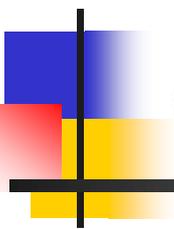


Social capital: a tool for promoting effective workplace based learning relationships during transition?



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Aims

- To familiarise participants with theories of social capital
- Drawing on participants' own experiences to consider how social capital may be used to help understand transitions and related workplace learning



The problem with transitions

- Teunissen & Westerman (2011) ` a transition is not moment but rather *a dynamic process* in which the individual moves from *one set of circumstances to another*’
- `Evidence of association between transitions and detrimental levels of stress & negative emotions’
- `Research on... the organisational & team consequences of accommodating students on rotations or adjusting to the introduction of new medical specialists is lacking’
- Brook (2009) –transitions from education to work can be seen as `non-linear’ complex, associated with uncertainty & risk but also opportunity



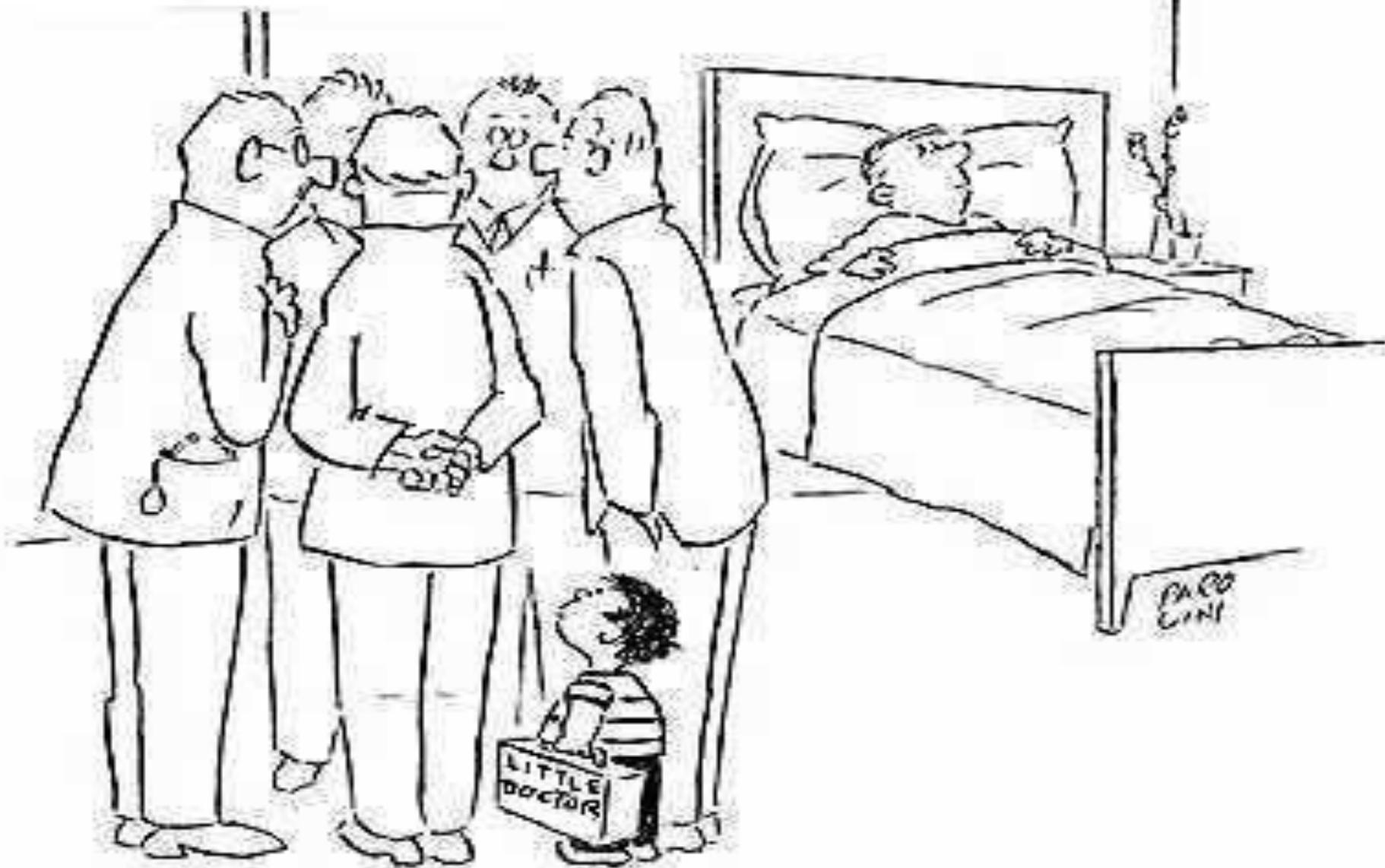
Your experiences

- A good transition – why was it good?
- A stressful transition – why was it stressful?



