the talk, further shapes the conversation and ultimately the resultant positions of all interactants. Using interactional positioning we demonstrate the shifting perspectives and techniques and address the specific RQs at Level 2.

The training course aims to change participants' perspectives and techniques through facilitating the delivery, receipt and use of the four questioning techniques by the participants. In this analysis we focus on the core unit of the quadratic paired supervision; practice participant supervision. However, we do include other interactants (trainer and participant observers) and their contributions in addition to the supervisor and supervisee. In doing so we observe the real-time naturally occurring use of these techniques, as well as the reported knowledge of the associated perspectives. Longer term commitment to course perspectives and techniques can only be yielded from longitudinal data collection and analysis which is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

CASE STUDIES

For this analysis, we look at two of our case studies, Mary and David, at two separate time points (our rationale for choosing these was outlined earlier on page 21). This enables us to note development of techniques over time, if and where this occurs, and allows comparison between cases. Additionally, where possible, we take the opportunity to identify other sub-units of analysis within a quadratic paired supervision, (e.g. the introduction), to further explore delivery and receipt of perspectives and techniques. We consider how trainers may be demonstrating the course techniques within the interactions. Finally, all audio and video

¹⁵ Imperative = direct demand, e.g. "Do such and such..."; Declarative = direct information, e.g. "He does such and such...";

¹⁶ Where mood of the talk is altered using: verbs including, e.g. could, would, might, often etc

recordings are transcribed and to enrich our fine-grained analysis, we make note of paralinguistic features, i.e. prosodic detail, e.g. vocal: stress; intonation; pitch; modulation; rhythm; tone; laughter etc., and, where possible, kinesis, e.g. bodily position; posture: movement; gaze; gesture; expression. The transcription convention we use is drawn from Paul tan Have (2007) and was outlined earlier in Table 3 on page 24.

DAVID: TIME 1

The first of David's quadratic paired supervision that we report is an audio recorded role-play situation which took place on the second course day in the main training room. The underlying assumptions and contextual layout of the room for this role-play is described earlier on page 30. This large group session includes seven people: trainer, Annie; David (role-playing the supervisor); Paul (role-playing the supervisee) and observers Mary, Roxy, Bal and Shiva.

This particular *quadratic interaction* lasted 20.29 minutes, during which time the sub-units of analysis included:

1. Introduction - 3 mins 1 sec
2. Practice supervision 1 - 1 mins 8 secs
3. Time-out 1 - 0 mins 34 secs
4. Practice supervision 2 - 8 mins 37 secs
5. Feedback - 6 mins 9 secs

We report the case study structured around these sub-units, focusing on the following three activities: Introduction and Practice supervisions 1 and 2.

INTRODUCTION

In reporting our analysis of the introduction sequence we focus on RQ 3 - ways, within the interaction, perspectives and techniques are delivered by trainers and/or received by course participants. Additionally, for this first section we refer to elements within Table 4 to ease the reader into the process of our analysis and how it links actual talk (what we can evidence) with concepts taken from Tomm's (1988) model and the Seven C's.

Following the initial introduction to the role-play (partly reproduced on page 30), David and three other participants volunteer to play the roles of supervisee and supervisor for each of the two scenarios. We pick up the interaction at the second role-play scenario. This was preceded by an earlier role-play that had been acted out and it is agreed at the outset that this will build upon what had been enacted previously. Prior to the actual supervision role-play of Scenario 2, the supervisee (in this instance, Paul) is requested to step-out of the room to consider the role that he has been assigned. David then reads out his scenario:

EXCERPT 1: MISERABLE AND DISENGAGED

- 1 **David:** (.) er it's three months later (.) the attitude to nurses seems rather miserable
- 2 and disengaged (.) and there has been two occasions when drugs were written
- 3 up incorrectly (.) obviously taking to account change behaviours and
- 4 Implications

The remaining group members then join with the trainer and David to discuss how he might approach his supervision. Trainer Annie begins to comment on their discussion. As she does so, we see how she creatively co-produces with David the scene for supervision:

EXCERPT 2: YOU CAN STATE WHAT YOU'VE NOTICED

- 5 **Annie:** So that's- that's a- so perhaps a- a- sort of amalgamation of all of those

6 *is- is partly what you were saying before but maybe without (.) being quite so*
7 *(.) erm (.) you know without making the assumption that they are down in the*
8 *dumps but saying that you have noticed 'cause you- you c=*
9 **Shiva:** *=yes-*
10 **Annie:** *=you can state what you've noticed (.) so "I have noticed (.) that (.)*
11 *you seem different-you used to be (.) this wonderful de-de-de-de- person (.) and*
12 *you don't seem to be like that anymore and there has been (.) that (.)*
13 **David:** *OK*
14 **Annie:** *so that- so that's not saying you are down in the dumps it is saying I've*
15 *noticed that you (.) your behaviour (.) what- what it is about your behaviour*
16 *that's changed rather than (.) the mood yeah*
17 **David:** *we can try that*
18 **Annie:** *Shall we (.) I mean*

As trainer-Annie offers her last bit of advice before this practice supervision starts, she occupies an oppositional position and invokes a corrective frame (lines 5-14). Annie describes, with regard to this particular case, the exact way in which the course techniques should be translated into practice. The delivery of this message is an example of didactic training but, for a couple of reasons, the net effect is neither reductionist nor authoritarian. Firstly, it is noticeable how tentatively Annie presents her statement; she hesitates and hedges, with qualifiers, i.e. “*sort of*”; “*maybe*”; “*quite so*” and her instruction, is modulated with “*can*” as opposed to “*must*”; here reducing obligation she involves David in decision making about what is done (Table 4 Column 11). So although delivering a very clear and unambiguous message, an already non-threatening quality in her talk is enhanced by a soft tone and regular rhythm (Table 4 Column 13). In this respect, Annie pays particular attention to the *conversation*, *care* and *caution* aspects of the 7Cs (Table 4 Column 10). In other words, to the current interactional *context* in which she and David are operating, she demonstrates creativity within this *context* and sensitivity to its *complexity*. Secondly, in line with the course philosophy of *circular* assumptions, before she offers an example (lines 10-12) and then an explanation (lines 14-16) about the technique that she is proposing here, Annie works hard to connect with that which the participants had said previously (lines 5-8). Annie connects with the course philosophy by picking up and working with their prior talk and by making *connections* between perceptions and interactions. As Annie, encourages the supervisor (lines 14-17) to be *curious* she demonstrates an awareness that the nature of the *interaction/context* between supervisor and supervisee, may affect the perception of these interactants and so she introduces new/ different ways of thinking and doing things. In this case, Annie suggests two tactics for pursuit of *curiosity*; firstly, she advises that instead of using *statements* (directives) involving assumptions (lines 5-8) David should adopt an comparative approach based on observation rather than hypotheses. Secondly, Annie talks about avoiding reference to mood/ feelings (lines 14-16); this is a recurrent theme of the course and it is perhaps relevant that, although it is evident that Annie herself is, in her own behaviour, sensitive to her interactants feelings, this is not something to which she refers in her talk.

By the end of her quite long turn at talk, David does not occupy the *constrained* position, as might be suggested by Tomm’s (1988) model, but rather he responds to Annie as if she has occupied a *creative* position and invoked a *facilitative* frame and placed him in a *generative* position, which leaves him ready to explore a different *interaction/context* and identify *circular* patterns (line 17). Annie consolidates David’s response, which suggests that they are embarking on a joint, *democratic* venture, by re-iterating the inclusive “*we*”.

Annie delivers a very clear message in terms of making *connections* with different

contexts and of avoiding talk about emotions and feelings in favour of talking about behaviour and *interaction*. In so doing Annie successfully avoids attaching the dilemma (of grasping the course techniques) to the individual, David, in favour of *contextualising* the problem.

The introduction to David's first *practice supervision* illustrates how difficult it is to categorise particular examples of talk as simple and specific question types – indeed, the complexities of taking a particular stance/position through talk are highlighted above. The inter-relatedness of different talk types means that the uptake by the supervisee, David, may not be easily predicted. According to Tomm's (1988) framework, if we look at the content of trainer, Annie's talk (Table 4 Columns 11) which is broadly *lineal/strategic*, this should have a *conservative/constraining* effect upon trainee David. However, we see the exact opposite. David adopts a *liberated/generative* position within a facilitative frame. Indeed, we note that the content and paralinguistic's of her talk also help to shape Annie's delivery (and in this case softens the constraining effect). Thus there is evidence in this interaction that Annie, who occupies the hierarchical position, is working *creatively* towards foregrounding the *exploratory* and *facilitative* and promoting a negotiated training activity becoming a **co-producer** in this interaction.

PRACTICE SUPERVISION 1

Our next excerpt considers how the supervisee David takes forward that which he is learning, in particular how he applies the course techniques (RQ 4). In particular we see David struggling as an accepting supervisor with the early moments of supervision:

EXCERPT 3: DRUG ERRORS – WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

- 19 **David:** (3.0) Erm (.) thank you very much for coming to see me today (.) a-a- now I-I
20 called you in for a chat for- I want to talk about a couple of things erm (.) we obviously
21 spoke- eh- spoke a few months back (.) erm I was quite struck at that time that you- you-
22 you was very positive about the job (.) er you sounded sort of quite enthusiastic at the
23 time (.) er and it's something (.) something I've sor- I've noticed over the course of the
24 last- last few weeks (.)that you seem to be a bit sort of er you seem to have been a bit
25 miserable- you seem to have become a bit sort of (.) well not miserable- wrong word but
26 you seem to be sort of maybe a bit down (.) erm maybe a bit sort of disengaged with some
27 of the rest of the team (.) erm and I-I wonder if that has sort of come across as well with
28 a couple of drug errors that I have noticed you have been involved with- writing up a
29 couple of drugs (.) Erm er I'm just interested what your sort of reaction to that is
30 **Paul:** (.) er sorry- w-w- drug errors (.) what- what do you- what d'you mean

Initially, David relates the “*enthusiastic*” behaviour of his supervisee, Paul, to a different time period (line 22). As he introduces the notions of *comparison* and *context*, as something which could potentially be *explored* so he positions himself as *accepting*. However David struggles to avoid talking of Paul's feelings, i.e. “*miserable*”; “*a bit down*” (lines 25-26) and it takes David several attempts before he refers to Paul, more generally, moving his focus away from Paul's internal feelings to his external behaviour/interaction, to which David refers as “*disengaged*” (line 26). David ends his first turn at talk with an indirect question, a *circular* statement (lines 29). Although David's talk with Paul is embedded within a broader *context* and within an overall *exploratory* frame, Paul responds to David's embedded *lineal* assumptions where, in a *judgemental* position, David mentions Paul's drug errors (lines 28-29). It seems that Paul is operating within an *investigative* frame as he takes up a *conservative* position (line 30).

Following this exchange David steps out of role as practising supervisor in order to

clarify the role descriptions. In particular he wants to know the level of error on the part of the practice supervisee. Once it's agreed amongst the group that the error in this role-play is of a "minor" order and has been "picked up by the nurses and rectified", David and Paul are able to continue their role-play.

PRACTICE SUPERVISION 2

From our analysis so far we can see how it is increasingly apparent that the positioning of the supervisor cannot be readily classified without considering the interactional process in detail as the uptake of the interlocutor's position depends on the complex mix of extraneous factors including the content of talk and paralinguistic factors which bring forth emotional reactions. Thus elements of talk which may be categorised as *lineal* may be closely interwoven with *circular* talk and due to the complexities of interaction it is not always easy to predict the position the supervisee will adopt in response. In this case despite David's considerable tentativity (in terms of hesitation) he uses the exclusive pronoun "I" creating a power differential between him and Paul - "I called you in for a chat", "I've noticed". And rather than linking the change in behaviour with the change in context, as had been done earlier by trainer Annie, here David focuses on his supervisee's current behaviour: Paul's drug errors and disengagement. In doing so, David is locating the problem as intrinsic to Paul and as a consequence this becomes the focus of Paul's talk too.

David now attempts to rectify this by approaching their conversation in a more accepting manner:

EXCERPT 4: DO YOU FEEL

31 ...but it is not something that has been flagged at all as being a problem that you had
32 erm but I just noticed these sort of two cases coming on the back of each other and er
33 with the sort of ch-slight change that I- I- may-maybe I have just perceived- but this
34 change in your behaviour (2.0) I'm just wondering d'you- do you feel sort of under
35 erm- do you feel that you have changed at all (.) do you feel you're under any extra
36 pressure at the moment

David reports back to Paul and in a very gentle, mitigating fashion. He outlines his own perception of Paul's errors, then shifts his focus back towards *context* and *comparison* over time (lines 32-34). Thus, in an *accepting* rather than *judgmental* position he tries to *open space* and *liberate* Paul to explore *different perspectives* of his recent behaviour. He asks Paul if his perspective is the same as others (lines 34-35) but then, at the last moment, David shifts into a *judgmental* position as he fails to resist the earlier avoided *lineal* assumption that Paul must be under "pressure" (lines 35-36).

Despite David ending in this way Paul does not appear to take up a *conservative* position. He is shocked and very apologetic about his mistakes and then he quickly refutes the notion that he is under "pressure" but he is *liberated* enough to volunteer that "I do feel a bit lost at the moment". This may be due to David's gentle tone at this point and his repetition of "do you feel" - as he enquires into Paul's feelings three times immediately prior to his response.

We will now consider how David struggles to adopt the position as an accepting supervisor, but despite this, how Paul is not constrained. In Excerpt 5 (below) David picks up on Paul's response. In doing so he develops an *exploratory* frame with a series of open and *circular* questions and *minimal responses* (37, 40, 45, 49) which encourage Paul to tell his narrative in which he identifies changes in circumstance.

