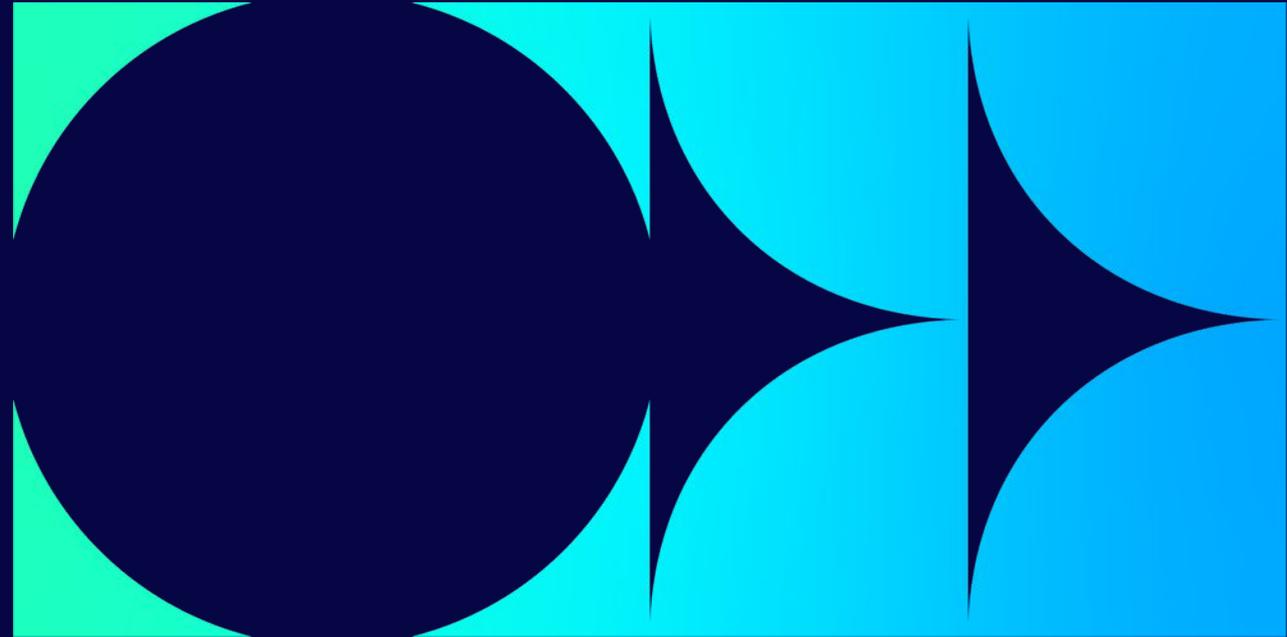


Navigating Change: Empowering insights around workplace mentorship through a World Café

UVAC Conference 2025

ICC Birmingham, 20th November 2025

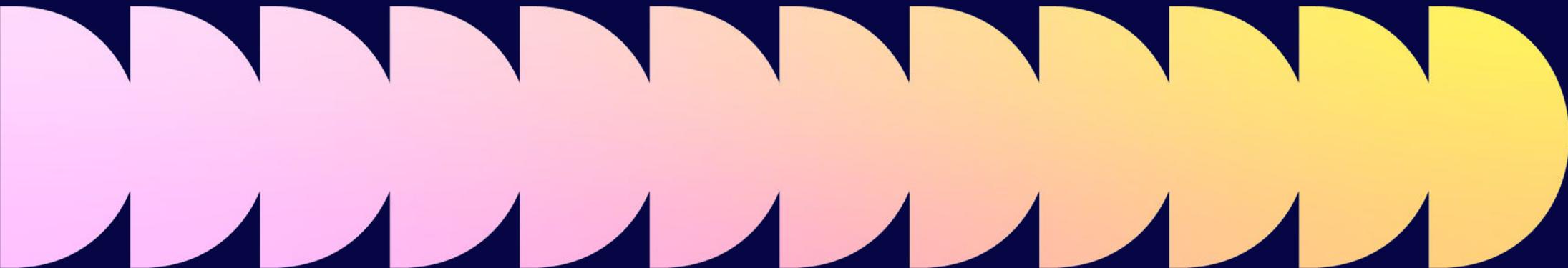
- **Abigail Salter**, Lecturer in Policing
- **Sarah Bloomfield**, Senior Lecturer in Work and Organisational Learning
- **Evelyn Mooney**, Lecturer in Nursing



Our plan for this Workshop

1. Insights from research using World Café methodology to explore challenges faced supporting learning in the workplace (10 mins)
2. Interactive World Café experience to develop insight around supporting learning in the workplace (40 mins)
3. Plenary Discussion (10 mins)

