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ABSTRACT

        Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist whose work spanned
over 40 years, died in January 2002. His work took in such diverse topics as
international politics, colonialism, art and the media, marriage patterns of
French farmers, and gender studies. As the Chair in Sociology at the College
de France, Bourdieu published a number of major studies of French society,
but it is perhaps as a sociologist of education that he will be best
remembered. His interest in education began in the 1950s and resulted in
studies of French schools and schooling. Later, he concerned himself
increasingly with higher education and the French systems for recruiting the
political elite. This paper offers a reconsideration of Bourdieu's work on
education and sets out his main instruments of analysis. The paper also
considers some recent trends in classroom practice in England and discusses
these in the light of Bourdieu's approach. It considers how sociology can
give people a perspective in aspects of education that are not immediately
apparent and that certainly run counter to their stated aims and objectives.
Specifically, it discusses how the ideas of Bourdieu provide insights and
possible ways of understanding which enrich knowledge of pedagogic processes.
(Contains 52 references.) (BT)

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Bourdieu in the Classroom

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Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist, died in January 2002. His work spanned over forty years and took in such diverse topics as international politics, colonialism, art and the media, marriage patterns of French farmers, and gender studies. Holding the Chair in Sociology at the Collège de France, he published a number of major studies of French Society. He also became increasingly involved in politics, both at home in France and abroad. However, it is perhaps as a sociologist of education that he will be best remembered. His interest in education began in the 1950s and resulted in studies of French schools and schooling. Later, he concerned himself increasingly with Higher Education and the French systems for recruiting the political elite. This paper offers a reconsideration of his work on education and sets out his main instruments of analysis. It also considers some recent trends in classroom practice in England and discusses these in the light of his approach.

Introduction

Bourdieu begins his 1964 publication *Les Héritiers* with a quotation from Margaret Mead's *Continuities in Cultural Education*. In it she describes the practice amongst North American Indians of using visions as a social *rite de passage*. A vision conferred on the visionary the right to start a business, to hunt and fight in war. In the case of the Omaha Indians, all young men had the potential for visions. They would go out alone into the desert, fast and return to tell stories of the visions they had experienced. The elders of the village would then explain to some of them why theirs was not a real vision. Mead noted that this designation of authenticity acted as a form of social selection: 'genuine' visions were most common amongst the sons of the ruling, elite families. In other words, membership of the groups nominating the chiefs, tribe doctors and army generals was controlled in order to preserve the privileged inheritance of certain families.

Bourdieu offers this epigraph to his book without comment. However, the analogy between the nature of modern education and primitive society is clearly implied. Like traditional communities, the modern world has established institutionally based routes through which everyone must pass. In schools, there is a claim to meritocracy: education is available to all. Yet, one function of the education process is social selection: to legitimate and replicate the dominant factions within the social hierarchy. Since this selection function goes unacknowledged, and therefore unrecognised, it is all the more powerful and pervasive.

It is the job of sociology to *blow the whistle* on what is going on; to reveal the true processes and products of systems like education which legitimate and justify their operations by appealing to principles of fairness and equality. In short, Bourdieu writes, sociology must 'give itself the task of restoring to men the meaning of their actions' (1962: 109). These words and *Les Héritiers* were written some forty years ago. One purpose of this paper is to examine their continued worth. I want to consider how sociology can give us a perspective on aspects of education which are not

immediately apparent and which certainly run counter to their stated aims and objectives. More specifically, I shall discuss how the ideas of Bourdieu provide insights and possible ways of understanding which enrich our knowledge of pedagogic processes. This discussion will involve examination of classroom discourse in order to tease out the underlying structures of teaching and learning. It challenges how we interpret what we see and hear, and, therefore, alters the way we view what is happening in the classroom. Firstly, however, I develop Bourdieu's early thesis on education and set it in the context of its times. I also consider what he called his 'thinking tools' in order to appreciate their use as means of explanation and understanding.

An Anthropology of Education
It is wholly significant that Bourdieu begins *Les Héritiers* with a quotation from a world-renowned anthropologist. Throughout his career, Bourdieu himself retained an anthropologist's eye in his treatment of the media, systems of state, and politics. The link with anthropology connects him with Levi-Strauss and his studies of so-called primitive societies and with the moral philosophy, applied, in the work of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim; especially *Suicide* (1952/1897) and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1915/1912). In the work of these two writers, amongst others, we see the moral force of society set out; that *collective conscience* which receives and gives as a cycle of *externalisation of internality and internalisation of externality* (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1971). Of course, the weight of this force is mostly sensed rather than seen, but it is no less real for that. It serves to direct the action of individuals, who themselves contribute to its power by the recognition given to it in their acknowledgement, which itself confers legitimacy.