EXCERPT 5: MY WORLD'S FALLEN APART

- 37 **David:** *okay (1.0) h-how do you mean by lost*
38 **Paul:** *((inhales)) Erm (2.0) well you- you erm (.) you may recall the last time we- we- we*
39 *met I was erm (1.0) I was due to get en(.)gaged*
40 **David:** *yep*
41 **Paul:** *erm er sadly that's er that relationship's broken down (1.0) and erm (2.0) erm (3.0)*
42 *e-e- it's hurting*
43 **David:** *(2.0) that must be very difficult*
44 **Paul:** *(1.0) er yeah (.) it is I erm (3.0) yeah well my- my world's fallen apart really*
45 **David:** *(3.0) how are you managing to cope with things do you think*
46 **Paul:** *(.) er well it would seem not very well really erm (1.0) you know I- I- I've not (.) er*
47 *you know I think that patient safety is at stake because er (1.0) I'm- I'm just in a bit of a*
48 *dream really aren't I*
49 **David:** *mm*
50 **Paul:** *(2.0) erm (2.0) I feel (2.0) I-I- I feel like I just feel quite despondent I'm- I'm not coping*
51 **David:** *(2.0) what sort of I-I-I'm (.) I can't imagine where you are at the moment as it must*
52 *be sort of a dreadful few weeks- few months erm er what sort of support structure have you*
53 *got at home and is there anyone (1.0) have you got other family or other friends around you*

David, again, intermittently shifts his talk to that which is not associated with the course techniques, i.e. he talks of feelings (lines 43 and 51) and ultimately, rather than *explore* ways of dealing with Paul's *stuck situation* and encouraging Paul to offer his own perspective regarding "support structure", David falls back on a *strategic* approach and what could be construed as *lineal* assumptions about how the problem should be tackled, as he points to specific solutions to Paul's problem "have you got other family or other friends around you" (lines 53). David's *judgement* that family and friends are the specific answer to Paul's problem is softened by the hesitancy through which he introduces his *lineal* and *closed* questions (line 51) and by the way he works hard to pick up empathically on his supervisee's prior talk (lines 51-53). Interestingly, David's *leading* questions do not *constrain* Paul who, rather than behaving *conservatively*, follows David's lead in relation to "support structure" (line 52) or lack of it. In doing so Paul discloses (immediately following this excerpt) that he has already given this option quite a bit of thought and so David is possibly heading down a blind alley since his "family or other friends" are removed.

Continuing with their conversation (not reproduced here), and despite David's insistence on pursuit of his own solution "how about family" Paul chooses not to be *constrained* by David's *strategy* and volunteers "I just need a bit of space really I think". Here Paul seems to be responding to the empathic cues of David whose expression, in words and tone, throughout has stressed his personal concern, sensitivity to feelings and eagerness to help.

We pick up the conversation again in Excerpt 6 when we witness how David as supervisor and Paul as supervisee achieve co-production in the supervision:

EXCERPT 6: TRY AND HELP YOU THROUGH THIS

- 54 **David:** *yeah well I mean I- I think (.) I mean our position is that we (.) well my position*
55 *is very much one to sort of support you and to try and help you through this I mean-*
56 *what- do what you see that I can (.) or the hospital can do for you at the moment*
57 **Paul:** *(2.0) erm ((exhales)) (3.0) well I don't know I guess I- I-I think probably I- maybe*
58 *I need a- a little bit of (2.0) e-extra support and- and time out- I'm not entirely sure that*
59 *(.) I can deliver (2.0) the service that I expect of myself or I expect you to expect of me at*
60 *the moment and I think I probably need (.) erm a bit of time (.)*

Again David foregrounds the position of himself and Paul's employer as one of support (lines 54-56). In doing so he emphasises his own compassion as he shifts from his use of the exclusive "we" - "our position", meaning 'the hospital' - to the personal pronoun "I" demonstrating a personal involvement in caring for Paul and his predicament. Paul picks up on this cue and he works with David's endorsement of his own suggested solution, i.e. time-out, as well as the potential option of psychological support (lines 57-58). Here Paul's problem is redefined as one of negotiating the type of support accessible through David and his employers and, for the remainder of the supervision, this is what Paul explores with David.

This is another example of how the diverse features of talk employed by a person occupying a hierarchical role, in this case that of supervisor, may produce unexpected results. Trainer Annie introduces this practice supervision by encouraging the trainee supervisor to avoid reference to the "mood" of the supervisee. But feelings seem to be paramount in David's talk. In this case, it is not a technique which seems to deter the supervisee from contributing to the interaction. Additionally, David frequently employs *lineal* assumptions and a judgemental position, here again, however, instead of Paul responding to this by being *conservative* or *constrained* he seems *liberated* enough to contribute fully to the conversation.

This could be happening for a number of reasons considering the context; it may be because Paul is dutiful playing his 'role', as facilitative co-trainee, in the given exercise; it maybe because Paul was facing real-life relationship problems (we are aware of this from our other data); it maybe because he was acting as a strategic supervisee, one who already had his own pre-empted solutions for which he was merely seeking approval (and this being ultimately tied into his real-life predicament). Here we are not looking to evidence such assumptions. Rather, what we do evidence is that despite David's directive approach, through his employment of a range of interactional features, including mitigation techniques which are not too dissimilar to those of his trainer; he too delivers a very clear message of cooperativeness and co-production.

DAVID: TIME 2

David's second practice supervision that we analyse takes place on the third/final course day. The data here involves a *quadratic paired supervision* which occurs in a small group *break out* session, which includes four people: trainer, Veronica; supervisor, David; supervisee Gwen and observer, Mary. In this case the data used for transcription is a video-recording so extra paralinguistic detail is available (kinesis which includes the bodily position, posture, movement, gaze, gesture, and expression) to further enrich our fine-grained analysis.

This particular *quadratic interaction* lasts 35.44 minutes, during which time the sub-units of analysis include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Introduction | - 5 mins 2 secs |
| 2. Practice supervision 1 | - 8 mins 3 secs |
| 3. Time-out 1 | - 4 mins 35 secs |
| 4. Practice supervision 2 | - 6 mins 50 secs |
| 5. Time-out + Practice supervision 3 | - 0 mins 41 secs |
| 6. Feedback | - 10 mins 30 secs |

The practice supervision had been scheduled for a 10 minute slot so that each of the three participants would get a chance to practise and have time allocated for feedback. However this *quadratic paired supervision* over-ran taking nearly 15 minutes (excluding feedback time). Since the same happened with the next practice supervisor, Mary, and since

only one hour had been allocated for the session, one group member, Gwen, was unable to practise the supervisor role as had been initially agreed.

Here we consider the entire *quadratic interaction* (omitting the brief time-out and practice supervision 3) so our analysis comprises the main five sub-units of analysis. As we consider the introduction to this *quadratic paired supervision* we focus upon RQ3 and the delivery and receipt of questions and turns at talk. In particular, here, we look at the way in which the training is delivered by the trainer, Veronica; in this instance, the delivery offers an interesting contrast to that of David's previous trainer Annie, at Time 1.

INTRODUCTION

Veronica opens the first *quadratic paired supervision* of this small group session by inviting participants to set the agenda (Excerpt 1 below), however, as we discuss later, she appears to struggle against adopting a didactic approach:

EXCERPT 1: WE'VE GOT AN HOUR

1. **Veronica:** *Ok, so we got an, we've got an hou:::r # so we can use it # in any way, that*
2. *you::: # would like, bearing in mind # you need to keep, some cases# for spee::d supervision*
3. *# later on in the afternoon # wha- what would you like to do in the this hour((smiling,*
4. *Veronica looks, specifically, at one of the trainees, Gwen, she moves her head in the*
5. *direction of the others but her gaze is, almost entirely, on Gwen))*
6. **Mary:** *(5.0) I don't mind doing, the same sort of thing again-*
7. **Gwen:** *-mmh-*

Within this short excerpt Veronica occupies several different positions as trainer. At the outset she attempts to orient all participants to the task in hand. As she defines the time limit of this training session her hesitation, repetition and regular pauses (line 1) suggest discomfort with her uptake, here, of *lineal* assumptions. Her attempt to soften her *directive*, by following up with an invitation to the participants to choose their own agenda (lines 1-2), is hampered by her subsequent *strategic* statement and *oppositional* stance (lines 2-3) where, in an authoritarian manner, she directs participants towards what they "need" to do. Finally (line 3) she shifts to a position of *acceptance* and apparently *exploratory* intent, *opening-space* for the participants to get involved in *agenda setting*. Apart from at one point, early on in this introductory phase, Veronica mostly uses inclusive gestures and gaze, with her hands palms upwards and opening out and purposively looking around at all participants; additionally, she does a lot of nodding as if to encourage participants' contributions. However, with such rapid switching between positions, within a single turn at talk, it seems as if Veronica is struggling with her stance as trainer in relation to competing approaches. Simultaneously she embraces the philosophy of the 7Cs, promoting an *accepting/creative* stance/position and an *exploratory/facilitative* frame using *circular /reflexive* questions, yet she is unable to cast off the more didactic role of trainer.

Following this excerpt, despite what may appear to be a somewhat ambiguous start, Veronica then settles more fully into a *facilitator* frame and a *creative* position; by interjecting with positive sounding minimal responses "mmh" and "mmh hmm", she now encourages course participants, vocally as well as through her body language, to contribute to the *agenda setting*. We join the conversation once more in Excerpt 2 (below) as Veronica, again, attempts verbally to direct the interaction by correcting Mary's description of how the session might proceed (lines 21-22). Simultaneously, Veronica smiles, nods slowly and deliberately whilst restraining her hands but although avoiding intrusive gestures, her voice tone exudes authority. David is not *constrained* by this *corrective* frame but refers back to the prior *exploratory* frame (line 12); perhaps allowing Veronica's body language to override her

verbal communication. He continues in concordance with Mary's more general proposal that *quadratic paired supervision* practice is the best way forward.

EXCERPT 2: ASSERTIVE TONE

8. *Mary: a short*
9. *Veronica: shortish* ((very assertive tone but smiling, nodding and clasping her hands))
10. *Mary: a short[ish]*
11. *Veronica: [yes]*
12. *David: it's probably the best use of time isn't it* ((Gwen examines her nails; although the
13. front of her face is out of view, she is seen to intermittently engage her gaze with
14. fellow participant David and Veronica))
15. *Veronica: OK # so we need some material* ((she looks around, still nodding and
16. smiling, at all participants Gwen; David; Mary))- ... *although it might be good to*
17. *cha::nge (.) whose supervising who ...* ((looks directly at Gwen still swaying back and
18. forth in her seat as she says)) *Have [you # got any (pause) a case]*

Throughout this interaction Gwen appears noticeably more detached than Mary and David (lines 12-14), and Veronica has increasingly more input as the discussion proceeds. She retains a *directive* approach, so despite starting with a pause and the inclusive pronoun "we" (line 15), which hints at inclusion and tentativity towards being lineal and didactic she asserts her *strategy* using statements (lines 15-17), baldly, to guide the participants in the particular direction she favours. Similarly, she *challenges* Gwen (lines 17-18) to contribute to the interaction and interestingly, although the frame is *investigative*, the effect on Gwen is not *conservative*. At Veronica's bidding, Gwen offers the fullest narrative contribution that anyone has yet provided in this session. This seems to be counter to the course perspective that *circular* assumptions and/or questions are most likely to achieve this type of response. It is uncertain the extent to which Veronica relies on Gwen to step out of the current course context and fall into a traditional cooperative participant role to deliver her "interesting" contribution or, the extent to which it is dependent on Gwen's personal approach to interaction.

We note here that Gwen throughout the course and in her audio-diaries gave full and detailed accounts. We join the conversation a little later in Excerpt 3 in which we explore how Veronica as a trainer struggles with circularity. Prior to this excerpt, Veronica facilitates Gwen's and Mary's further contributions during the introductory activity through her minimal responses until she begins to negotiate the format of the practice supervision (on line 19):

EXCERPT 3: AN INDIVIDUAL DECISION

19. *Veronica: good # alright, and wha- what do you # want to do about (.) stopping # or*
20. *being interrupted # well perhaps you each [want to make]*
21. *Mary: [ye::s:]*
22. *Veronica: an individual decision on that # right OK so # who- who # would like to start*
23. *by supervising (6.0)*
24. *David: (am I going to have to) start as supervisor or supervisee* ((looking round the
25. group he makes a large circular gesture with his index finger pointing upwards))
26. *we're probably going this way around aren't we*

So we see how Veronica begins a new turn at talk (line 19) in a position of *acceptance* with a *circular* question to create an *exploratory* frame but even within the same *turn at talk* (lines 20 and 22-23) she answers her own question and then follows on with a second question which reverts to *lineal* assumptions. Thus from a *judgemental* position and via *directive* statements,

Veronica creates an *investigative* frame which does not serve to encourage participant contributions but rather has a *conservative* effect, which is evidenced by a long 6 second pause (line 23). At last, one of the course participants, David, steps in (lines 24-26) and picks up the conversation. Following on from Veronica, David continues to make *lineal* assumptions. Indeed, following from David's lineal contribution this *investigative* frame is sustained by Veronica, Mary and David as they continue the conversation around the introduction. Furthermore, when we pick up the scene following that exchange we see how Veronica starts to negotiate the practice supervision format, and how the linearity is followed through (lines 27-28) but David responds as a co-operative participant supervisor:

EXCERPT 4: LEAVE ME FOR A SECOND AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS

27. **Veronica:** *uh::m* (.) David what would you like # in terms of # being interrupted
 28. # or not
 29. **David:** *uh:::m* # I think I'm quite comfy- I 'm in a relaxed position compared to last
 30. time- I'm comfortable with you interrupting # but I think I'd still- for you to
 31. update but I think I would still # like to be left to wallow(.) a little bit (.) if I'm # if I I
 32. am being sli::ghtly lost # leave me for a second and see what happens (.) *uh::m*, er- but
 33. if you've got a:: an interesting observation or insight of where things are going #
 34. I am extremely comfortable with uh # [taking that]

As Gwen had done earlier, here David is not *constrained* but responds to Veronica's *closed lineal* question with a full account of his preference (lines 29-34). This is another example which seems to challenge the assumption that *linear* questions do not prompt full replies. Maybe David, also, has slipped into the co-operative behaviour associated with the traditional, didactic trainer-trainee role.

Immediately prior to the practice supervision proper, Veronica presents her final *lineal* question (Excerpt 5 - lines 53-36). Interestingly David seems, conceptually, to have embraced the essence of the course philosophy (in this case circularity) as he answers using the appropriate terminology (lines 39-41) and talks about how he'd like to have his practise evaluated during feedback.

EXCERPT 5: GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE COMPLEXITY

35. **Veronica:** *Ok fine* # a:::nd anything particular (.) that you would like us (.) to watch
 36. out for when we are giving feedback afterwards
 37. **David:** *I suppose it's the* (.) *issue that I came up with last time* # ((Veronica starts
 38. writing copious notes - David mostly looks at Veronica as he speaks)) *I would be*
 39. *quite interested to* (.) *explore the::* # *to see how well I manage to explore the complexity*
 40. # *versus the* # *the time* (.) *uh:::m* (.) *and whether I'm managing* (.) *to ask* (potentially)
 41. *challenging questions* ((points at Mary)) *to get to the bottom of the complexity* #
 42. *whether I*

We have seen that to orient and move forward with the prescribed task/activity, e.g. quadratic paired supervision, Veronica, has employed a range of question types, often using *lineal* and *strategic* questions and statements alongside some circular turns at talk. We have also observed that Veronica's less 'facilitative' turns at talk (according to Tomm's 1988 model) do not appear to have deterred David from participating in the interaction. We are now beginning to discover the precise ways in which perspectives and techniques are *delivered* by the trainer and *received* by the trainee and how exactly this relates, or not, to Tomm's (1988) model. Within this trainer-trainee interaction there seem to be exceptions to the model's 'rules' but on the course, so far, none of this is made explicit or even explored. We have seen that, within an hierarchical and task oriented interaction, here between trainee

and trainer, the trainer's, didactic/authoritarian approach, though delivered baldly, does not necessarily exert a negative/detrimental effect on David, the trainee. The facilitative effect here is very notable since Veronica's delivery is largely unmitigated. We may surmise that the cause of this related to the predetermined co-operative role of a volunteer trainee supervisor and his understanding and commitment to the course philosophy but our analysis does not purport to make claims about such conceptual positioning.