Theories of learning: communities of practice

- Wenger (1998) 'concerned with everyday activity & real-life settings, but with an emphasis on the social systems of shared resources by which groups organize & coordinate their activities, mutual relationships & interpretations of the world' (p 13)



What is social capital?:

It's not what you know but who..

- “Basic idea of ‘social capital’ is that one’s family, friends, and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called upon in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and/or leveraged for material gain.
- Also for groups, communities ... a diverse stock of social networks and civic associations will be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability, resolve disputes, and/or take advantage of new opportunities.
- Conversely, the *absence* of social ties can have an equally important impact e.g .ambitious professionals recognize that getting ahead in a new venture typically requires an active commitment to ‘networking’.
- A defining feature of being poor, moreover, is that one is not a member of—or is even actively excluded from—certain social networks and institutions, ones that could be used to secure good jobs and decent housing”
(Woolcock & Narayan 1999)



Theories of Social Capital

- Social capital refers to “the stock of active connections among people (including the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviours) that bind members of human networks and communities and that also empower them to make cooperative action and participation possible” (Putnam 1995 p.4).



Why interest in social capital?

- Economics & international development
- Health (positive & negative effects)
- Social inclusion & cohesion
- Applied across social science



Relevance to transitions?

- Tett & Maclaclan (2007) relationship between social capital and learning in adult literacy & numeracy classes
- Schuller & Field (2006) high levels of social capital may lead to high levels of informal & non- formal workplace learning – associated with pooling of information, sharing capacity as trust & reciprocity is high



Transitions in nursing

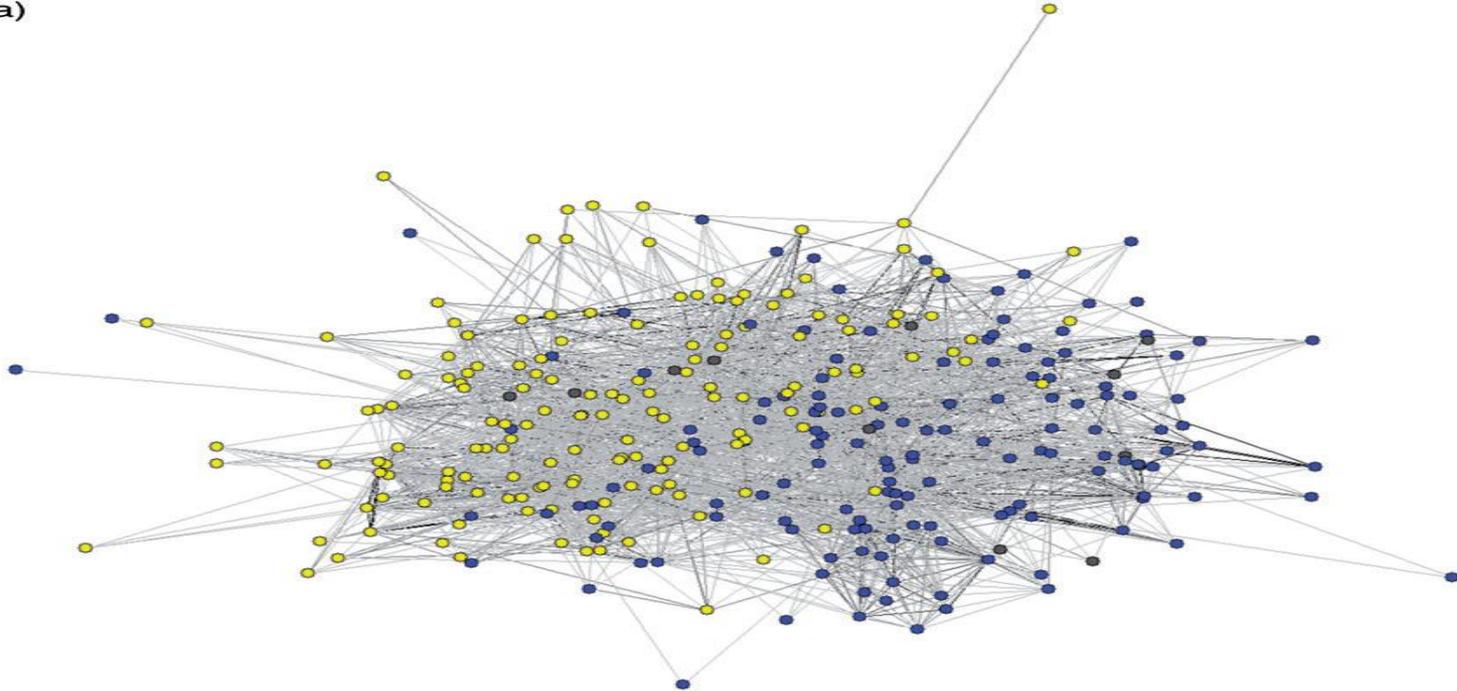
- Levitt-Jones et al (2008) study on nursing students' motivation and capacity to learn, influenced by the extent to which they experience belongingness.
- Staff-student relationships (including receptiveness, inclusion/ exclusion, legitimization of the student role, recognition and appreciation, challenge and support) were the most important influence on students' sense of belonging and learning.
- Students described how staff-student relationships had an impact on their sense of belonging, the quality of their clinical placement experience and their learning.