1. Background to our project

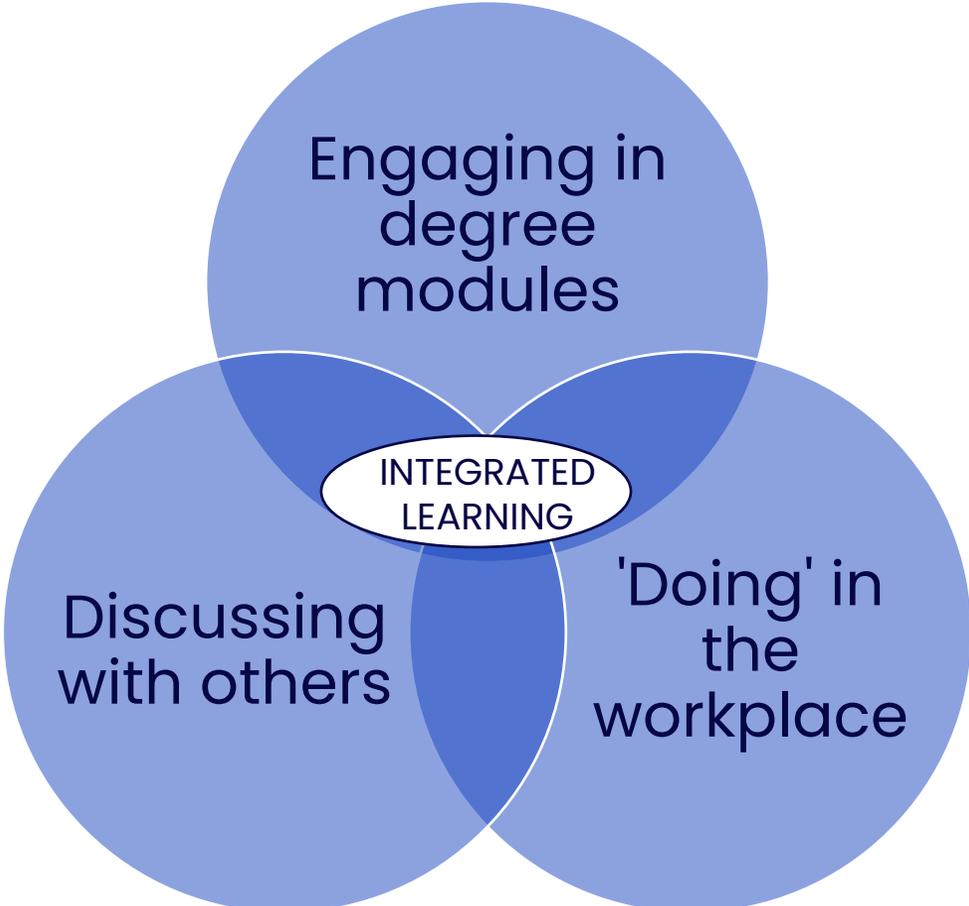


Degree Apprenticeships are an alternative HE route in England

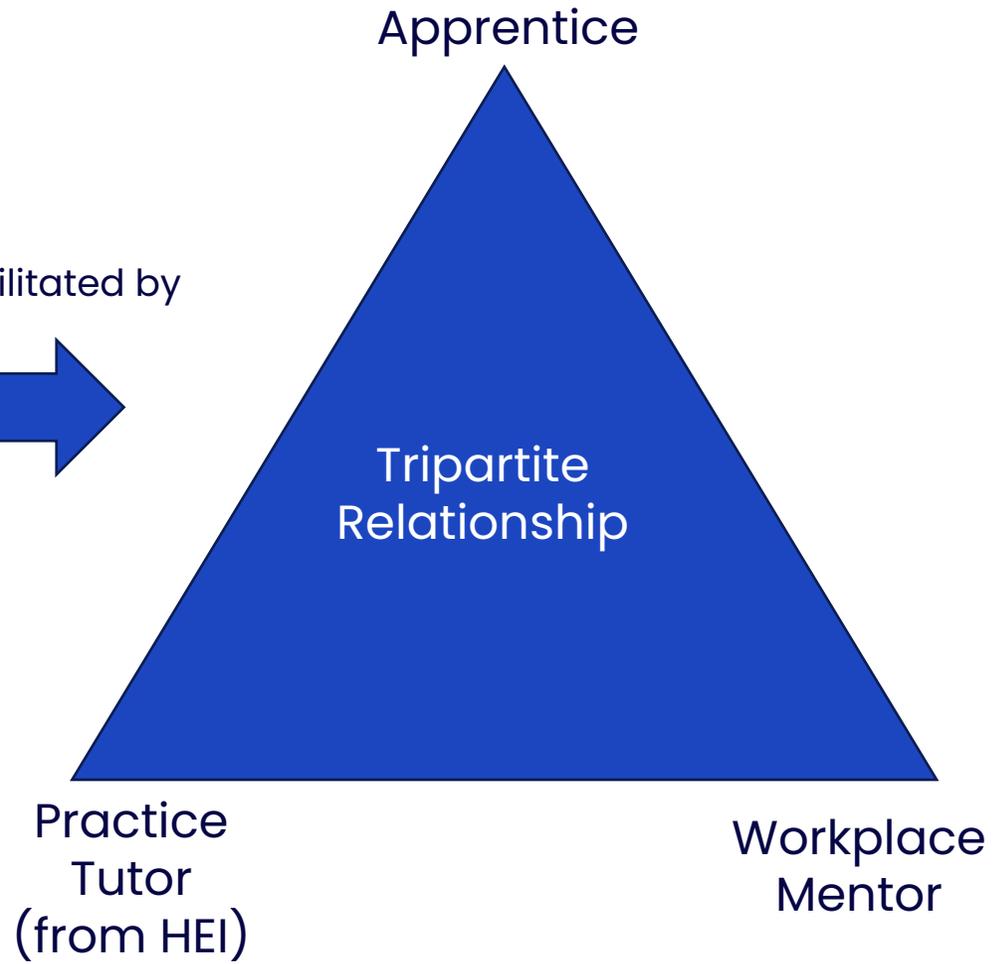
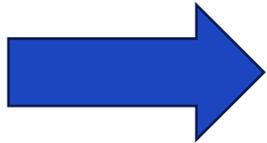
Apprentices:

- Work, and earn a salary, whilst studying
- Degree funded through the apprenticeship levy
- Provided with a day a week from work to study
- Use the workplace as a site of learning
- Provided with additional support from both the employer and HEI

Degree Apprenticeships



Learning facilitated by



The World Cafe

- The World Café (WC) aims to facilitate development of a set of **socially constructed themes** emerging through guided dialogue and a 'cross pollination of ideas' (Löhr et al 2020)
- Originally intended as a method for facilitating participatory action among diverse groups, the WC methodology has recently been used as a **data collection method** within academic research
- As a method, WC is a '**bottom-up participatory research approach**' (Löhr et al 2020)
- WC has similarities with a focus group methodology in capturing and sharing diverse perspectives, but without the researcher leading the discussion
- Additionally, allows for a **larger group of participants** to simultaneously take part in the discussion (Alfred, 2011).

2. Learning about workplace mentoring through a World Café experience



What we did

- Pilot event in May 2023
- Ran a 'World Café' event in York in March 2024
- 20 participants + 7 members of project team

Participants	Apprentice	Workplace Mentor	Practice Tutor	Total
Management	1	1	1	3
Policing	2	2	2	6
Nursing	2	2	2	6
Social Work	1	2	2	5
Total				20

Our Data set

1. Pilot event
2. Pre-event survey
3. Leadership cards with notes
- 4. Tablecloths from two rounds of World Café**
- 5. Flip charts consolidating first round**
- 6. Tablecloths from second round of World Café**
- 7. Flip charts consolidating second round**
8. Post-event survey
9. Project team reflections
10. Ethnographic experience of Project Team



World café discussion 1

'Thinking from the perspective of your role (apprentice, workplace mentor, practice tutor) what is the best way to support an apprentice, or what are the best ways you can be supported as an apprentice'

- Worked in **role** groups
- Moved round room as a group every 20 mins
- Wrote on tablecloths with a designated pen colour per role
- Each table hosted by project team member
- Used flipchart to summarise when returned to own table



World café discussion 2

'Thinking about some of the ideas that came out of the morning discussion about supporting learning, create a set of 'Good Practice Principles' for working in tripartite groups from your discipline's perspective'

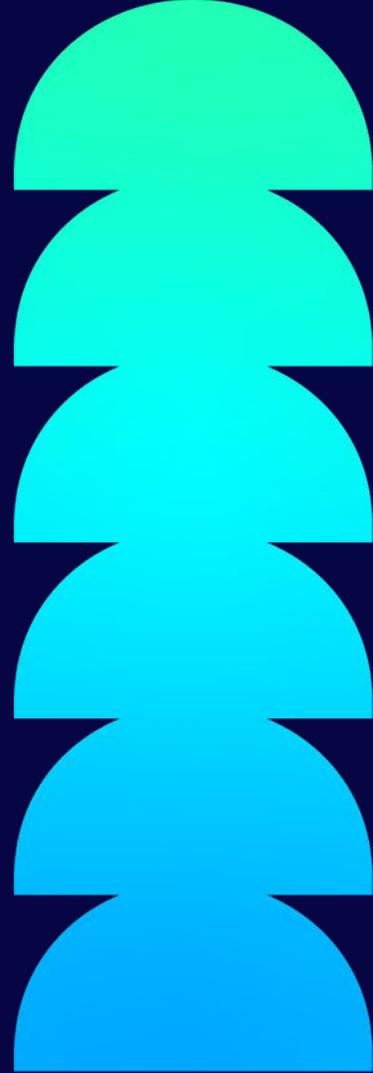
- Worked in **discipline** groups
- Moved round room as a group every 20 mins
- Wrote on tablecloths with a designated pen colour per discipline
- Each table hosted by project team member
- Used flipchart to summarise when returned to own table