After this Introduction phase which lasts over 5 minutes, the *practice supervision* begins. Here we look more closely at RQ 4 and the way in which David takes the suggested techniques forward, i.e. whether he demonstrates knowledge of the philosophy and techniques through his commentary, plus understanding and ability through his usage in his talk.

PRACTICE SUPERVISION 1

We turn now to consider the interaction during the first sub-unit of David's practice supervision. Here we witness David as a supervisor using softening and acceptance techniques alongside his somewhat lineal stance (as evidenced through his use of paralinguistic aspects of talk - e.g. pauses, hesitations, qualifiers). Interestingly this occurs in a similar manner to the way in which Annie, in his earlier interaction (Time 1, Excerpt 2 on page 43), interacted with him.

At the beginning of the practice supervision David asks Gwen a simple open question "what would you like to talk about...". Gwen responds to David providing a detailed account of her dilemma or *stuck situation*. As we see below in Excerpt 6, David initially works to influence the subsequent direction of the interaction by making a *strategic* statement of intent (lines 43-44) and invoking a *corrective* frame:

EXCERPT 6: YOU WORRY THAT YOU'VE ALREADY LABELLED HIM

43. **David:** No # OK (.) uh::m:: # I suppose then it is worth thinking abou::t (.) how
 44. best we can use the next sort of few minutes
 45. **Gwen:** hmmm
 46. **David:** uh 'cause you've raised sort of (.) a couple of interesting issues there
 47. **Gwen:** ye[ah]
 48. **David:**[uh] you were talking about you- you worry that you've already labelled him
 49. # or you were talking about (.) how best to go about # u::h (.) managing him before
 50. he's even arrived (.) of the sort of stuff to do before hand=
 51. **Gwen:** =yeah=
 52. **David:** =before he starts=
 53. **Gwen:** =yeah=
 54. **David:** =what potentially (I suppose I'm sort of) thinking lo::nger term # is there
 55. sort of one area there that would sit best with this time do you think #
 56. **Gwen:** prob- probably (.) about managing a # a # an unmotivated registrar really
 57. **David:** have you had experience in this position before

While we have noted David's strategic statement of intent, we also note that throughout his turn at talk (lines 43-52) he frequently softens his *lineal assumptions* with interactional features: pauses, hesitation "uh::m::" and hedging "sort of". He introduces further tentativity as he qualifies his directives though using words such as "suppose", "worth thinking abou::t", "how best". He also talks of this being a joint venture "we" (line 44). Subsequently, as he identifies two specific areas of concern, which were expressed by Gwen, David (lines 48-50) links his lineal statement, directly, with what Gwen has told him. David continues to shift, subtly, towards adopting *circular assumptions* (lines 54-57), which he

develops further as he moves from an *accepting* to a *creative* position and from an *exploratory* to *facilitative* frame. He contextualises their present situation and negotiates the “*potential*” agenda for the conversation/interaction with Gwen (lines 54-55).

Once Gwen defines her specific dilemma, or *stuck situation* for attention “*managing a # a # an unmotivated registrar*” (line 56) although David poses a *closed* and reasonably *lineal* question (line 57) the content of this strives towards generality by looking to *context* and *comparison*. Whilst David’s intent might be to broadens-out the perspective, the uptake of this question by Gwen might be constrained and it could be construed as narrowing down the context to Gwen’s specific behaviours as an individual. However, it seems that David’s personal mixed-method technique seems both to position him as *accepting* and to generate an *exploratory* frame: Gwen picks up on David’s turn at talk as a *space opener* and volunteers a narrative of a previous comparable situation that she has experienced.

After Gwen’s long description of a previous comparable problem, the management of a difficult supervisee, we see in Excerpt 7 below how David follows through with what appears to be a further *circular* type question (lines 60-61).

EXCERPT 7: CONCERNS AND FEELINGS

58. **David:** *I think the case you mentioned is quite interesting in that=*

59. **Gwen:** *=yes=*

60. **David:** *=do you think # wha- what sort of bearing do you think that case # has had*

61. *on you::r # concerns and feelings about this new trainee ...*

At one level, David seems to be *curious* about the effect that a different *context* associated with a similar dilemma may exert on Gwen. However, David does appear to struggle with circularity and perhaps a more genuinely *circular* question would focus specifically on the effect of context on the *interaction*, rather than on connections between different contexts and their effects on the individual, i.e. effects on the supervisee. Here, David’s *comparison* of *contexts*, belies *lineal* assumptions about his supervisee’s problem being intrinsic, or attached, to Gwen as an individual. Disguised, by ‘pseudo’ *circularity*, David’s underlying, or intermittent, *judgemental* position results in a *conservative* effect which does not work to open out the view of the problem, or move it away from one which is intrinsic to the individual.

This *conservative* effect on the supervisee is not instantly recognisable since Gwen is not hindered in terms of her narrative production but she offers another full descriptive account (not detailed here for anonymity). It is in the content of Gwen’s talk however that this effect is illustrated. In her response Gwen reverts to talking specifically about her “*anxiety*” and her “*concerns*” about being prejudice. In this way the conversation is narrowed down. Gwen does not look at *alternative* ways of viewing the problem and/or *exploring* the *context* of her previous dilemma. Instead, rather than focusing on the *context* and *interactional process* of a selected *stuck situation* – “*managing her registrar*” – she has been directed back by David to her alternative issue/problem, that which had been identified but dismissed: her fear of being prejudice and “*already labelling*” her potential supervisee. The latter effect resonates with the course’s particular take on narrative analysis, which advocates avoidance of probing the *feelings* and *emotions* of the supervisee in favour of broadening perspectives beyond the individual, by consideration of *context* and *interaction*. As we have discussed earlier, this is an element of the course that one course participant, in particular, found very difficult to understand and/or accept (c.f. Paul, in Theme 3, page 35). As there are a couple of things occurring here it is unclear whether the reference to emotions/feelings by David is in itself a problem or whether it is the fact that his talk here is *lineal*; if we are working with Tomm’s (1988) model we should assume the latter.

Following Gwen's narrative David then continues to struggle with avoiding *lineal* assumptions as he shifts, within his next turn at talk, between circular and lineal questions (lines 62-70):

EXCERPT 8: THINKING BACK

62. **David:** *would it be wo::rth # do tell me if you don't think it is (.) but would it be*
63. *worth sort of thinking back to that previous e::piso::de=*
64. **Gwen:** *=mmmh hmmm=*
65. **David:** *=and sort of you mentioned whether you had some prejudices (.) from tha::t*
66. *Episode=*
67. **Gwen:** *=mmmh=*
68. **David:** *=and sort of thinking what the::y might be # and potentially sort of*
69. *expanding to what lessons might have been learned from that previous # uhm (.)*
70. *rel- (.) trainer- trainee relationship #*
71. **Gwen:** *I think the problem with the last registrar # but # yo- not the last registrar*
72. *but the last problem registrar ...*

In line with the ideas of the course David demonstrates *care* as he checks with Gwen whether he is taking their conversation in the 'right' direction for her. He then again refers back to Gwen's previous problem situation, as an "episode" for their consideration (line 63), a move for which Gwen signals approval "mmmh hmmm" (line 64). However, almost concurrently in his talk, David shifts his attention away from the event/activity and back to Gwen as an individual, as he talks of the need to identify what her "prejudices" might be in order to find out "what lessons might be learned" (lines 65-70). David's shift into this *investigative* frame and *judgemental* position is received less enthusiastically by Gwen, as is indicated by her voice tone and minimal response (line 67).

It is David's *lineal* assumptions that seem to be fore-grounded in the content of Gwen's response. Yet again, Gwen does not adopt a *conservative* position in terms of the delivery of her response, as she launches into another detailed narrative. Throughout her turn at talk she seems to be trying to justify the *prejudicial* position that David has identified her occupying. She again focuses in on the detail of her individual position and talks at length of her particular understanding of the specific problems associated with her previous experience. This focusing on the specifics of the event seems to be a direct response to David's narrowed-down focus upon Gwen's *prejudices* and the *relationship/interaction* aspect of his complex question seems to have got lost as are any more general process "lessons" that "might have been learned". Here again, David seems to have narrowed down the focus of the talk/conversation whereas, bearing in mind the course philosophy, it may have been better for him to have completed his earlier question (line 65-70), before adding in his own interpretations about the cause of the problem and directing the conversation towards a specific solution.

David has evidenced that he is capable, at times, of employing circular and reflexive course techniques but as yet, it is unclear if he is able to differentiate clearly when he is using these specific techniques. Unlike his trainer Veronica, however, David engages in a great deal of mitigation when he delivers his lineal and strategic turns at talk; maybe then it is less surprising that he too, also in an hierarchical relationship, seems to achieve a 'facilitative' effect on his recipient, in this case supervisee Gwen. So far, although trainer's have mentioned and demonstrated that, within an hierarchical and task oriented supervision all of Tomm's (1988) question types may prove relevant, as yet there is no clarity about when to replace Tomm's (1998) holistic/systemic approach with a more didactic/authoritarian approach. Nor is there any clarity of when, despite adopting an approach which appears

counter to Tomm's (1988) model, supervisees are likely to be facilitated within the interaction.

We have seen that, within an hierarchical and task oriented interaction between participant and trainer, the trainer's unmitigated didactic/authoritarian approach does not necessarily exert a negative/detrimental effect on the trainee. Here again in a supervisor-supervisee hierarchy, we can only surmise that, as practising supervisor, if David had been less mitigating, i.e. as bald as Veronica, then Gwen occupying a prescribed supervisee role may have been, less engaged. Despite David's clear shifts in his position, between *circular* and *lineal* assumptions, within a single turn at talk, he does make moves, in several ways, to embrace the 7Cs and a more *exploratory/facilitative* frame. Firstly, David links to Gwen's previous talk, he also looks for comparison between different events/interactions to develop new perspectives and he identifies the "*relationship*", which is a systemic notion, as being important for *exploration*. Added to this, his *lineal* assumptions are consistently hedged with softeners, i.e. "*sort of*"; "*might be*"; "*might have*". David's apparent delivery of 'mixed messages' has not inhibited Gwen's subsequent contribution to this conversation; he seems to have *opened-space* for her to deliver full and detailed narrative (possibly through these softeners and hedges). There is no exploration by Gwen of contextual or interactional factors that may have been brought to bear.

TIME-OUT 1

Before Gwen has finished her narrative she is stopped by Veronica, whose body language strongly reinforces her rhetorical 'request', for Gwen to stop and for the practising supervisor and supervisee to take a *time-out* period for reflection, possible due to her identifying the lineal route that David has taken (lines 73-75):

EXCERPT 9: IN MID FLOW

73. **Veronica:** ((Veronica twists her body away from Mary and leans towards Gwen,
74. with her hand that is gripping her pen, pointing towards Gwen as she speaks)) *can*
75. *I just interrupt* ((Gwen laughs))
76. **Veronica:** ((Veronica now looks around at others)) *is that OK # [uh::m (.)*
77. **Gwen:** [*yes # yes*]
78. **Veronica:** [*I'm sorry*] *Gwen I know you were (.) kind of in mid flow=*
79. **Gwen:** =*yes*=
80. **Veronica:** ((addresses and looks at David, gesticulating vigorously)) =*but I think*
81. *that I wou- # a- # I'd like to know where you are # what's going on in your head at the*
82. *moment # David*

It is interesting that although these interruptions, which are *time-outs*, are negotiated with the trainee supervisor before the *practice paired supervisions*, the supervisee, who is also involved in the supervision, is not necessarily consulted beforehand about their preferences in relation to such interruptions. Gwen's laughter (line 75) whilst acknowledging that she has been talking for a long time, could also reflect her discomfort at being interrupted. A second rhetorical question from Veronica (line 76) asserts her authority; this is reinforced by her tone of voice and her body language (lines 73-74 and 76) which seems also to try to rally support from others in the group (line 76). Indeed as Gwen stands *corrected* her eagerness to acknowledge Veronica's authority and approve the interruption is indicated by her overlapping and latched talk. Here then although, according to Tomm's (1988) model, Veronica takes an *oppositional* position, Gwen is not *constrained* by this *corrective* frame. Veronica seems to resort to an authoritative role as she pursues a *strategic* approach and this is accentuated in the exclusivity of her demand of David (line 80-82) "*I'd like to know*", the

repetition of the pronominal “I” in her request is not built on *circular* assumptions or aligned with a *facilitative* frame but is rooted in, and consolidates, her personal expertise and authority (an alternative request could have been framed using the inclusive *we* – “perhaps you could explain to us”).

David complies with the didactic approach of Veronica and volunteers how in his exploration of “*lessons learned*” and the “*complexity side, of things*” he finds that time runs out before getting to a “*useful endpoint for Gwen*”. There is some discussion about how to proceed and Veronica encourages David not to hypothesise aloud but to “*formulate a question*” and she asks the observer, Mary what thoughts she has. Mary mentions David’s checking with Gwen about the direction of their talk but she notes that “*she seems to have cho::sen to have gone down a different road*”. David reflects on the recurring use of meta-communication during the practice supervision, i.e. talking about the conversation and its direction.

This is another example, within the training session of an unmitigated imbalance between the power of the person with expertise, in this case Veronica, versus the agency of the interactant, David. However, here again, within the context of this specific activity, the training session and with the associated assumed roles, David seems to overlook/overcome the expressed power differential.

We next consider the progress that David has made by the 3rd day of the course not only in terms of his performance and commentary but also in his assessment by the trainer Veronica.

PRACTICE SUPERVISION 2

David continues the practice supervision by making a number of statements about the short time available to finish this activity and the need to decide how best to proceed. In Excerpt 10 below we can see the way in which David *strategically* leads the decision making as he defines the current problem (at the end of the excerpt, lines 97-98) “*so whe- # what options are there to give you:: s-some support you’re- you’re familiar with*”.