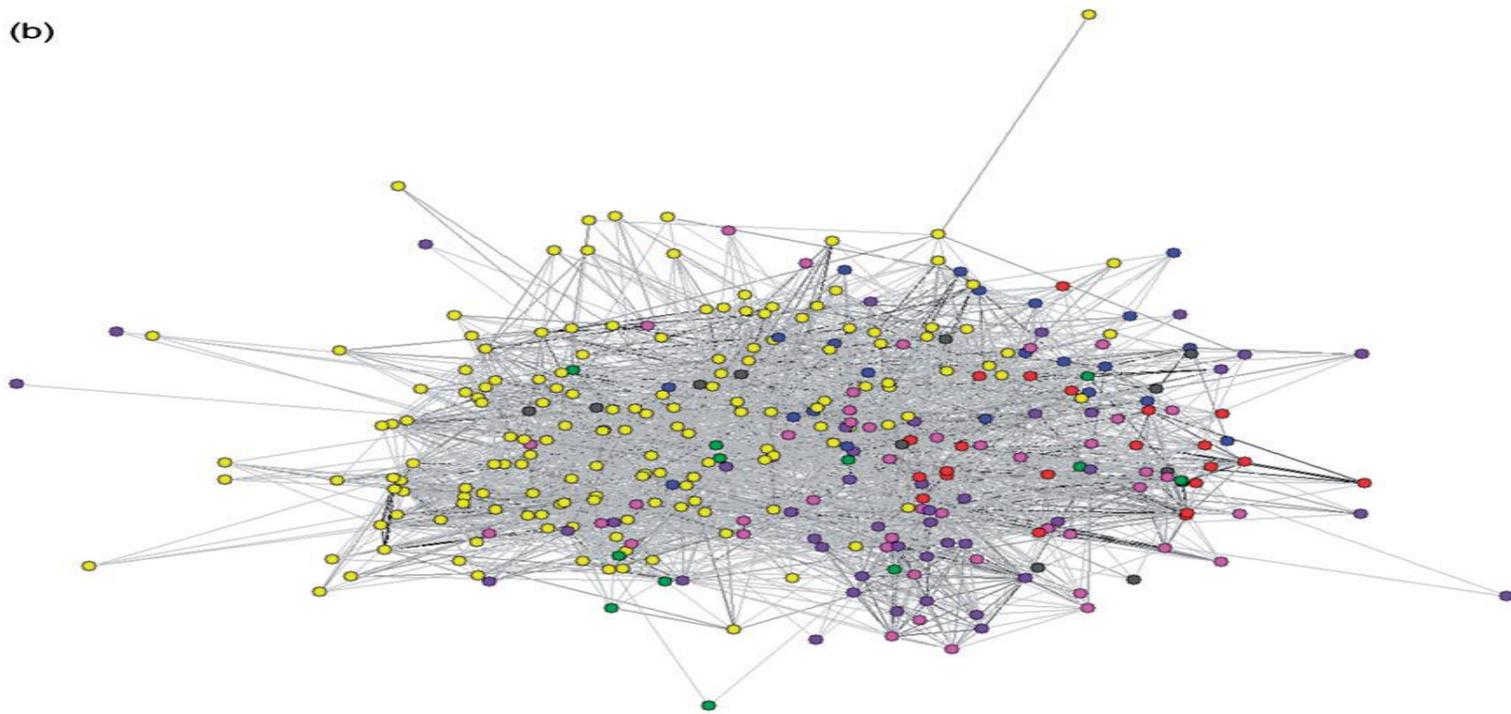
Social networks & learning

- Wolf et al (2012) – study medical students UCL mapped social networks and influence on academic success.
- Closeness in the social network predicts similarity in academic achievement – ‘students doing well were more closely linked socially to other students doing well’ (p 582) **& vice versa**

(a)



(b)





Forms of Social Capital

- **Bonding:** refers to supportive relationships within groups such as families, communities and close work colleagues (Kamrul Islam et al. 2006)
- **Bridging:** refers to distant or weak ties that exist between similar people such as workplace associates or loose friendships (Woolcock 2001)
- **Linking:** which refers to relationships that develop between people in dissimilar situations, where power and authority differentials exist (Woolcock 2001).

Forms of Social Capital

Bonding
social capital

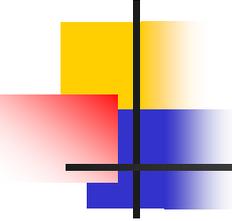
Strong ties that connect people with groups e.g. student study groups, colleagues who regularly work together

Bridging
social
capital

Distant ties between similar people e.g. managers and clinicians

Linking social capital

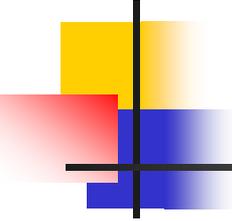
Relationships between people in dissimilar situations e.g. relationships between lower grades of staff, senior clinicians



Your experiences of transition as a trainee/ early career

Think about 'roles & relationships' (e.g. peers, senior colleague):

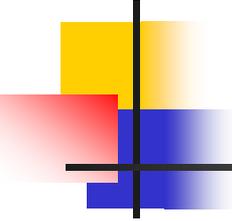
- Who did you develop a sense of friendship & trust with relatively quickly?
- Who did you feel you needed to develop a connection with to learn/ develop/ progress that you found it difficult to relate to/ approach?
- Who from previous placements/ posts continued to help you learn/ develop?
- Who helped you learn most in the early stages of your new role/ placement/ post?



Practical responses to build social capital?