In primitive society, magic is an exemplar of this moral energy that connects nature and culture, giving symbolic power to totem and taboo, as well as rites and rights. Bourdieu connects the 'old' world with the 'new' by stretching the analogy to the mechanisms of the contemporary world. For him, magic is still essentially present in the ways certain individuals are symbolically configured; their position and title giving them power to endow, legitimise other systems and individuals, themselves symbolically configured, who then act in mutual self-regard and support. In education, the same magic acts of power and legitimacy are bestowed on those who gain academic awards. Such awards give them the right to speak with authority, to join the establishment and perpetuate it, to adopt the magical language of the culture they now share. They make themselves stronger by excluding the *masse* and controlling who is, and is not, *one of us*. *Magical* is the appropriate word to describe this process because it is unrecognised, accepted, unchallenged within the social group as a whole. It derives its power from within the social; it is not imposed. Schools are not simply places where individuals prove their innate worth but a mechanism by which elites are perpetuated and transformed. Bourdieu describes the ideal French *homo academicus*:

> Coming from parents and grandparents who are themselves teachers, *the first prize* (coming first in the baccalaureate) in Philosophy in 1964, aspires mostly to prepare the Ecole Normale Supérieur (the most prestigious education university of France), to gain the aggregation there (a competitive exam which qualifies the candidate to teach in a prestigious upper school or

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university) and to become a philosophy teacher; whilst *the first prize* in Latin 'has read the whole of French Literature by the age of fifteen and a half' and, 'ferociously individualistic', 'surprising in their precociousness', only hesitates between research and teaching.

(1964: 65 – 66, my own translation and comments in brackets)

Of course, in a post post-modern age, we are now able to separate out *signifier* and *signified* and meditate on the linguistic relativism of the terms of reference used in this passage. The signifier, the content of the French academically aspirant child, may have changed (although I suspect less than we may think!). Business, finance and state administration studies have possibly replaced philosophy and literary studies. However, the signified, in this case the social means of preserving social prestige across generations, remains the same.

Bourdieu notes how the parents of the 'excluded' seem to collude in the process:

> When a pupil's mother says of her son, often in front of him, that 'he is not strong in French', she makes herself an accomplice of three forms of unfavourable influence: firstly, ignoring her son's results are a direct function of the family's cultural atmosphere, she transforms into individual destiny all which is only the product of a education and which still might be corrected, at least partly, by educational activity; secondly, through lack of information on school matters, due sometimes to having nothing with which to oppose teachers' authority, she draws final and premature conclusions from a single school report; finally, by sanctioning this type of judgement, she reinforces for the child the feeling of being such and such by nature. Therefore, the legitimising authority of school can redouble social inequalities because the least favoured classes, too aware of their future and yet too unaware of the routes by which it happens, contributes in this way to its realisation.
>
> (1964: 109)

Such unknowing collusion lends weight to belief in a process of natural as opposed to social selection. What is occurring is *'misrecognised'*; what *is* occurring is left unrecognised.

These are stark passages. The claim that schools reinforce social differences was, however, hardly new, even by the standards of the early 1960s. Nevertheless, Bourdieu was developing a highly sophisticated theory of social reproduction and the role which education played in it. *La Reproduction* (1970) starts by detailing the *Foundations of a Theory of Symbolic Violence*. A series of propositions are made and offered almost as a series of aphorisms. 'Every power', it begins 'to exert symbolic violence, i.e. every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those relations' (p.18). It follows that *pedagogic action* is symbolically violent by the imposition of its cultural power. Such action implies *pedagogic authority*, which defines a specific legitimate relationship to *pedagogic communication*. Pedagogic action entails *pedagogic work*: activity through which arbitrary but legitimate pedagogic knowledge is inculcated and internalised by individuals. Finally, all this takes place within an *Educational System* that itself is

institutionalised and institutionalises pedagogic practice, and whose role it is to produce and reproduce the conditions for the function and operation of pedagogic action, work and authority. Activity within the educational system is always symbolic and mediated by differentially valued products and practices; what Bourdieu refers to as *cultural capital*. Cultural Capital is the currency of education and alludes to certificates, legitimises forms of knowledge and general attitudes to and outlooks on life.