EXCERPT 10: GETTING SOME HELP

74. **David:** Right ((clears throat)) # uh:::m # I think it’s bee- uh:: (.) I think
 75. it is really interesting so far (.) and uh:: (.) it’s interesting to see how things have
 76. interacted
 77. **Gwen:** hmmm
 78. **David:** I- I wonder if we need to think about (.) the best way (.) that we use our
 79. resources
 80. **Gwen:** hmmm #
 81. **David:** uh:::m uh (.) this # this conversation unfortunately can only go on for
 82. about another sort of [two three minutes]
 83. **Gwen:** [mmmh hmmm]
 84. **David:** uh:::m (.) and I don’t think we’re going to manage to solve all of this (.) in
 85. that sort of time=
 86. **Gwen:** =hmmm=
 87. **David:** =so I suppose it is firstly thinking (.) how best you would like to use that
 88. amount of time (.) hhh (.) but I also (.) don’t want you to leave this with a feeling that
 89. (.) is the end of (.) any sort of way (.) of solving the problem=
 90. **Gwen:** =hmmm=
 91. **David:** =so I wonder if it’s worth spending some of that time # around thinking what
 92. other ports of call (.) there a::re # and getting some help in (.) or get some sort of u:::h

93. # ways to help you formulate an idea (.) or plan=
 94. **Gwen:** =mmmh [mmmh]
 95. **David:** [would] that be a useful approach
 96. **Gwen:** yeah (.) yeah #
 97. **David:** so whe- # what options are there to give you:: s- some support
 98. you're- you're familiar with

Once again despite David's *oppositional* position and the *corrective* frame, Gwen is not *constrained* to delivering a short response (which she does immediately following this excerpt and which is omitted again for anonymity). As exemplified before, the way in which David delivers his *directive* talk (lines 74-95) is highly tentative and non assertive. David's approach is gentle and inclusive and reinforced by his tone of voice, posture and gaze which are mindful, using *caution* and *care*. Cumulatively, this seems to be conducive to Gwen offering another very full and detailed account.

After Gwen identifies some sources of support for herself, she reflects on the previous event/context and highlights process/procedural failures therein. Following a very long narrative, she comments on the additional difficulty she faces in her current situation, in that she is not going to be there when her new supervisee arrives. David does not pick up on this particular issue but he does not dismiss her concern; *strategically*, he *opposes* the direction of her conversation but, despite this *corrective* frame, within the content of his talk, he picks up on the issue of Gwen's support system (lines 99-100).

EXCERPT 11: OFFER YOU THAT SUPPORT

99. **David:** I want you (.) just to sort of # to have someone in your mind #that you can use as
 100. the next person to be sort of thinking about # sharing some of these ideas and concerns with
 101. **Gwen:** yeah
 102. **David:** is there sort of someone (.) maybe you can use in your practice (.) that could be that
 103. sort of person (.) that point of uh: reference
 104. **Gwen:** well unfortunately # unfortunately my practice training is not seen (.) as # hugely
 105. profitable # or (.) or #....
 106. **David:** anyone outside the practice that could offer you that support (.) possibly (.) from the
 107. **Gwen:** I think the the tr- the other trainers (.) in the trainer's workshop # and in particular
 108. the (.) you know (.) the two
 109. **David:** not that we # not necessarily solved anything in the last ten minutes # but I # do
 110. you have some idea (.) of a plan (.) going forward
 111. **Gwen:** yes ((very positive tone)) and I kind of feel # poor lad # he's not even arrived (.)
 112. I've not met him #.... ((lots of shoulder shrugging by Veronica))
 113. **David:** yeah
 114. **Gwen:** and allow him (.) to # find his feet

David's *lineal* assumption about Gwen accessing support from a fellow practice member proved to be an unsuccessful *strategic* question (line 104-5; interestingly, this issue of support is a recurring theme within David's supervision style and proved a successful suggestion when supervising Paul at Time 1, see Excerpt 6 on page 91). Additionally, when Gwen was asked in what way the practice supervision had helped take her forward, she reverted to locating the problem within herself and a solution which required her to avoid being *prejudice* (lines 111-2).

Following this excerpt, Veronica establishes that David has finished his questioning and practice supervision. She then prompts David to check if his practice supervisee is also happy to finish the supervision there. Then, despite Gwen signalling that she was "*left with anxiety*", Veronica closes off this practice session with the approving remark "*well done*".

FEEDBACK

The feedback event took 10 mins 30 second, although we do not go into great depth here. There is much discussion about how David, as practising supervisor, could have, or should have, dealt with Gwen's complex story. It is felt by both observer and trainer that more interrupting, with *circular* questions, may have worked well and Veronica notes that to have negotiated such interruptions in advance "*might have been helpful*". At one point during feedback, counter to the more common advice given on the course, Veronica suggests that in relation to "*lessons learned*" David should have been more specific in his questioning, yet, elsewhere, she says that he should have been less so. In the latter regard Veronica highlights David's most obvious *strategic* question and David acknowledges the difficulties associated:

"I probably shouldn't lead to assumptions as to what the likely answer is going to be # when I thought that I might get a simple answer"

But despite practising the techniques and receiving feedback David still says:

"...I mean i- it still (.) I still feel I ju- I'm on that tightrope with sort of complexity and time"

This statement seems to suggest that for David, mastering the course techniques seems less of a concern to him than is his ability to use the techniques within a constrained timeframe. So, for him, the struggle to balance the power of the person with expertise – himself as supervisor – with the agency of the interactant – Gwen as supervisee – remains ongoing. As yet, the course techniques have not resolved this issue for him. Indeed, there is some evidence that David is able to apply the circular question type, as advocated on the course, but it is unclear whether, for much of the time, he chooses not to use this or if, he is simply unaware of his limited usage. This lack of awareness may be due to his successful use of *care* and *caution* which is evidenced through his frequent hesitations, pauses and other paralinguistic mechanisms of talk. It is interesting that Veronica makes minimal mention of this and that, despite his supervisee's stated dissatisfaction, overall, she seems happy to accept David's mitigated performance.

MARY: TIME 1

We turn now to consider our second case study in which we examine two quadratic interactions over different days of the course. The first interaction occurred on day two and comprised a complex mix of training the course participants alongside training the trainee trainer. This is a particular feature of the course, and the inclusion of this additional layer of complexity has been previously commented on in participants' audio diaries (see page 34). We therefore comment on this within our analysis in addition to our consideration of how Mary interacts and engages with the questioning techniques that are promoted by the course itself.

The setting of this interaction is the large room within which at least one other group is conducting a similar exercise. The room is noisy with the sound of other voices, in addition to the sound of drilling/banging in the distance. Present for the session is Veronica (who is training the trainer), Kurt (the trainee trainer who, in turn, is training the course participants), Mary (who volunteers to be the supervisor), Simon (who volunteers to be supervised) and finally, William and Philippa who are observers.

This particular *quadratic interaction* lasts 1 hour, 3 minutes and 24 seconds, during which time the sub-units of analysis include:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Introduction | - 8 mins 23 secs |
| 2. Practice supervision 1 | - 4 mins 9 secs |
| 3. Time-out 1 | - 7 mins 10 secs |

4. Practice supervision 2	- 2 mins 29 secs
5. Time-out 2	- 7 mins 3 secs
6. Practice supervision 3	- 3 mins 25 secs
7. Time-out 3	- 1 min 38 secs
8. Practice supervision 4	- 4 mins 3 secs
9. Time-out 4	- 8 mins 53 secs
10. Practice supervision 5	- 4 mins 31 secs
11. Feedback	- 13 mins 40 secs

As we can see, this session was considerably longer than the sessions we report on for David. The entire exercise itself was timetabled for around 80 minutes and in that time it was anticipated that there would be two or three supervisions. As it turned out only one practice supervision was conducted. This was partly due to the additional time taken away from the trainer-course participants' interactions by the training of the trainer interactions. The majority of the training the trainer time took place during time-out, hence the longer than usual time-out periods. However, it was also partly due to the difficulty Mary was having in engaging with the questioning techniques she was learning on the course. It is fair to say that Mary struggled to get to grips with the techniques during this session. The following sections are reported chronologically as we follow Mary and her colleagues through this particular session, variously commenting on the different layers of interaction between course participants, trainee trainer and 'super' trainer.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction comprises a brief discussion about the questioning techniques, a brief exchange between Kurt and Veronica and a more lengthy discussion whereby the course participants offered up their dilemmas to the group to take forward to the practice supervision. One additional event occurs early on in the introduction when a member of the group practising in the same room approaches Veronica and says in a loud whisper "*we just had a request to be quieter # it's too noisy*".

In the following excerpt, we see an interesting example of how the interaction between trainers themselves (as role models) might influence course participants as they enact their own teaching/learning relationship within a group setting in which there are course participants present. Thus we witness how Kurt (training the course participants) talks with Veronica (who is training him) about the process of supervision and the nature of the skills involved. Additionally, throughout this excerpt, which constitutes the introduction to a more participatory learning exercise, a didactic teaching approach is adopted (by both Veronica and Kurt in their cascading roles as trainers). On the face of it, this introductory session is also participatory in the sense that it is a discussion rather than the conventional teaching, standing in front of a class, scenario; it is only by examining in detail the interactional, rather than physical, positioning that the lineal nature (assumptions) of this interaction are exposed.

We join the scene early on as Philippa directly requests further guidance about the details of the learning process on which they are about to embark, i.e. should they be focusing on a particular lineal question type to start with (lines 1-2):

EXCERPT 1: THAT'S WHERE WE HAVE TO POSITION OURSELVES

- 1 **Philippa:** *is there any kind of # are we just trying supervision again # or are we*
- 2 *going to start with a lineal question, and move to a # or just be mindful of that idea*
- 3 **Kurt:** *# uh # to be mindful about [what]*
- 4 **Philippa:** *[OK]*

5 **Kurt:** kind of questions to ask and to be as much as you can (.) if (.) if the situation
6 is right # in the circular corner or in the reflexive corner #
7 **Philippa:** -OK-
8 **Kurt:** -so (.) depending on the task
9 **Simon:** OK
10 **Kurt:** what do you think Veronica- so (.) I I at this point I'd (.) I'd like to go
11 back to ground rules to say # simple questions (.) questions leading from what
12 has been said before (.) erm (.) creating space (.) and playing with the techniques (.)
13 and using time to (.) to think about (.) how to ask (.) so=
14 **Veronica:** =I agree with you (.) without- without being caught up too::: much about
15 what (.) particular kind of question (.) you're asking # 'cause that could # that could
16 ((giggle)) constrai:::n
17 **Kurt:** [there's a bala=]
18 **Mary:** [((shrill laughter))]
19 **Kurt:** there's a balance between the flow (.) and if you go with the flow then (.) there
20 might be a lot of your personal attitudes (.) statements (.) erm (.) lineal questions (.)
21 or to really interrupt all the time (.) and to say no (.) no (.) no no (.) do it this way
22 and how could you when you take a lot of the natural interaction and flow away so
23 # that's (.) that's where we have to position ourselves (pause) we've got time unti:::l
24 # one o'clock # it could be either allocated for two or for three supervisions (.) what
25 is (.) what is your in having more time [for that]
26 **Veronica:** [why (.) why don't we see] what cases people have got (.) you know (.)
27 before we decide ((unclear)) #
28 **Kurt:** shall we go around and (.) see what kind (.) what kind of cases you have (.)
29 and then we see # how to split that up

Following Philippa's request for further guidance, Kurt responds in a lineal way (lines 3-6) delivering the message that the course advocates the other types of questions, i.e. circular and reflexive. The goals of these questioning types, where the trainee supervisor occupies an accepting and creative position, is to create both exploratory and facilitative frames in which the supervisee is probably positioned as liberated or generative (Tomm 1988). He then elaborates with more detail about how this positioning might be developed practically within the interaction (line 10-13). However, in doing so Kurt shifts from a position of authoritative expert as he enlists the help of his own trainer ("what do you think Veronica", line 10). But before she has a chance to contribute, he continues with his turn at talk by referring to ground rules and advocates the use of lineal questioning before utilising more circular questions which give the opportunity of "creating space". Cutting short his trainer he manages to claw back his position of authority as he struggles between the position of lineal and circular hypothesising; the latter of which promotes a non-hierarchical structure.

Veronica corroborates Kurt's message (line 14) adding that they shouldn't get bogged down with the choice of the 'correct' question type as it's a difficult skill to master (thereby constraining the interaction). It is interesting that Veronica giggles, pauses and displays some degree of tentativity, whilst she is highlighting, for Kurt her trainee, the difficulty of practising the techniques that they, as trainer and trainee trainer, are trying to impart. Here we can see a situation in which those more familiar and experienced with the complex ethos, openly debate the issue. This poses an interesting question: does this extra layer within the training, serve to elucidate or just add to the uncertainty and confusion of the less familiar, newcomers (the 'lower order' participant trainee supervisors) to the complex (if not alien) ideas and ethos?

Kurt then explains the constant balancing act between adopting a lineal approach or

a circular approach and how the participant trainees as well as he and Veronica as trainers have to learn/aim to position themselves without taking away the naturalness, or conversational aspect, of the interaction (lines 19-23). At this point we see an example of Kurt engaging in strategic hypothesising whereby he adopts a didactic position (c.f. instructor role). As we have noted with Case Study 1, this is not entirely counter to the philosophy of the course, which acknowledges the need to sometimes use this approach. However, the main thrust of the course promotes a far more exploratory and facilitative or holistic/systemic approach. So we can see how Veronica (in her trainer role) cuts into and overlaps the talk of Kurt who, at the end of his turn, lines 23-25, appears to be struggling to move the session forward. Indeed, Veronica seems to indicate her discomfort with taking this reductionist, authoritarian approach towards Kurt as she pauses and hesitates in her response.

If we pause to consider the theory, it would appear that Veronica takes an oppositional stance here, generating a corrective/directive frame which is likely to result in a constraining effect on Kurt. However, the effect is far from constraining as Kurt accepts the challenge by picking up and running with Veronica's suggestion. This might be due to the fact that he was, indeed, struggling to get the practice session started and this interjection enabled him to direct the action in a more purposeful manner. Alternatively he may have adopted a strong identity as being the trainer (rather the trainee in this instance) and this positioning of himself in that role, along with Veronica's tentativeness, enabled him to resist any potential constraining effect.

