The ecology of judgement in child welfare and protection

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How do social workers move between intuition and analysis without losing their grip on either?
Hammond’s theory of task structures

Intuition  Quasirationality  Analysis

Some properties of intuition and analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Intuition</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive control</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of cognitive activity</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of shift across indicators</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of cognitive activity</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Raw data or events stored</td>
<td>Complex principles stored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphors used</td>
<td>Pictorial</td>
<td>Verbal, quantitative</td>
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</tbody>
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Findings

• Cognitive activity matched the features of the task: intuition predominated
• Informal ‘peer-aided’ judgement common: quasirationality was practiced
• Corporeal co-presence or “being there”: spacial and temporal considerations
Importance of informal face-to-face communication

- Containment
- Embodied ways of knowing
- Reorganising information
Proximity and choice; availability and accessibility of peer support

• Sharing rooms – sharing “information cocoons”
• Movement and “go to” people
• Ethos – door open / door closed
• Opportunities for public and private sense-making
Changing environments for sense-making

- Losing common ground?
- Deficit model for peer contact
- “go to” people and self-selection
- Containment and challenge
- Traditional hierarchies
Contact

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