Both *Les Héritiers* and *La Reproduction* are largely empirically based but, rather than addressing methodological questions, this chapter is a consideration of theory *in* and *of* practice and what it is to understand classrooms from a Bourdieuian perspective.

The focus Bourdieu gave to culture in these two books was quite distinct from conventional sociology of education, which concentrated on establishing social class inequalities (for example, Musgrave 1966, Banks 1968) through statistical analysis of performance. The study of culture and its effects enabled Bourdieu to integrate the moral philosophy of Durkheim with the effects of ideas from Weber in the context of class structures from Marx. It formed part of a veritable blossoming of a 'sociology of knowledge', which included educational knowledge. The 'new sociology of education' was announced most strongly in Bourdieu's chapters in *Knowledge and Control* (Young 1971). This seminal volume did more than any other to shift the focus away from outcome of education to the mechanisms of knowledge construction and their effects. The title says it all – *Knowledge and Control* – in other words, how knowledge was controlled to operate the processes of social selection and segregation as exemplified by the North American Indian story above. In *Intellectual Field and Creative Product*, Bourdieu delineates a 'field' space as the boundary of cultural knowledge and its effects. Individuals within this space define themselves in relation to their position within it. The cultural is an unconscious expression, from within and without, of affinity and dis-affinity:

> The school is required to perpetuate and transmit the capital of consecrated cultural signs, that is, the culture handed down to it by the intellectual creators of the past, and to mould to a practice in accordance with the models of the culture a public assailed by conflicting schismatic or heretical messages...Further, it is obliged to establish and define systematically the sphere of orthodox culture and the sphere of heretical culture.
> (Bourdieu in Young 1971: 178)

In *Systems of Education and Systems of Thought*, Bourdieu extends an argument presented by the art historian Panofsky; that there was symmetry between the structure of scholastic thinking and the structure of Gothic architecture. In other words, in a very Weberian sense, a certain way of thinking produced a certain way of acting in the world. By extrapolation to schools, Bourdieu was able to argue, for example, that: 'Many of the distinguishing features of English 'positivism', or French 'rationalism' are surely nothing other than the tricks and mannerisms of the schools' (1971: 204).

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Academic Discourse

Bourdieu was not alone. In the same volume, other articles dealt with the way the curriculum is organised, knowledge defined and cognitive styles developed in ways which are implicitly designed to bring out social class differences in the way pedagogic ideas are expressed. Whilst, on the surface, systems are legitimised in terms of equality and meritocracy, the repeated message is that there is an unobserved social function which differentiates and discriminates. Topography of knowledge is also offered in the work of the man with whom Bourdieu is most often compared: Basil Bernstein. In *Knowledge and Control*, Bernstein (1971a) writes of the way knowledge might be 'classified' and 'framed'. Bernstein also suggested that we might understand knowledge types as inherently possessing *elaborate* and *restricted* codes (1971b). The word *codes* here implied *being in the know* – or not!

Both Bourdieu and Bernstein draw attention to the way that knowledge is presented and represented in education; that is, the linguistic forms which act as a vehicle for it. The currency of education is language and it is *the* medium of knowledge transmission. Language has two basic levels of expression: form, or structure, and content. Both form and structure may exist in a way which favours certain ways of thinking and expressing that thinking. Moreover, it may act as a mechanism for cultural transmission which itself advantages and disadvantages those who encounter it depending on their background and the affinities (or not) this sets up when they enter a scholastic field. Bourdieu writes of the importance of language in the *academic discourse* and how it operates in education. If academic discourse is predicated on an assumption of communication between the teacher and the taught, this relationship is fraught with faulty signals:

> There are, in fact, two systems of contradictory demands that pedagogical communication needs to satisfy, neither of which can be completely sacrificed: first, to maximise the absolute quantity of information conveyed (which implies reducing repetition and redundancy to a minimum); second, to minimise the loss of information (which, among other measures, may imply an increase in redundancy).
> (Bourdieu, Passeron and de Saint Martin 1965/1994: 6)

The paradox of language in the pedagogic relationship is that it cannot satisfy these contradictory demands. Moreover, they are intensified by the social origins of learners and teachers, representing as they do, more or less, differing worldviews and ways of expressing them. Bourdieu argues that 'the aim of maximising the output of communication...goes directly against the traditional relationship to the language of teaching' (1994: 6). He offers evidence of this 'misunderstanding' (cf. Taylor 1992) everywhere in his empirical studies of language in education:

> ...the traditionalist professor can slide from the *right* to demand that his students learn...to the *fact* of making this demand when he has withheld from them the means of satisfying it.
> (ibid.: 8)

The world of the classroom where 'polished' language is used, contrasts with the world of the family.