Following the interaction in Excerpt 1, the group discuss various cases they might use for the session. Simon offers a situation that he is experiencing whereby a registrar booked additional leave by herself during a busy time without consulting others. Prior to the introduction it was established that Mary would be the first person to practise her supervisor skills. As the dilemmas are discussed, Mary chooses Simon's dilemma because she feels that it will be an easier one to work with: "*being the chicken* (.) *I'll go for the simpler one*". The introduction concludes as Kurt prepares the course participants for the supervisory session with the customary positioning of himself in the role of trainer and an explanation of how he will be overseeing the session and the reasons why he might or might not call time-out. It is worth noting that the following excerpt is another example of how the trainers develop the ideas for course participants through the open teaching/learning process that is simultaneously occurring between Veronica and Kurt as they model the process of supervision and the nature of the skills involved:

EXCERPT 2: *THEY DON'T HAVE MUCH RIGHTS*

- 30 **Kurt:** *uhm* (.) *I'm your coach* # *I will interrupt as little as possible* (.) *if there's*
 31 *a flow* (.) *and from time to time I* (.) *will I will do that but mainly to generate*
 32 *some interaction where it* [unclear] *so we don't need to successfully* (.) *single*
 33 *handedly* # *(steal) your concentration for this supervision to a successful end*
 34 **Veronica:** *yes can I check something you* (.) *can* (.) *can Mary decide* (.) *if she*
 35 *would like* (.) *to* (.) *hear* (pause) *from any of the observers* (.) *can she stop*
 36 *# this?*
 37 **Kurt:** *yeah*
 38 **Veronica:** [*'cause I I* (.) *I'm sorry* (.) *I* # *I was* (.) *I was* # (.) *so I was looking*
 39 *towards]*
 40 **Kurt:** [*yeah* (.) *we've agreed* [(unclear))] *yeah*
 41 **Veronica:** *and if you want me to stop* # *if I want to stop you* # *how are you*
 42 *going to do that* (.) *just* # *so apologies for the tie* (.) *of interaction* #
 43 **Kurt:** *coach* (.) *meta coach* (.) *supervisor* # *observers* (.) *they don't have much*

- 44 *rights (.) you know [((unclear))] only when asked for*
 45 **Veronica:** [((much laughter)) *abso::lute::ly* ((laughter))]

This scene begins with Kurt makes a bald statement about his position (line 30) but does this in terms of his adopting the role of coach and appearing to take a didactic approach by purely focusing on his role with respects to the issue of time out (rather than an holistic approach which includes how the participant supervisor-supervisee, or indeed the observers, might also behave should the wish time out). At which point Veronica cuts in and attempts to re-introduces the interactional aspect/approach but she does so in a corrective manner (line 34). She believes that Kurt has omitted to consider if and how the participant supervisor may interrupt/interact with Kurt and their audience. This interaction is problematic on three counts.

Firstly, there is no agreed definition of what actually is a coach and the course promotes an understanding of how positions evolve during and through interaction rather than being a prescribed identity, i.e. existing in predetermined roles which bring expectations of behaviours accompany such a role.

Secondly, Veronica's talk directs by locating the solution as she openly trains Kurt by specifying the way forward for him. As she does so she exemplifies how a directive may also be posed as a question: "*can Mary deci::de...*". This directive is realised through paralinguistic aspects of her talk - vocal stress - and her rephrasing of the question to "*can she stop..*" (lines 34-36), each pointing to the option which Mary would prefer to support. A more exploratory approach to this could employ a more circular questioning approach, e.g. "From where else could Mary get feedback, help as she occupies role of supervisor.....?". While Veronica's approach at this point is more instructive/ didactic than exploratory, this does not necessarily go against the course ethos as circular and reflexive questions are not always deemed to be necessary (as previously highlighted by Kurt in Excerpt 1). However, it is possible that Veronica's employment of this more directive approach, full of hesitation, may denote the degree of caution/ discomfort that she experiences as she enters the 'Lineal' quadrant. It is therefore possible that this is a situation whereby the trainers themselves struggle with the concepts advocated by the course (Suoninen & Wahlström, 2009).

Finally, the interaction is problematic as Kurt appears to have already negotiated with Mary regarding her requirements for time-out which Veronica appears to have missed. This results in some overtalk between Kurt and Veronica as he attempts to correct her misunderstanding (lines 38-40). Both Veronica and Kurt then engage in face-saving with Veronica taking the opportunity to negotiate with Kurt about their own time-out activities (lines 41-41) and Kurt lightening the situation through humour (lines 43-45). Indeed, this face-saving via humour actively demonstrates *care* in the form of nurturing (Saunders, 1998) whilst simultaneously deflecting potentially negative effects of their directive stance. The matter comes to a swift end as Mary drops into her supervisor role and begins to interact with Simon (line 48, Excerpt 3 below).

PRACTICE SUPERVISION 1

The following relatively lengthy excerpt is the opening scene of the practice supervision and demonstrates the practical difficulties that are arising for participants - in this interactional example the participant is Mary - but she was not alone in her struggle to adopt the new style of questioning:

EXCERPT 3: WHAT RULES ARE THERE WITHIN THE PRACTICE

- 46 **Mary:** *How long is # have you known her personally*
 47 **Simon:** *Er (.) she joined the (.) practi::ce erm (.) about six month ago now*

48 **Mary:** *Ri:::ght* (.) (what is it with her that you have to do)
 49 **Simon:** *She's one of the GP registrars there # Erm* (.) *we've got five learners*
 50 *there as well which I'm supervisor for two of them*
 51 **Mary:** *I see # what is your relationship (having to work) together?*
 52 **Simon:** *Well she's the newest of the two registrars that I've got* (.) *erm* (.) *it's*
 53 *been good # she erm works well # erm* (.) *there's no particular problems* (.) *erm*
 54 *(.) in my relationship with her*
 55 **Mary:** *what do you # er* (.) *what knowledge have you got* (.) *of he:::r uh* (.)
 56 *feelings of you* (.) *as her supervisor*
 57 **Simon:** ((2.0)) *erm, as far as I'm aware* (.) *erm* (.) *the feedback has been positive* (.)
 58 *erm* (.) *and obviously I've got that and what she's told me and I appreciate it's*
 59 *a difficult situation for her to be in* (.) *erm* (.) *and I've also got feedback from the*
 60 *other trainers* (.) *erm* (.) *because we share a lot in training* (.) *erm* (.) *get a lot of*
 61 *feedback* (.) *erm* (.) *from the registrars as to::: how they feel things are going for*
 62 *them here*
 63 **Mary:** ((3.0)) *and what erm* (.) *feedback* (.) *have you had # from your* (.)
 64 *colleagues about her behaviour*
 65 **Simon:** *Yeah* (.) *well from the other doctors* (.) *erm* (.) *it's been* (.) *very positive*
 66 *(.) erm* (.) *from some of the staff there's been some slightly negative feedback* (.)
 67 *she::: tends to* (.) *erm* (.) *treat them perhaps with less respect than they feel is*
 68 *appropriate*
 69 **Mary:** ((10.00)) *what* (.) *erm* (.) *what rules are there within the practice*
 70 *about [listing ((unclear))]*
 71 **Simon:** *Because there are so many of us ((lots of talk about rules))*
 72 **Mary:** *and what are the rules* (.) *regarding the::: (.) crunch points of high*
 73 *targets and ((unclear))*
 74 **Simon:** *well that's what I'm saying* (.) *at tha:::t time [erm]*
 75 **Mary:** *[so is] it just first past the post*
 76 **Simon:** *E:::r* (.) *it's first past the post* (.) *bu:::t erm...* ((more talk elaborating
 77 *rules))*

At the beginning of this excerpt Mary embarks on a fact finding mission seeking out the facts that she is personally disposed to investigate. With her questioning she is building a picture of a context which she is defining and focusing in particular on Simon's personal relationship with the registrar (lines 46, 48, 51 and 55) rather than approaching the problem with a more open and curious approach to explore the broader context of the situation. Thus the responses by Simon are frequently conservative and narrowly defined by the questions posed.¹⁷ From our other data, we are aware that Simon is a more experienced participant and one who is very aware of the desirability for curiosity. Indeed, we note that in this excerpt, Mary struggles with the issue of phrasing her questions as evidenced through her continual pauses, nonfluences ("uh") and meaningless 'fillers' ("Ri:::ght" "I see"). Indeed, the only circular "space opener" question she manages to construct (lines 63-64) is eventually fed to Mary by Simon (lines 57-62) as he struggles to answer yet another lineal question.

However, as a result of asking this more open and exploratory question, Mary receives a response from Simon which takes her away from her original line of questioning (lines 65-68). She then finds herself unable to continue in this fluid frame which has led into her own *stuck situation*. This is indicated when the interaction is suspended for 10 seconds as Mary struggles to take the discussion forward. Finally, she is defeated, and returns to her own

¹⁷ Interestingly, later on during the feedback session Simon confessed to Mary "And the thing wa- # the thing was at the beginning (.) I wanted to tell you # mo:::re but wasn't able to"

lineal fact-finding path as she enquires about the rules that are in place at the practice that govern the holiday-taking behaviour of its members (lines 69-70 and 72-73) restricting Simon once again to very specific and conservative responses which he stumbles over as he does so (lines 71 and 74).

In this case the supervisee seems more in tune with the course ethos than the supervisor but is defeated in his attempts to promote this since he does not have the collaboration of his supervisor. Interestingly, Simon, in his audio diary, comments on his difficulties of this kind of interactional co-construction of a solution to a dilemma unless both parties are committed to this way of working. In his diaries he reports examples of both a patient and a co-holiday maker, both of whom were uncollaborative.

Finally, Simon signals the unsuccessful nature of this supervision with Mary from his perspective as supervisee and in relation to the ethos of this course, when he later comments on how he would have preferred to explore other ways of handling his problem since he had already considered the line of enquiry being pursued by his supervisor here.

TIME-OUT 1

Time-out 1 was called by Mary. While she didn't actually label it as a time-out, Mary paused for 7 seconds following Simon's compliant responses including elaborate talk about rules (Excerpt 3, lines 76-77) to reflect aloud on her intentions during that interaction. We report this part of the time-out now as Mary's reflective narrative demonstrates Mary's lack of understanding of the questioning technique she is trying to grapple with:

EXCERPT 4: SO MUCH TIME ASKING LINEAR QUESTIONS

- 78 **Mary:** Right (.) well I've (.) tried to establish what erm # I've asked a lot of linear
79 questions to try and establish (.) the ru::les around the practice (.) because I wasn't quite
80 sure about (.) from the initial description (.) whether the issue wa:::s (.) the first registrar
81 (.) had actua::lly (.) contravened the ru::les (.) in a round about fashion (.) or whether it
82 was just the fact because she was # maybe super organised (.) erm (.) maybe she was
83 just ta- getting (.) of her share of the (.) holidays # than the other members of the practice
84 (.) but haven't actually contravened any regulations=
85 **Simon:** =hmm=
86 **Mary:** =I wasn't quite sure in my own mind whether this was a sort of problem about
87 how the rules were written (.) the unwritten rules # or whether it was (.) problems with
88 her (.) actually erm (.) behaving inappropriately (.) professionally #
89 **Simon:** hmm=
90 **Mary:** =within (.) so I wasn't sure # quite what the nature (of the problem) was (.)
91 and I was trying to explore around that (.) and I think (.) I THINK from what Simon
92 although I'm not entirely su:::re # from our last answer (.) was that she hasn't actually
93 # broken any (.) of the (.) written rules (.) but there was a sense (.) because she hadn't
94 (.) booked (.) time in advance (.) but I'm not quite entirely sure about the most
95 ((unclear)) this (.) this additional week (.) there was sort of a contravention of rules
96 whether she (.) whether it was the sort of (.) "because I'm getting married="=
97 **Simon:** =hmm=
98 **Mary:** =I think that maybe that was sort of (.) being used as an emotional=
99 **Simon:** =hmm=
100 **Mary:** =thing to actually swing additional leave (.) or not (.) so::
101 **Simon:** hmm=
102 **Mary:** =I haven't quite established that (.) (but at the moment) was where I'd like to go
103 next I then was wondering (.) I also wanted to explore about the EFFECT# that this

104 *leave taken (.) was having (.) on (.) the other members of the practice (.) whether (.)*
 105 *that was (.) causing problems (.) in terms of (.) perception of fairness (.) what they would*
 106 *say was fair (.) what was actually happening in the practice=*
 107 **Simon:** =hmm=
 108 **Mary:** =whether the rules were adequate to address that for fairness
 109 **Simon:** =hmm=
 110 **Mary:** =and maybe (.) sort of moving on (pause) to::: (.) how (.) that was affe::cting
 111 [# ((tries to recall Simon's name))]
 112 **Simon:** Simon
 113 **Mary:** Simon personally (.) whether that was impacting on [his]
 114 **Simon:** [hmm]
 115 **Mary:** view at the moment and whether that was an element impacting on his
 116 judgement (.) and with Simon sort of being the judge but also being involved=
 117 **Simon:** =hmm=
 118 **Mary:** =in the decision-making [process]
 119 **Simon:** [hmm] #
 120 **Kurt:** what were (.) your observation (.) about the process of erm #
 121 **William:** This is very good (.) actually # the questions (.) were going OK (.) and
 122 the::: (.) answers are (pause) I don't know (.) about one thing (.) I don't know whether
 123 actually Mary # though she spending so much time asking linear questions and (.)
 124 fewer of the circular questions (.) it's whether (.) I'm not sure whether she's
 125 rea:::lly understood the (.) situation and the problem (.) at the end of those
 126 questioning

Mary commands the floor with her long (almost 13 minute) summary. She reviews her agenda and confirms that she has been operating under lineal assumptions following very much her own ideas about what the cause and solution to Simon's dilemma/problem might be. So we can see (lines 86-96) where Mary, in her narrative account, evidences what she is struggling with in this supervision process (c.f. the complicating action, Labov & Waletzky, 1967). However, in her subsequent assessment (c.f. evaluation, Labov & Waletzky, 1967, lines 90-100) demonstrates her lineal hypothesising and how she is out of sync with the course ethos: Mary seems totally unaware of the fact that she is not employing the exploratory skills that they are trying to promote.

Mary's narrative is full of hesitation and hedging, which corresponds with her early stated uncertainty about her findings (lines 86-88). However, there is nothing in the content of Mary's story to indicate that she questions or doubts her chosen particularly investigative, orienting approach. She acknowledges, confidently, that she has adopted lineal questions to reach a very particular goal (lines 78-79) however her approach is full of lineal pre-suppositions/assumptions about one individual: the registrar, who she places at the heart of the problem. Mary uses no circular assumptions or explorations of her own (so no curiosity or contextualisation) beyond that one individual. The only instance, so far, where she takes the latter approach is where she picks-up from Simon's response (in the earlier Excerpt 3 line 63).

Mary's final evaluation within her narrative (lines 102-118) indicates how she had wanted to explore the effect on others in the practice suggests that she may, potentially, take a more exploratory circular approach with her subsequent questioning. However, as she expounds her notion of exploring she reverts again to lineal hypothesising and investigative questions. This mismatch shows a lack of understanding by Mary.

We also note that throughout this second part of Mary's narrative of her own performance to date, Simon interjects frequently with minimal responses. These appear to be

received by her as encouragement/endorsement of what she is saying or as positive feedback for she never fully checks with him whether she is on the right track and whether her line of thinking resonates with him at all. It seems that Mary is not aware of any uncertainty about the 'facts' she believes she is uncovering or, correspondingly, of her approach.