Our learning from the World Café

- Challenges with studying alongside working:
 - Having to learn a new job/culture at same time as learning for the degree
 - A day a week may not be enough time for their studies
 - Need to prioritise between studying and the day job
 - Guilt in respect to others at work
- All Tripartite members experience emotional burdens:
 - *Apprentice*: **Guilt** about off-the-job learning and the pressure it puts on others
 - *Workplace mentor*: **Worry** that they don't do enough
 - *Practice Tutor*: **Frustration** from lack of recognition as both a Tutor and a Practitioner
- Relies on competence and commitment from both employer and HEI
- **Learning goes beyond the apprentice**: it also includes other members of the tripartite and beyond within the organisation

3. Sharing experiences



Your experience supporting learning in the workplace (10 mins)

1. Choose a card that best represents your thoughts about supporting learning in the workplace
2. Put three words on a post it note that explains your choice of card
3. Share your thoughts with others on your table

World Café (30 mins)

First questions (green pen):

- *What are the challenges for workplace mentors supporting learning in workplace settings?*
- *How can the challenges be overcome?*

World Café (30 mins)

Second question (blue pen):

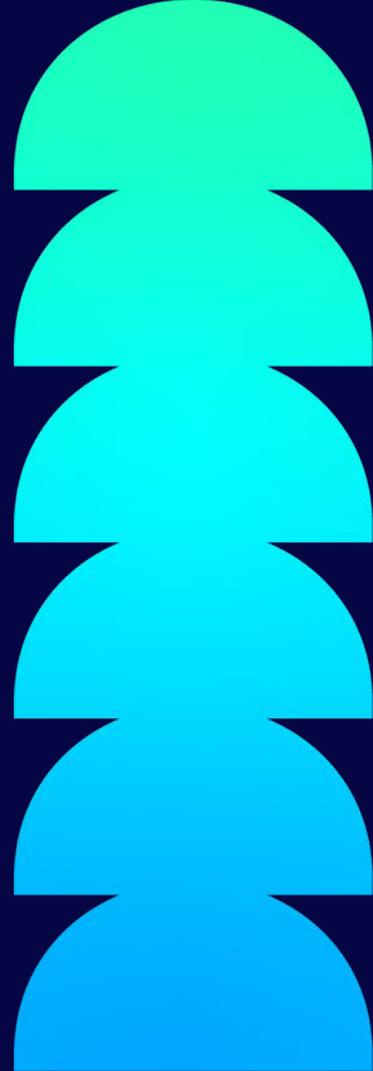
- *How (else) could the challenges written by the previous group be overcome?*

World Café (30 mins)

Third question (back at first table: red pen):

- ***What are your reflections on what has been written on your original table?***

4. Plenary

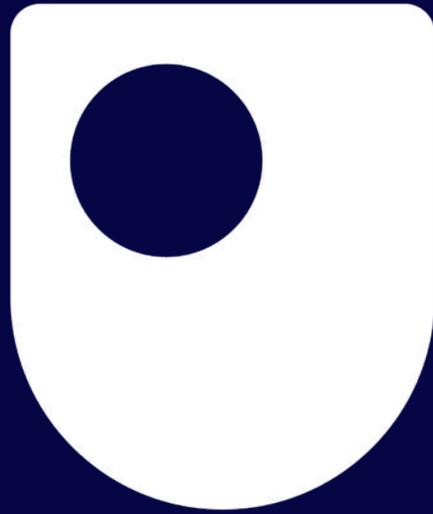


Plenary Discussion (10 mins)

- What are three key reflections from your group?
- What are your thoughts on the World Café as a participatory technique?

Our prior thoughts for supporting Learners in the workplace

- Ensure buy-in from top of organisation
- Ensure the workplace mentor is supported
- Ensure that the conditions for good learning is recognised as the responsibility of all Tripartite members
 - Clarify roles and expectations of the tripartite members from the outset
 - Be explicit about the multiplicity of roles for each tripartite member (learner/employee; supervisor/supporter; educator/practitioner) to ease tensions faced
 - Recognise the fact that (unavoidable) changes in membership impacts relationships, and hence more effort needed to rebuild trust
 - Role model the professional values within the tripartite relationship



**The Open
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References

- Aldred R. (2011). From community participation to organizational therapy? World Café and Appreciative Inquiry as research methods. *Community Development Journal*, 46(1), 57–71. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsp039>
- Löhr, K., Weinhardt, M., & Sieber, S. (2020). The “World Café” as a Participatory Method for Collecting Qualitative Data. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920916976>