(p.9)

...the teacher's self-assured use of professional language is no more fortuitous than the student's own tolerance of semantic fog.

(p.10)

Student comprehension thus comes down to a general feeling of familiarity...technical terms and references, like 'epistemology'. 'methodology'. 'Descartes', and 'sciences', shoulder each other up. He can quite naturally refrain from seeking clarification of each one of these...for his system of needs is not, cannot be, and up to a *point* must not be, analytical...the student is able to put together an essay which is apparently written in the same language of ideas, but in which the sentence 'Descartes renewed epistemology and methodology' can only be an impressionistic restoration. For outside this sentence, many students associate nothing with the word 'epistemology'.

(p.15)

These are evocative and telling observations. Bourdieu's thesis of academic discourse is clear:

• the linguistic background of the family influences the student's ability to deal with both the content and form of scholastic language;
• there is an implied interest in perpetuating this misunderstanding as it shores up social selectivity, misrecognised as such as a collective act of *mauvaise foi*;
• the way we think and speak betrays a whole relationship to language and conceptual modes of thought;
• the location of particular disciplines in the institutional hierarchy of studies is a structural homology of these differences most apparent in differentials of performance according to social class.

But is it true? It can be argued that this is a very French view of education; a nation particularly sensitive to the style of expression over content. The world has moved on. This focus on culture can now be understood as part of the *zeitgeist* of the 1960s and 70s; so can the radical critique of schools and schooling. This critique can be found in the work of such writers as Bowles and Gintis (1974) who saw schools as mirroring the structures of social class and Althusser (1971) who viewed them as the 'ideological apparatus' of state control. The cultural focus also connects with the work of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. For Gramsci, culture is a form of hegemony, which is a product of the dialectical and historical processes in society. The problem is, as we see in the work of Bourdieu, people seem powerless to resist the imposing force of this hegemony. Gramsci conceptualises 'liberated' man as someone who can rise above these forces in a new kind of intellectual *engagement* with the world. Normally, as we have already seen, experience is one of contradictions:

...this contrast between thought and action, i.e. the co-existence of two conceptions of the world, one affirmed in words and the other displayed in

> action...cannot but be the expression of profounder contrasts of social historical order...It signifies that the social group in question may indeed have its own conception of the world, even embryonic; a conception which manifests itself in action, but occasionally and in flashes. But the same group has, for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own but borrowed from another group.
>
> (Gramsci 1971: 326-7)

This alternative worldview, obscure but also implicit, present and immanent, clearly relates back to the social interpretations given to the North American Indians' visions. It raises questions about the character of knowledge, which can be seen as iconoclastic, as *blowing the whistle* on what is happening in the name of democratic systems. For Gramsci, the 'common sense' of the everyday world is nothing more than 'a chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions' (p. 422). But what is the alternative? The implications of the new sociology of knowledge led to three possible options: resistance, celebration, and compensation. By *resistance*, what is meant is opposition to the hegemonic forces. Dominant culture is seen as alienating and pacifying; therefore, it should be opposed. Moreover, wherever its effects can be identified, as noted above, names should be named and inequalities unmasked. Resistance needs its own point of focus and *celebration* of alternative cultures can provide one. Here, another cultural heritage, be it social or ethnic, is applauded for its richness and diversity. Such a celebration may be an end in itself – an honouring of non-hegemonic culture – or as a means of providing an alternative to it. *Compensation* occurs when steps are taken to make up the difference between one culture and another. Positive discrimination was one approach here, where those lacking in the particular cultural forms expressed in education were differentially favoured at the expense of those already culturally endowed with the prestigious social accoutrements which social background provides. One of the obvious outcomes to Bernstein's restricted and elaborate codes was to develop a deficit model. Here, the children of certain social groups were seen as impoverished in certain respects. The solution was to provide a 'top-up'. With hindsight, it is possible to see how these forms of quasi-social engineering stand little chance of success.