Later in the transcript it becomes evident that Simon does not endorse Mary's approach and so his interjections here may potentially be an attempt at challenging Mary's version of what she has achieved here: as Mary takes in-breaths Simon latches onto her talk, not with an affirmative 'yeah' but with an increasingly agitated 'hmm', indicated by intonation and pitch, almost as if trying to get a word in edgeways. These interruptions seem to be more frequent towards the end of her long 13 minute narrative. This is yet again an example which suggests Mary is adopting an authoritative rather than negotiated, exploratory, facilitative approach at this point.

Though interactively Mary has done a good job to support the accuracy of her 'factual' findings, Kurt opens up the floor, dominated till now by Mary, to the observers, giving them the opportunity to reflect further on Mary's performance, thus allowing another interpretation of what has been going on. One of the observers, William, queries what progress had actually been made (lines 121-126, Excerpt 4 above) and a little later, her trainer, Kurt wonders whether Mary's approach of "mining" facts had been necessary.

TIME-OUT 1

This next excerpt is another example whereby the trainers vocally share their ideas and visibly perform skills with each other and in front of their trainees who are able to listen, watch and learn. After Philippa's observation (not reported here), there is a significant pause. Kurt appears to have some trouble in taking this conversation forward but then Veronica, as Kurt's trainer, intervenes to ask a question (line 128, Excerpt 5 below). Through this request she interactionally positions herself as accepting and in line with Kurt's established circular hypothesising and exploratory frame. Kurt eagerly accepts her observations as reflected in his overlapping and latching talk and repetition of affirmative response (lines 129; 133; 136; 144;146 and150):

EXCERPT 5: I FEEL SHE'S HUNTING IT AT THE MOMENT

- 128 **Veronica:** *can I ask you something # [as well]*
 129 **Kurt:** *[Yeah yeah]*
 130 **Veronica:** *Erm (.) okay there's like well two questions I'd like to know er (.)*
 131 *one is (.) that (.) I haven't (.) yet (.) heard what (.) Simon (.) wants (.) from*
 132 *this supervision=*
 133 **Kurt:** *=yes #*
 134 **Veronica:** *my other observation (.) is (.) that I think Mary is working too hard*
 135 *(.) and asked too many (.) [very]*
 136 **Kurt:** *[yeah]*
 137 **Veronica:** *spe]cific (.) questions*
 138 **Kurt:** *you can # I can see (every synapse in her brain firing) and working so*
 139 *that she gets a precise question=*
 140 **Veronica:** *=so maybe (.) she:: # she can have (.) once she's established what she*
 141 *wants to talk about::t (.) or what she wants to help with # perhaps she could*
 142 *just use (pause) a more general question for example (.) what do I need to*
 143 *kno:::w=*
 144 **Kurt:** *=yeah=*

145 **Veronica:** =in or= # in order to understand more (.) [than (.)]
146 **Kurt:** [yeah]
147 **Veronica:** then (.) [then]
148 **Kurt:** [then] that will fit with what Simon says (.) she's not entirely there (.)
149 **Veronica:** [and Mary doesn't want to do all the work]
150 **Kurt:** [I feel she's hunting it at the moment] (.) but he might just volunteer::r
151 (.) to give her [that]
152 **Veronica:** [yes]
153 **Kurt:** information=
154 **Veronica:** =hunting it (.) yes (.) yes I like that word #
155 **Kurt:** I noticed some (pause) erm cues as well (pause) when (.) erm # it was
156 about (.) respect erm (.) about the effect on others and he said erm (.) she treats
157 some staff with less respect than appropriate and then I think he had a little
158 bit of a (.) sss- (.) a smile # [and I wondered]
159 **Veronica:** [so you're cur-] (.) curious about that=
160 **Kurt:** =I'm really curious about that emotional context (.) and I know (.) or
161 I make (.) I presu::me that she was curious as well (.) because when (.) she
162 mentioned emotions earlier on (.) but how the emotions and the rota and (.)
163 her relation # what exactly the plot is you really (.) you don't know.
164 **Veronica:** so uh wh- (.) wh- (.) what advice are you (.) going to give Mary
165 now (.) about how to get back into this
166 **Kurt:** I # I would like to # to invite her (.) to lean a little bit back (.) and to
167 (.) to let Simon tell her (.) what he wants from her (.) what his goals for this (.)
168 is (.) and to volunteer what kind of information she needs or even she could
169 even ask him what kind of questions would be good (.) (stepping in the middle)
170 levels (.) so that she's not stuck with doing all the hunting work
171 **Veronica:** ((Veronica laughs)) # so give us your binoculars
172 **Mary:** ((Mary laughs))
173 **Veronica:** move down ((unclear))

The way Veronica progresses the conversation is complex. Although in terms of turn taking she sees to comply with Kurt and circular assumptions in terms of taking her turn as an invitee to talk, and contributes to the exploratory questions Kurt had instigated earlier. On the other hand, the content of her talk is full of lineal assumptions which manifest themselves at two levels.

Veronica intervenes (beginning at line 130) with two very strategic/directive statements. This places her in an oppositional position. Her discomfort (once again) about occupying this stance rather than the favoured reflexive/creative one is suggested via the hedges "erm"; "there's like"; "I think" in her talk. The frame for her supervision of Kurt is established here as corrective rather than facilitative. So shifting from a position of competition (e.g. where Kurt's talk is overlapping with Veronica and where he is keen to show his perspective on the situation) Kurt has no space to be generative of his own accord and appears rather constrained by Veronica. As supervisee, Kurt yields to Veronica's further instruction.

Veronica says she has questions to ask. However, she proceeds to make statements which appear more assertive and potentially more challenging/confrontational than lineal/strategic questions. Veronica's statements are judgemental, if not oppositional, and shift the frame to one which is oppositional/corrective. She interacts directly with Kurt who is her own trainee-trainer to effect this change but the change is indirect for, Mary, who is Kurt's trainee supervisor is not invited into to this two way conversation about her.

Veronica seems to be challenging Kurt for not having initially elucidated Mary's lack of agenda setting (lines 131-32) which is a core skill of the course technique. This is accomplished through a statement, although it could equally be undertaken through a question format: "How do you think Simon may have been involved in setting the agenda for this supervision process?" Secondly, lines 134-35, Veronica comments baldly on Mary's adherence to a lineal/strategic approach. Kurt's eagerness to take up Veronica's assessment of Mary is indicated by the overlapping "yeah" at line 136. Kurt seems excited by the overt judgment of Mary. This might be due to his personal hesitation in making such a forward claim, despite William's earlier analysis, and hence the long pause following William and Philippa's observations (as mentioned earlier, not reproduced here). It might be that Kurt has been struggling with his attempt to role model the course ethos (of non-judgemental exploration rather than direct attribution and instruction) with Mary, although he is well aware that Mary is adopting a lineal approach to her questioning. However, Veronica's statement seems to give Kurt permission to develop a judgemental stance further in a very exuberant (through his use of prosodics and overtalk: lines 146-152) and florid manner (through his use of the metaphor SUPERVISOR AS HUNTER: line 150) almost as if he is relieved that he can now take this forward and provide direct instruction for Mary. Thus, as a result of Veronica's strategic questioning with her trainee, Kurt no longer occupies a generative position. Rather he employs language in a very creative way to establish his corrective stance in relation to his trainee supervisee.

Furthermore, it seems that Kurt, from a position of shared knowledge, had managed interactively to effectively overcome the oppositional stance of Veronica and any major constraining effect on him. Ultimately, he gains the approval of Veronica, who "likes" his figurative language which serves as a vehicle to transmit the ideas of the course. Whilst Kurt is not constrained by his trainer Veronica and has reclaimed his voice, this is the second time that the behaviour of the trainers somewhat contradicts the model that they are espousing - although the content of their talk is consistent with how the interactions should proceed to follow the ethos of the course, the way they do this is not. It is uncertain how this helps the trainees (in this instance Mary's) follow on performance.

However, one final thing to note from this excerpt is the skilful way in which Veronica manages to overtly link theory and practice. Kurt begins to talk about some cues he noticed during the supervision so far, and "wondered" about Simon's smile at a certain point in his description of registrar's behaviour (line 158). Identifying his observations as being fully in line with the course ethos, Veronica swiftly and expertly shifts his 'wonderment' to align with the language of the 7Cs: "[so you're cur-] (.) curious about that-" (line 159). Kurt instantly picks up on this opportunity that Veronica has created and proceeds to rephrase this wonderment as curiosity - not just for him, but also for Mary (lines 160-161).

Following the exchange between Veronica and Kurt in Excerpt 5, Mary takes the cue from Veronica and Kurt's conversation and following a brief defensive comment about her own strategy so far launches back into her supervision of Simon by asking him what he wanted to talk about:

EXCERPT 6: THIS JUST ISN'T WORKING

- 174 *Mary: right (.) what would you like (.) the perception to the problem to you (.)*
 175 *what position would you like to [(be at (.) at the moment)]*
 176 *Simon: [OK #] what I'm looking for.... ((talks eagerly for a few minutes)) ...*
 177 *and how do I deal with the deputy practice (.) manager's (.) inability to say (.)*
 178 *no (.) to (.) any of the doctors # so those are the (.) three dilemmas that are now*
 179 *(the features of the problem)*

180 **Mary:** so (.) perhaps if we sort of isolated (the set of) those three problems
 181 with staff (.) which of those three problems would (.) do you view as the most
 182 pressing
 183 **Simon:** no::w (.) the (.) most pre::ssing (.) is (.) probably ((names)) the deputy
 184 manager's inability to say no to the ((unclear))
 185 **Mary:** so would it be helpful if we spent # say (.) another ten minutes or so (.)
 186 talking about # that ((5.0)) erm (.) could you (.) tell us (.) about how you're deputy
 187 manager has been (coping with this)
 188 **Veronica:** can I stop (.) please=
 189 **Mary:** =right
 190 **Veronica:** can I stop # uh # this is # think (.) this just isn't working #
 191 this is th- sa- # it's exactly (.) the sa- (.) we're going [back into the same
 192 question]
 193 **Kurt:** [(it's the same so)]
 194 **Veronica:** so far so good (.) but we just have the same questions # [so I (.)think
 195 we can (move forward) (.)]
 196 **Kurt:** [((unclear))]
 197 **Veronica:** so a::ll she needs to sa::y (.) is a (.) much more broa[:::d] question
 198 **Kurt:** [yeah]
 199 **Veronica:** of what do I need to know=
 200 **Kurt:** =yeah=
 201 **Veronica:** =rather than having to #
 202 **Kurt:** she's (.) again (.) putting the lens (.) extre::mely (.) extremely narrow
 203 (.) to see the nitty gritty #
 204 **Veronica:** so perhaps you could have a conversation with Mary to help her to
 205 formulate # the question that she could then go back to with # with (.)with
 206 # is it okay (.) is this helpful (.) to stop you like that

Mary's circular question (line 174) now opens floodgates for Simon demonstrates an eagerness to converse, with his overlapping talk and lengthy narrative (lines 176-179). During this narrative, Simon is given the space to explore his problem further and identified three distinct issues relating to his dilemma - with the issue of the deputy manager's inability to say 'no' being the most pressing (lines 183-184). At this point the conversation is firmly back in the hands of Mary, who once again struggles to formulate a follow-up circular question and reverts back to her lineal route, again narrowing down to the specific individual rather than open up to potential contextual influences (lines 185-187).

Indeed, if we consider this small extract of talk, we can see how Mary is beginning to work with the questioning technique she is learning as she managed to lead Simon to the point at which he could focus on a specific pressing issue. Recognising that the next few minutes should be considering this issue, she pauses to frame her question (5 seconds, line 186) and demonstrates further evidence of her struggle to appropriate circularity within her questioning as she pauses, hesitates and almost mumbles the final words of the question.

Veronica steps in and takes on the role of trainer for Kurt and simultaneously trainer for the course participants. This is the first time in this session that Veronica has stepped in so abruptly by actually stopping the conversation between Mary and Simon following Mary's lineal question (line 188).

The remaining interaction between Kurt and Veronica (lines 190-206) has a number of important features that we will explore. Firstly, Veronica manages to elegantly move from a position of authority (which she has taken from Kurt by virtue of stopping the progress of the supervision) through her strategic use of personal pronouns within which she frames

her talk. So, she begins by asserting authority through the personal pronoun *I* – “*can I stop*” – which she repeats two times (lines 188-190). Following this, she uses the inclusive *we* to bring herself (and Kurt) into the frame as she highlights the fact that Mary is still using lineal questioning: “*we’re going [back into the same question]*” (lines 191-192), “*we just have the same questions (pause) [so I (.) think we can ((move forward))]*” (lines 194-195). Finally, having established herself as the authority, she hands over her power to Kurt “*so perhaps you could have a conversation with Mary*” (line 204).

However, simultaneously as Kurt is being corrected by Veronica, he is very eager to retain his position as authority as trainer, which is signalled by repeated overlapping talk as he eagerly tries to overtly align himself with the 'true expert', Veronica (lines 194, 197, 199). This is another example of how Kurt, who is committed to the same beliefs and knowledge as Veronica, resists the negative impact that Veronica’s strategic and reductionist approach may otherwise bring. Indeed, we wonder if in this particular situation – one of shared beliefs and knowledge – when a more lineal intervention may safely be employed.

Once again we see evidence that Kurt has a conceptual understanding of the ideas and skills that he is attempting to develop in others, but he seems to be struggling with putting this into practice; specifically in supporting his trainee supervisor Mary in her practice/performance of those skills.

Finally, we note that the content of Veronica and Kurt’s talk imparts the course techniques. However, the content of their talk runs counter to the actual performance of the skills which appear to follow linear and strategic hypothesising. This incongruence between performance and content was a regular feature of this particular session during overt ‘training the trainer’ episodes (which appear to fall within the normal time-out activities). However, this is the first time we have seen such incongruence cutting into, and halting the flow (so, instigating a time-out).

MARY: TIME 2

Here we analyse the last of Mary's three practice supervisions which takes place on the third and final course day. The data here involves a quadratic paired supervision which occurs in a small group break out session, which includes four people: trainer, Veronica; supervisor, Mary; supervisee David; and observer, Gwen. In this case the data used for transcription is a video-recording so extra paralinguistic detail is available (kinesis which includes the bodily position, posture, movement, gaze, gesture, and expression) to further enrich our fine-grained analysis.