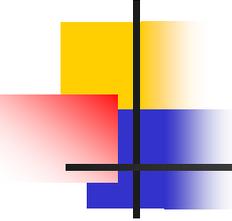
Jones et al (2011)

- *Proactive on part of new staff/ learners*– actively engaging in team, asking about others roles & responsibilities, for feedback, for guidance... to develop '**bonds**' with peers/ members of MDT
- *Proactive on part of clinical team* – a sense of belonging and effective support is crucial to successful transitions so: communicate the team vision, values and ways of working to new colleagues. Make the model of care, and the skills required, explicit to new staff... '**bridging**'
- **Linking** – role of senior staff/ colleague to build trust?



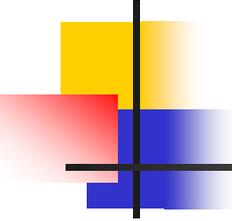
Critiques of social capital theory

- Social capital is difficult to measure
- Bourdieu (1986) all forms of capital are manipulated by those with power to protect their resources thereby reproducing social differences
- Power issues under theorized (Grenfell 2010)
- World bank – ‘bring back in’ inequalities, race, class, gender (Fines 2010)



Further reading

- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital, in Richardson, J (Ed). Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education. Santa Barbara, Greenwood Press: 241-258.
- Grenfell, M. (2010). Applying Bourdieu's Field Theory: the Case of Social Capital and Education. International Conference on Education, Economy and Society. Paris.
- Putnam, R. (1995). "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital". Journal of Democracy **1**: 65-78.



Further reading

- Teunissen P, Westerman M (2011) Opportunity or threat: the ambiguity of the consequences of transitions in medical education. Medical Education. 45, 1, 51-59.
- Wolf, K et al (2012) The hidden medical school: a longitudinal study of how social networks form, and how they relate to academic performance. Medical Teacher 34, 577-586
- Woolcock, M. (2001). "The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes." Canadian Journal of Policy Research **2**(1): 1-17.