Another French Sociologist, Raymond Boudin, wrote at the time: 'since our real objectives is to reduce inequalities of education and social opportunities, changing schools is probably not the most effective means' (1973: 196). Bourdieu, certainly nowhere supported such moves. Indeed, his view of the world and education seemed rather 'fatalistic', in that, although these social forces grip us all, there appears to be little or nothing we can do about them. It is important to note that the analyses and conclusions of the new sociologists of education were taken on board in the 70s and 80s by the new generation of training teachers as part of their mission to do something about it. However, this analysis was appropriated by pedagogy, encouraging action towards establishing social equality in the classroom, rather than looking at pedagogic processes themselves. Moreover, the social class narrative became almost a given end in itself. As Bernstein wrote:

> The programme, whatever else is produced, did not produce what it called for. General theories of cultural reproduction again appear to be more concerned with an analysis of what is produced in and by education than the medium of reproduction; the nature of specialised discourse. It is as if the

specialised discourse of education is a voice through which others speak (class, gender, religion, race and region).
(Bernstein 1986: 206)

Bernstein extends the logic of this critique to Bourdieu when he writes that the latter is essentially concerned with relations *to* legitimacy in a social context rather than relations *within* (Bernstein 1990: 174-77). Bourdieu is preoccupied with the causes and consequences of social hierarchies, whilst Bernstein argues for a shift of focus to the internal construction of legitimacy. Bernstein seeks to refine the diagnosis that social class society leads to differential outcomes in performance, which are not attributed to natural talent. What can be done about it? To find the answer, we must move away from Bourdieu's own work on education to look at classroom discourse more closely and the processes and mechanisms present there. I want to connect this work with Bourdieu's philosophy as a way of seeing the world. The final element to understanding Bourdieu in the classroom is what he calls his 'thinking tools'. It is to these I now wish to turn.

Thinking Tools

It is clear from Bourdieu's earliest writings that his work examines the relationship between the individual and the situation in which they find themselves. In *Les Héritiers*, the conditions of life conferred on individuals is referred to as *habitat*. In subsequent publications, he develops this perspective as *habitus*: 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures...principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representation which can be objectively regulated' (1977: 72). Individuals are 'predisposed' to act in certain ways, which show regular patterns of occurrence. The extent to which these patterns are actualised depends on the social location any one finds themselves in at any one time. For Bourdieu, such locations are also structured – both physically and organisationally – and should be understood as *fields*: 'a network... a configuration of objective relations between positions' (1992: 73). Human activity hence proceeds through an engagement between habitus and fields and the homologies this sets up. There can be instances of convergence through affinity, and divergence as a result of mismatches. Bourdieu saw such mismatches in the systems of scholastic inculcation, which favoured those from cultural backgrounds congruent with that of schools. These mismatches might be expressed through language content or form, but should be understood as representing the same structures as those found in the social divisions of society. Thought could therefore shape society and the social world (as for example in the case of Panofsky above) but it was itself formed by very same structures.

A discussion of the full sense of habitus and field has been attempted in Grenfell and James (1998). In the present context, it is worth noting that habitus, in particular, has been fiercely debated over the years and its usefulness questioned (see Nash 1999). Paradoxically, near the end of his life Bourdieu commented to me that habitus was rarely mentioned within his own team of researchers. Moreover, his later public lectures were publicised under the banner of 'explorations in Field Theory'; putting the focus on social space rather than the individual. Nevertheless, Bourdieu himself wrote a great deal about *habitus* and it plays an important part in his analysis of education and learning. What I wish to stress here is the philosophical derivation of habitus, and by implication, field. Bourdieu was a philosophy student before adopting anthropology and sociology as his chosen academic pathway. His student training was

therefore steeped in continental philosophy, which at the time was heavily influenced by an interpretative, hermeneutic paradigm. Phenomenology, the study of things *in themselves*, was central to this tradition and Bourdieu encountered it principally through the work of fellow Frenchman Merleau-Ponty, as well as Husserl and Schütz. For phenomenologists, individual experience exists differentially as it is always shifting. We interpret this experience by mapping the past (what we 'know') onto the present (what we are learning). However, this process does not take place in a free realm of signification but implies orthodox and heterodox interpretation. Bourdieu socialises this process, so the orthodox becomes the dominant conventions of thought and action of a particular society against which any one individual may conform or deviate. Moreover, their social origins and the constituent habitus (linking with Husserlian phenomenology), which expresses this doxa as individual *habitualität*, determine which of these applies.