This particular quadratic interaction lasts 23.04 minutes, during which time the sub-units of analysis include:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Introduction | - 0mins 15secs |
| 2. Practice supervision 1 | - 7mins 15secs |
| 3. Time-out 1 | - 4mins 15secs |
| 4. Practice supervision 2 | - 4mins 32secs |
| 5. Feedback | - 6mins 47secs |

This is another practice supervision which had been scheduled for a 10 minute slot (c.f. Case Study 1 - Time 2 on page 92) but, here, Mary's quadratic paired supervision, like David's, also over-ran. In this case the extra time used was far less, the quadratic paired supervision taking nearly 13 minutes (excluding feedback time). Again here we consider the entire quadratic interaction so our analysis comprises the main five sub-units of analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction to this quadratic paired supervision, which follows on from David's more lengthy previous one (c.f. Case Study 1 - Time 2), is extremely brief and the trainer and trainee supervisor very quickly, in five lines and 15 seconds, negotiate terms of engagement for the subsequent interaction (Excerpt 1 see below).

EXCERPT 1: IF I GO WRONG DO INTERRUPT

- 1 **Veronica:** *again*
- 2 **Mary:** *mmh hmm*
- 3 **Veronica:** *Mary (.) wha- (.) wha- # how do you want to run this*
- 4 **Mary:** *uh (.) five minutes [0:00:07] (in one # tap) and (.) do:: interrupt*
- 5 *if I go wrong # do interrupt*
- 6 **Veronica:** *yeah (.) absolutely # ((Veronica and Mary smile and nod at*
- 7 *each other)) OK*

It seems that, by this stage on day three during quadratic paired supervision, the course 'rules' for interaction between trainer and trainee supervisor have been fully accommodated by Mary. In this instance, there seems to be no need for the trainer, Veronica, to explicate the training technique to her.

PRACTICE SUPERVISION 1

In the following Excerpt, we see how the participant supervisor uses curiosity and contextualisation as she explores the dilemma brought to her by David. Mary, as trainee supervisor, visibly through her bodily movement and inhalation (lines 8-9) suggests that the imminent practice supervision is going to involve some effort on her part:

EXCERPT 2: WHAT PROBLEM DO YOU WANT TO BRING

- 8 **Mary:** *((Mary turns to David (.) she takes an in-breath purposefully lifting*
- 9 *and dropping her torso as she does this)) .hhh hello David*
- 10 **David:** *hi*
- 11 **Mary:** *what problem do you want to bring (.) to this ten minutes*
- 12 **David:** *uh::m # I'd like to build on my last supervision*
- 13 **Mary:** *mmh hmm*
- 14 **David:** *I think (.) you sort of (.) hea::rd # where I erroneously thought my*
- 15 *biggest problem (.) was managing to sort out a (.) na::me for my (.) [uh::m (.)]*
- 16 **Mary:** *[mmh hmm] ((nods head in encouragement))*
- 17 **David:** *((much hand gesturing throughout)) new service # whereas I now*
- 18 *actually think (.) I need to work ou::t (.) well I mean it's part of it (.) it's not*
- 19 *necessarily the part I want to focus on now*
- 20 **Mary:** *mmh hmm*
- 21 **David:** *I want to think about how I can manage (.) to se::ll this (.) erm (.) to*
- 22 *your average (.) erm (.) group of paediatric consultants and your average*
- 23 *PGH and paediatric department uh::m # so that (.) that's where I'm starting*
- 24 *from ((Gwen as observer looks at her foot and seems completely*
- 25 *disenchanted/uninterested with the interaction between Mary and David*
- 26 *- ?topic; ?process))*
- 27 **Mary:** *that (.) sounds like a # manageable problem # bu::t # knowing there's*
- 28 *only (.) ten minutes=*
- 29 **David:** *=-yeah=*
- 30 **Mary:** *=uh::m # time for us (.) to have this conversation (.) .hhh would you mind*

31 (.) erm (.) if in # the flow of it (.) that I sometimes interrupt you # in order to:: #
 32 perhaps focus # and (.) and (.) [uh:::-]
 33 **David:** [that's fine] ((nodding profusely))
 34 **Mary:** -to get to the end(.) within the # timeframe that we've been # given # so
 35 could you tell me # a little bit more (.) about # what I need to know # about you
 36 se::lling the service

Following her space opener (line 11) Mary gives her supervisee, David, plenty of space to describe his dilemma (lines 12-24). As David struggles to pin point exactly what his problem is, Mary only punctuates David's talk to encourage his exploratory contribution with her minimal responses (lines 13; 16 and 20) she, additionally, reinforces her support with vigorous head nodding. It is notable how, in this her third supervision, by comparison to before (c.f. Time 1; Excerpts 3 on page 106, and 4 on page 108) Mary, as supervisor, is very much less assertive and much more cautious/tentative; she uses many long pauses and lots of mitigation in her language, e.g. "that (.) sounds like"; "could you tell me # a little bit more". Unlike in her previous practice supervision, here, Mary begins by occupying a more *accepting* position allows the development of a far more *exploratory* frame and resultantly, according to Tomm's (1988) model, David occupies a probable liberated position. It is uncertain at this stage why the observer Gwen appears so disengaged with the process (lines 24-26); especially since this is a good example of a technique about which she has voiced much enthusiasm and commitment. However, we suspect that this might be a follow-on effect from the supervision between David and Gwen, following which she reported unresolved feelings of anxiety (see her comments on page 101).

After negotiating with David the course 'rules' in terms of interruption (Excerpt 2 – lines 27-33) Mary extends her holistic/systemic approach; she shifts into a reflexive position (Excerpt 1 – lines 34-36) by referring back to the problem as defined by David himself (Excerpt 2 – lines 27-23).

EXCERPT 3: MAIN CUSTOMERS

37 **Mary:** so who would be # your main customers (.) in that sort of [(.) sce-]
 38 **David:** [so I-]
 39 **Mary:** -nario
 40 **David:** -mean our main customers (.) I suppose there are (.) are two groups #
 41 one group that I think would (.) like us # and one group (.) that we will want
 42 to try and get to # so one is your paediatric department which is already (.)
 43 doing a good job (.) with training and writes it up as one of their priorities #
 44 and there'd be some of them would be keen to do anything to nudge little
 45 bit # sort of (.) make themselves a little bit better (.) you know (.) they cou::ld
 46 do e::ven better
 47 **Mary:** mmh hmm
 48 **David:** and I suspect that some them would want our services and it won't
 49 be too hard to be seen (as attractive) # the other group that we're particularly
 50 keen to aim at # are the hospitals (.) that we know where training has slipped
 51 slightly do::wn (.) in the list of priorities # and they're not providing particularly
 52 good training # and I think there's going to be so- # there's a chance that
 53 they're going to be slightly defensive potentially # and not be particularly
 54 keen to involve us # and so it's that # that particular cohort that I (.) uh::m(.)
 55 u:h that I'm keen to try to # sort of get this service out to # and get this
 56 team involved with
 57 **Mary:** mmmh hmmm # wha- (.) what are your ideas about # uh::m(.) having
 58 then to ta::ckle # the different group

We can see in the excerpt above how Mary is careful to locate the problem outside the supervisee by exploring *context* and expressing her *curiosity* about the hypothetical future (lines 37-39). However, at the end of the conversation we see that when she makes connections between groups of interactants, rather than focus on their different perspectives and different potential interactions she shifts back to focusing on David as intrinsic to the problem (lines 57-58).

Following the exchange in Excerpt 2 there follows some talk about the difficulty of image management of the educational service, which David and his colleagues are delivering and David mentions general ideas about how to minimise any threat that they might pose to some of their 'customers'. When Mary checks back with David, as to whether this conversation is proving helpful to him or not, he acknowledges that, so far, this practice session may be unfair for Mary in that, at the outset, she had not had access to the prior discussion about the same dilemma. Eventually, Mary says "right # so you've used several different terms there # one of which was # *wha-(.) how we can make ourselves useful and prac[tical]*". Although, here, Mary is picking up on David's previous talk, she is unable to sustain her holistic/systemic approach and very quickly, as a practising supervisor, she finds herself in a *stuck-situation* and she requests time-out.

TIME-OUT 1

At the beginning of her time-out Mary flags up to her trainer, Veronica, her concerns about her practice supervision performance to date (Excerpt 4 lines 59-68):

EXCERPT 4: IT'S JUST I'M LOST

- 59 **Mary:** [I want to use] ((Mary has turned to address Veronica but Veronica
60 focuses still on her writing/note-taking and barely glances up at Mary))
61 *my resource # I'm # I'm concerned that perhaps I've been using # more closed*
62 *questions in (.) uh:m (.) this this # uh (.) interview (.) that wouldn't be my*
63 ((Mary flaps her hand next to her cheek and Veronica abruptly turns away
64 from Mary to gaze intently at and lean towards Gwen whom she addresses
65 hastily cutting off Mary's talk)) (.) [my (.) my (.) (chosen course for]
66 **Veronica:** [would it be yours]
67 **Mary:** *this (.) interview ((Gwen shakes her head)) oh (.) thanks goodness for*
68 *that*
69 **Veronica:** ((Veronica immediately then turns back to Mary; vigorously
70 gesticulating in circular motions with her hand, as if to encourage Mary to
71 contribute fully)) *what (.) what (.) just tell us what's going on for you at the*
72 *moment # what are you thinking about*
73 **Mary:** *right # OK (.) I'm # wha::t # is coming across to me is (.) David # trying*
74 *# to (2.0) direct # uh:: he # ((Veronica nods gently here and continues*
75 *throughout Mary's turn at talk here; Mary does a lot of gesticulating*
76 *as she tries to define her problem))*
77 **Mary:** *David has got an agenda of what he wants to achieve # but the people*
78 *in his agenda haven't signed up to it # and yeah so (.) there's this mismatch #*
79 *that really he doesn't (.) you know (.) he knows there's a pool of people who are*
80 *doing it pretty well (.) and bring them up (.) to (.) even better is not going to be a*
81 *huge # challenge for him # but then he's got this problem of engaging (.) but (.)*
82 *he's # th- th- this other pool of perhaps # people no::t # performing well and*
83 *he's trying to do a::t # rather than # involve*
84 **Veronica:** *mmh hmm ((nodding))*
85 **Mary:** *and I'm wondering (.) how to (.) sort of # lead him to reflect on that #*

86 *without it kind of ((unclear talk)) ((Mary laughs))*
 87 **Veronica:** ((slowly nods head as she speaks)) *any other hypothesis # for you #*
 88 **Mary:** *uh::m (4.0) see # that that's the main one # go- rattling around in my #*
 89 *((Veronica looks down as she makes more notes; Mary continues to gesticulate*
 90 *and watch her own hands as these attempt to reflect what she is considering))*
 91 *brai::n # there's also (.) uh::m (3.0) he wanted to sell it # well if this is our key topic*
 92 *# it's selling his service (.) and I'm wondering whether he's more concerned with*
 93 *selling it # upwards rather than # downwards # but realises that # in order for*
 94 *it to be successful (.) he's got to encapsulate (.) down as well ((eventually Mary*
 95 *clasps her hands together to indicate the end of her talk))*
 96 **Veronica:** *shall # shall we (ask Gwen) ((Veronica looks back and forth (.) left*
 97 *and right (.) at Gwen and Mary and points to Gwen as she next speaks))*
 98 *[to look at it]*
 99 **Mary:** *[yes (.) yes do]*
 100 *((Veronica twists around towards Gwen and gives her a big grin; up until*
 101 *this point Gwen has appeared quite disengaged; looking down at her lap))*
 102 **Gwen:** *((now laughing)) (it's just I'm lost) (.) I'm having the same dilemma as*
 103 *Mary really # I don't know (.) uh::m (.) wondering where to go (.) with it*

As Mary voices her concerns about her over-use of closed questioning (lines 59-65), Veronica immediately seeks feedback for Mary from Gwen asking her to offer her perspective on the practice supervision so far (line 66). Gwen merely gestures with her head that she agrees with Mary's negative assessment of her own performance. Veronica accepts the corresponding assessments that Mary and Gwen have made and returns to Mary to explore her thought processes further (69-73). Veronica makes her request in an eager and enthusiastic manner, mitigating her instructional, directive approach. Although the content of this trainer's talk may appear to place her in a judgemental position, Mary does not respond, according to Tomm's (1988) model, in a conservative way but takes up a liberated, if not generative position, which Veronica supports with much nodding and minimal responses (lines 74-75; 84 and 87).

Veronica pursues Mary's reflections (line 87) but makes no comment about the linearity of these or of Mary's associated judgemental positioning (lines 76-83 and 88-95). Here, Mary's ongoing narrative, which reports lineal hypotheses, in combination with her relapse before time out into linearity, demonstrates that she is still struggling with the issue of putting ideas into practice: despite earlier attempts at employing more circular talk and occupying a more accepting position, she frequently lapses into her old ways of supervising and conceptualising the world.

When Mary has finished Veronica again directs the interaction towards Gwen; Veronica's discomfort here is manifest in her hesitation, i.e. pauses and repetition and in her general body language (lines 96-101). There might be a number of reasons for this hesitation. Firstly, Gwen is obviously disengaged in the process of this particular supervision activity. Indeed, the present supervision activity immediately follows on from the previous one within which she discussed her own personal dilemma, and during which she touched on a highly personal issue which she had never fully resolved. Furthermore, not only had this issue not been resolved at the time, when it emerged again during the supervision session she admitted to being left with anxious feelings. We also note that in her audio diary, Gwen commented specifically about her 'raw' feelings and her unease of the way the issue was left during the session (see her entry on page 28). Given it was Veronica who appeared not to pick up on Gwen's anxiety (either purposively due to issues such as time constraints or that she may have just missed the cues) it would be likely that Veronica was now picking up on

Gwen's disengagement during this supervision activity which, in turn, might lead to Veronica's feelings of unease. Alternatively, Veronica's unease might be related to the issue of her leading the interaction away from Mary or, whether she is making a judgement that Mary is faltering, or a combination of these things.

We also note that although Veronica is clearly directing the course of the conversation, she does this in a highly mitigated way; besides paralinguistic softeners, she modifies her suggestion using "shall" and uses the inclusive "we" thereby bringing Mary in with the request she makes of Gwen (line 96). This seems to be in stark contrast to her positioning as judgemental trainer, in earlier training sessions (c.f. Case Study 1 Time 2 on page 92; Case Study 2 Time 1 on page 102), and in-line with the way Annie softens and mitigates her own directive talk (c.f. Case Study 1, Time 1 on page 87).

When Gwen is again reluctant to engage with the conversation, Veronica's shifts her position to one which is far more baldly strategic. She places herself squarely to face Gwen. She seems to sense a reluctance of Gwen to engage, and so uses her body as well as her vocal requests to encourage participation (Excerpt 5 - lines 104-127). We shall see in the following excerpt how Veronica desperately tries to encourage Gwen's participation (she is now fully facing Gwen and she smiles and grins at her as she talks) despite Gwen's attempt to resist to fully engage in the process, as evidenced through her frequent minimal responses (lines 107, 110, 114, 116, 119, 123 and 126) followed by a 4 second pause before she provides a slightly longer affirmative statement (line 128):

EXCERPT 5: HMMM...MMH HMM...HMMMM... MMH HMM

- 104 **Veronica:** ((at this point Veronica turns around completely to face Gwen
 105 and addresses her only)) OK # well (.) what I think we've seen is that Mary
 106 (.) Mary's asked quite a lot of # of # questions (.) she's r-
 107 **Gwen:** hmmm
 108 **Veronica:** she's (flushed/fleshed) out (.) out (.) the context she # needs to #
 109 she's been able to interrupt
 110 **Gwen:** mmh hmm
 111 **Veronica:** a few times # uh::m (.) there are a few things that are interesting
 112 for me (.) that I'm curious about now (.) one is this this (.) it's a very powerful
 113 wo- word about selling
 114 **Gwen:** hmm
 115 **Veronica:** [selling an (.)] idea
 116 **Gwen:** [hmm (.) hmmm]
 117 **Veronica:** so I'm wondering # whose idea # is it # who's behind this # who
 118 who's vested interest is there # i- in it
 119 **Gwen:** mmh hmm
 120 **Veronica:** and (.) you know (.) uh what happens # what happens (.) if people
 121 do (.) want to (.) take up # the idea # how much is (.) uh::m # David's job (.)
 122 dependent on
 123 **Gwen:** hMMMM
 124 **Veronica:** on this # uh # you know # ((Veronica flashes a wide grin at Gwen
 125 who nods dutifully)) things like that (.) who who e::lse # is involved
 126 **Gwen:** mmh hmm (.) mmh hmm
 127 **Veronica:** those (.) are the (.) prime questions really # uhm
 128 **Gwen:** (4 .0) yeah so (.) I # I I I I (.) I would agree (.) uh::m
 129 **Veronica:** mmmh
 130 **Gwen:** I (.) s- suppose # i- it ge # I suppose it (.) yeah (.) I mean i- i- it's just out
 131 of my (.) comfort zone # so it's difficult (.) I kind of (.) then to formulate the

- 132 *questions*
 133 *Mary: I think I've thought of a question [actually]*
 134 *Veronica: fine*
 135 *Veronica: b- bu:::t # what we want to do now*
 136 *Mary: mmmh*
 137 *Veronica: is to go back to (.) David*
 138 *Mary: mmmh*
 139 *Veronica: a- and ask # becau- because he's had a chance (.) [to think now]*
 140 *Mary: [ye:::s]*
 141 *Veronica: so when you*
 142 *Mary: yeah (.) get his views*
 143 *Veronica: you want to ask your question ask him where he is # and then*
 144 *you maybe want to ask your question*

Focusing on Veronica, we see how she offers her reflections (lines 104-127) illustrating her positional difficulties as she occupies both the trainer (lines 104-119) and observer roles (lines 124-125). Veronica suggests that Mary has explored *context* but perhaps not been *curious* enough (line 104-119); here she uses strategic talk and sets up a corrective frame as, from an oppositional position, she locates Mary's practice supervision problem as intrinsic to Mary and her questioning methods (lines 108-113) and then David's embedded problem as intrinsic to him (lines 120-122).

Next Veronica places herself in the position of liberated observer who is able to accept her own assessment (as trainer) and she offers an alternative perspective (lines 117-125). It is possible that Veronica is now modelling for Gwen, what she would expect of her as this observer (given Gwen's reluctance to offer this herself). Indeed, we note Veronica's strategic use of the course 'jargon' – overtly binging in the terminology of *curiosity* and her own wonderment about David's predicament. Furthermore, in her modelling of the observer role, she appears to ignore (or dismiss) Mary's contribution to the discussion as she announces "*I think I've thought of a question [actually]*" (line 133). So, without even exploring the question Mary wishes to offer that might move herself forward with David, Veronica says "*fine bu:::t # what we want to do now... is go back to (.)David*" (lines 134-137). She softens this rejection (and the rejection is that they explore Mary's question further in order to ascertain its appropriateness) through her use on the inclusive "*we*", but exactly who 'we' are is unclear. She then provides Mary with a very specific directive: "*ask him where he is*".

Thus within this excerpt we can see a number of complex and interrelated issues coming to play. Firstly, we notice Gwen's reluctance to engage in the task at hand – the particular practice supervision between Mary and David. We also notice the difficulty that this disengagement causes for the trainer, Veronica. Veronica is now left with the task of offering her support as trainer to Mary as she simultaneously attempts elicit the much-needed engagement of the observer, Gwen (whom she is also training, as an observer, to become curious about the dilemma itself). This additional load makes it even more problematic for Veronica to shake off a directive stance given the time pressure of the training session itself.

PRACTICE SUPERVISION 2

Mary seems to take up the exploratory frame as the practice supervision resumes; she asks David "*right David (.) have you ... have you had your ears flapping for the last # two two minutes or so? How do you feel the conversation's going (.) on?* However, subsequently, as she attempts a hypothetical future question, "*how's that # in an ideal (.) ideally successful (.) in [your] terms # what is that... ..service going to be looking like*", she places David in a conservative position

whereby he is limited to talking, again, about his own singular view of a what a good service entails. Then, following a reminder, by Veronica, that time is nearly up for this practice supervision, Mary continues this line of questioning but shifts to creative position, wherein she asks David to consider others perspectives, i.e. those of the service users (lines 145-149 and 158-161).

EXCERPT 6: AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT

- 145 **Mary:** OK # so you've got your ideal service set up # and you're visiting #
146 these # Trusts
147 **David:** yeah
148 **Mary:** and wh- wh- what are you (.) giving # to those # Trusts in order
149 for them (.) to feel (.) that they've got (.) value
150 **David:** I think we're giving them an opportunity in many ways (.) to reflect
151 on what they do # I don't see our job as coming along (.) and (.) telling them
152 (.) uh::m # I think that would be # that would not work particularly well (.)
153 but it's giving them an opportunity to express their problems as to # why
154 their having a # why a particular area couldn't be delivered # for example
155 it's challenging # and let them think as a group (.) of trainees and trainers
156 as to ways that # there gonna # they can get around that (.) and perhaps
157 facilitating that
158 **Mary:** and what motivating forces t- # might there be # for them to come
159 forward
160 **David:** for a Trust to (.) to
161 **Mary:** for your # for your group to visit
162 **David:** uh::m (.) uh:: (.) w- well one we'd say (.) that it will (.) make their
163 lives easier (.) I think (.) give them a bit more input about (.) how they're
164 training # they'll be able to combine training services better which will
165 suit everyone's purposes # uh::m (.) I think secondly (.) there are going to
166 be changes (.) in the way that # funding (.) uh::m (.) and training is
167 happening in (names place) # I think that's going to be in the next
168 couple of years # and so it will be interesting to see whether # if your
169 # quality of training is # poor or not # whether that will have significant
170 financial implications for the Trust # and so that (.) would be another
171 # potential sort of lever
172 #
173 **Mary:** h::m # so how's the conversation gone for you # with this # this
174 few minutes
175 [0:15:45]
176 **David:** I think it's been quite a useful # almost kind of like a rehearsal
177 before (.) you know with some of the ideas and arguments # one could
178 use # to sort of # try and portray this in the right way
179 **Mary:** mmh hmm # thank you
180 **David:** ((David laughs)) thank you

David suddenly becomes generative in his responses; finally, vocalising potential solutions to his dilemma of how to engage the service users that he is targeting (lines 150-157 and 162-171). This practice supervision seems to end with Mary having achieved a positive result; with the support of her trainer Veronica, whose curiosity developed connections hitherto overlooked, Mary has got David to redefine his problem and even come up with some of his own solutions. Clearly, this has not been done by sticking rigidly to the model that Tomm (1988) has proposed.

Veronica, as trainer, has recognised the complexity of a training activity and shown a level of creativity within the interaction; she demonstrated how the introduction of another perspective, even if lineally presented, can change the course of the conversation. This is an approach that Mary, latterly, mimics to good effect.

FEEDBACK

During the feedback activity Mary reflects on how the technique works instrumentally (lines 175-176 below) and Veronica describes how Mary's skills are changing (lines 180-201) and suggests that Mary had found her way there without direction (lines 203-204). We know, however, that during the time out in this supervision Veronica had directed Mary both towards being more curious and, to some extent, to using of more general questions:

EXCERPT 7: USING A DIFFERENT KIND OF LENS

- 175 **Veronica:** *well done # good # it's good # so that's also a f- # I think a*
176 *change for you # in the way that you might # super- supervision # is*
177 *that*
178 **Mary:** *it's a way out of # it's a a (.) quick way of kind of getting out of # a*
179 *fairly downwards (.) s- uh (.) uh::m # oh (.) what's what's a loop # uh::m*
180 **Veronica:** *but you were just # you were using a different kind of lens # so*
181 *instead of using a # and sort of [pulling]*
182 **Mary:** *[yeah]*
183 **Veronica:** *back to the question # a much bigger lens # so it was realising*
184 *that you needed to do that*
185 **Mary:** *yes::: ((nodding exaggerated by whole body swaying))*
186 **Veronica:** *that was very important # I think that (.) that # you said this*
187 *morning # at some point*
188 **Mary:** *yeah*
189 **Veronica:** *that you realised that you were in # a*
190 **Mary:** *yeah*
191 **Veronica:** *situation*
192 **Mary:** *yeah*
193 **Veronica:** *and then you were able to get out of it*
194 **Mary:** *hmmm*
195 **Veronica:** *and it's happened again this afternoon*
196 **Mary:** *yes # so it wasn't (.) it wasn't the fact that I was asking closed*
197 *questions (.) it was just the ques- (.) the fact that I was asking very #*
198 *fo[cused]*
199 **Veronica:** *[very] narrow foc[used questions]*
200 **David:** *((nodding)) [that's right]*
201 **Veronica:** *[yes]*
202 **Mary:** *[and so] tha::t's (.) what gave me the sense*
203 **Veronica:** *yeah # and actually you got to that yourself because that's #*
204 *not something that we pointed out # as a part of the process.*

The positive feedback on Mary's performance was not limited to Veronica: Gwen and David also had encouraging observations to make. However, what is really interesting to note in the following excerpt, is how the participants and trainer begin to openly talk about the value of meta-communication:

EXCERPT 8: YOU LEAN FORWARD

- 205 **Veronica:** *how- how did Mary do it*

206 *Gwen:* ((much gesticulating)) *well # she asked permission # didn't*
 207 *she # you know # is it okay (.) if at this point I*
 208 *Veronica:* *mmh hmm*
 209 *Gwen:* *can I interrupt # but can't remember exactly how she phrased*
 210 *it # but just checking with David that that was OK # uh::m # and it*
 211 *was OK wasn't it*
 212 ((Gwen addresses David (.) who nods his head in agreement prolifically))
 213 *Gwen:* *th- that seemed to work # well*
 214 *Veronica:* *can you describe # how Mary # does the interrupting*
 215 *Mary:* *uh::m (.) I'm just trying to remember (.) I didn't write (.) uh:: (.)*
 216 *write the question down # uh::m # I think you se- (.) said something*
 217 *like "Can I just # interrupt here" or # I I # can't remember exactly what*
 218 *she said*
 219 [0:20:36]
 220 ((Veronica uses slow deliberate continuous nodding throughout the
 221 following verbal exchanges))
 222 *Mary:* *I used the excuse of (.) the ti::me*
 223 *Gwen:* ((leans forward enthusiastically in agreement as she's reminded
 224 of how this had worked)) *yes [# did you]*
 225 *Mary:* [(to cover up)] *rather than just # so I said we've only got a very*
 226 *short time*
 227 *Veronica:* *then you (.) you apologised for having # said sorry for interrupting*
 228 *# and you also # you lean forward*
 229 *Mary:* *yes*
 230 [0:20:49]
 231 *Veronica:* [(and you chose)]
 232 *Mary:* [(yeah (.) I usually] [stutter first) (.) I did a little (.) [little stutter (.) stutter]
 233 [0:20:54]
 234 *David:* [and you # yes #]
 235 *Veronica:* *so you can see # you can see an interruption's [coming]*
 236 [0:20:56]
 237 *Mary:* *it's coming (.) yes # so [interesting]*
 238 *David:* [so that] *gives me time to sort of finish my sentence and allow you to interrupt*
 239 *Mary:* *yeah # so it's not too rude*
 240 *David:* *no (.) no (.) I # I really struggle with this (.) quite ge- (.) I mean it's*
 241 *on the clinical side too # I find it very hard to interrupt people (.) [uh::m]*
 242 *Mary:* [hmmm]
 243 *David:* *but I think it's quite nice (.) that sort of cue (.) that comes in sort of*
 244 *a couple of seconds (.) before you actually say something # yeah*
 245 ((Veronica makes an exaggerated gesture leaning forward with her hand
 246 raised palm forward like a traffic controller stopping traffic. Mary and
 247 Veronica laugh (.) Gwen smiles))
 248 *David:* ((looking at Veronica)) *well that's what you do (.) in you're uh*
 249 *group sessions (.) isn't it #*
 250 *Veronica:* ((smiling and half laughing as she speaks)) [(sometimes)]
 251 *David:* [rock forward] *# it's a # it's a # it's a nice (.) it's quite a nice to have*
 252 *that as a sort of a (.) it's quite a useful trick*

What is interesting in the above exchange is how Veronica pushes for and introduces the power of meta-communication within the supervisory process. Indeed, she continually pushes for the group to come up with this themselves through her "how" questioning (lines

201 and 214). The conversation is stuck within the content of talk – specifically permission asking and the excuse of time running out. It is Veronica who then moves the group forward in a lineal manner to achieve enlightenment by explicitly bringing in the issue of meta-communication and ‘how’ we communicate in addition to words (line 228). It is worth noting, that Veronica phrases this using the pronoun ‘you’. Indeed, in the same utterance she switched from using it in its personal form – “*and you also*” (meaning Mary) – to using it in its impersonal form – “*you lean forward*”. The impersonal *you* interestingly marks an informal, conversational speech style and is frequently employed to communicate a generally admitted ‘truth’ when the speaker wishes their audience to share their views (Rees & Monrouxe, 2008). And this is exactly what Veronica’s turn at talk achieves: an opening of the floodgates whereby participants enthusiastically discuss the power of meta-communication (lines 229-252) beginning with the specifics of Mary’s conversation with David, continuing through difficulties in clinical practice and culminating in the participants’ open comments about Veronica’s own use of meta-communication, which she is very aware of. Thus the creativity at this level of detail is given some importance as discussing how caution and care in the interaction is achieved through using such discourse cues. We also note, how she is now becoming slightly more engaged in the activity than previously, and while not openly laughing at the end, she does smile as Veronica mimics her own use of body language in order to call time-out (lines 245-247). Following this exchange, David as supervisor ends on a very positive note. He flags up the value of broadening out the picture and taking a more general perspective.