In effect, what we have here is a theory of knowledge and a clear epistemological paradigm. It is not possible, therefore, to take habitus and field as simple re-expressions of agency and context, as they are commonly referred to in the social sciences. Rather, Bourdieu's terms need to be understood as highly charged matrices involving a dynamic philosophy of human praxis. Bourdieu refers to the relationship between habitus and field as one of 'ontologic complicity' (1982: 47) and, indeed, in his theory of practice epistemology and ontology become one and the same thing. This relationship is mutually constituting through thought and action:

> The relationship between habitus and field operates in two ways. On the one side, it is a relation of conditioning: the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of immanent necessity of a field (or a hierarchically intersecting set of fields). On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and with value, in which it is worth investing one's practice.
> (1989: 44)

Field and habitus therefore exist in a world, which values and is valued differentially. It is therefore perhaps no surprise that Bourdieu should term its products *symbolic capital*: symbolic, because it is based on a cultural arbitrary; capital, because it is useful in 'buying' into orthodoxy which is differentially rewarded according to current 'exchange rates'.

Cultural capital, habitus, field, symbolic capital – Bourdieu's approach can seem very schematic. One might see these terms as simply another set of buzzwords in the academic space, condemned to fight it out with other signifiers for ruling legitimacy. Why should they be different from any others with respect to this role? At their most basic, Bourdieu regarded them as 'thinking tools', instruments to be used and whose value could be judged in terms of the results they yielded. So what do they buy us? I would like to answer this question with reference to classroom discourse.

Classroom Discourse
Despite their sophisticated sociological theories of language and learning, neither Bourdieu nor Bernstein actually undertook empirical analyses of classroom discourse. *Knowledge and Control* offers a wide discussion of classroom knowledge without

citing teacher-pupil exchanges and, despite their new focus on pedagogic discourse, early sociological discussions of the classroom often omitted actual discourse analysis (for example, Barton and Meighan 1978). Early work on real classroom language took a broadly ethnographic approach by unpicking the structure and content of the medium of learning. For example, Sinclair and Coultard (1975) showed how the structure of classroom knowledge was built on I-R-F exchanges - initiation, feedback and response – that two-thirds of classroom language was talk, two-thirds of it was teacher talk, and two thirds of this was based on lecturing and questioning, thus giving rise to the 'law of two-thirds'. Others (for example, Barnes 1976 and Barnes and Todd 1977) examined the nature of group work as opposed to teacher-focused language, and the power of *open* and *closed* questioning.

Those working in this tradition later took up the theories of the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky in order to account for what is happening in classroom discourse. Vygotsky died in 1934 but his work became increasingly influential from the 1960s when his major book was first published in English (Vygotsky 1962). In opposition to the Piagetian notion of the learner as 'lone-explorer' passing through sequential stages of cognitive development, Vygotsky set out a model of psychology as a collective process. For him, the early learner mediates between themselves and the world around them, both physical and social, and, in this mediation, gains control over *objects, self* and *others*. What results is a process of self-regulation where knowledge means control. Vygotsky concluded in a similar way to Durkheim, that 'nothing appears in the psychological plane without first appearing in the social plane'; in other words, the *intra*-psychological must be understood as a product of the *inter*-psychological. It is important not to overstate the case here, it would be wrong to see this relationship as linear or one-dimensional. Rather, it is a dialectic of give and take. In this thinking, the source of knowledge is in the pre-given, which shapes the coming into being of the new.

Bourdieu was aware of the importance of maintaining a sociological focus in his work. He took psychological matters as a 'pre-given' and never strayed into an active involvement with its instrumental tools. Nevertheless, the social psychological constructivism of Vygotsky is perfectly congruent with Bourdieu's own 'structural constructivism' (see Bourdieu 1989b). Both see categories of thought as a social product and thus explainable in terms of social differentials. Bourdieu's habitus based dispositions and pre-dispositions are formed by passage through social fields with specific ontological character.

Vygotskyan psycholinguistics have impacted in a certain way on analyses of classroom discourse and the theoretical terms used to describe it. I now want to consider some of these before discussing how they look from a Bourdieuian perspective. Given Vygotsky's background, it is perhaps unsurprising that his was essentially a positive account of the social background to individual knowledge formation. It is the social, which supports and informs individual learners. And it is the social, which is the source of individual enrichment. Writers on classroom discourse who have taken Vygotsky as their point of departure often focus on 'common knowledge' rather than 'mutual misunderstanding' (cf. Edwards and Mercer 1987 and Taylor 1992). They take the Vygotskyan concept of the 'Zone of Proximal Development': 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined

through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (1978: 86). The ZPD offers a way of conceptualising classroom discourse and language in learning as a structure which needs to be shaped and *scaffolded* (see Wood et al. 1976), so that the learner is supported at the point of hand-over where knowledge becomes their own. The research task is then to identify and explain what constitutes this 'scaffolding' and 'hand-over' in order to understand how to maximise its effectiveness in pedagogic discourse. This work leads to an appraisal of good teachers:

1. *They used question-and-answer sequences not just to test knowledge, but also to guide the development of understanding.*
2. *They taught not just 'subject content', but also procedures for solving problems and making sense of experience.*
3. *They treated learning as a social, communicative process.*

(Mercer 2000: 160)

It also provides pedagogic edification of the processes and strategies available to teachers: for example, reworking knowledge, demonstration, the dynamics of explanation, styles of explaining, etc. (see Ogborn et al 1996).

Children and students need to learn and be taught. To this extent, the coverage of the dynamics of pedagogy and its mechanisms is useful. Yet, we also know from Bourdieu amongst others that, in language in education, such pedagogic dynamics, mechanisms and discourse do not come culture-free. Co-terminal with the structures of learning exist differences of world-view, which determine eventual outcomes. Writers in the Vygotskyan tradition occasionally admit that they are emphasising continuity, co-operation and sharing over conflict and dis-functionality (see Mercer 1995:121). A sociology of learning must be careful not to replace this essentially positive view of classroom discourse with a negative one, which socialises pedagogy out of existence. But we are correct to concern ourselves with the way we think and talk about classrooms. At one point in an interview with Wacquant (1989a) Bourdieu warns the would-be researcher to 'beware of language' (p.54), as language is a repository of 'common sense…both lay and scientific, as crystallised in professional taxonomies…The most routine categories…are naturalised pre-constructions which, when they are ignored as such, function as unconscious and uncontrolled instruments of scholarly construction'. So it is that we should be 'suspicious' of the terms of theory (such as, for example, ZPD and Scaffolding), which might become more real than the thing itself, taking on an *objective* reality beyond their use as simple *instruments* of analysis, or thinking tools; which exists 'only by superseding or obliterating all kinds of differences and contradictions' (p.38). Having said that, *habitus* and field are also part of the language of theory. What happens if we think about classrooms in these terms?

The Discourses of Teaching
There is, within educational phenomenology, a tradition, which aims at discovering the finite series of principles, which describe education as an inter-human, existential phenomenon. For example, that children require help and that education takes place within a social-historical content. An important feature in the present context is that 'authority is involved in every pedagogic relation' (see Vandenberg 1974: 198). The argument goes that even in the case of the most progressive education, some form of

authority is implied. Without it, the teacher would have to see the child as already grown up, thus not in need of help, thus, the pedagogic relation disappears. Even so, for Bourdieu such authority implies an imposition, the exclusion of one worldview by another. Authority is seen as a form of *symbolic violence*; in other words, 'the power to impose (or even inculcate) the arbitrary instruments of knowledge and expression (taxonomies) of society' (1991: 168). It is constituted within a field and is expressed and impacts on individual *habitus*.

In order to illustrate dimensions of authority in classroom discourse and what they look like in practice, I am going to take a short extract of classroom dialogue. To do this is itself methodologically problematic. Teaching takes place over many years, many thousands of hours and still more instances and interactions. A small extract of only a few minutes can therefore hardly claim to be representative. The extract itself shows the complexity of what is occurring in the classroom. I shall consider it as it stands and in what ways a Bourdieuian analysis can begin to show up the meaning of what is occurring. The example is taken from a lesson in Britain in which the tenets of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) are being applied. The NLS was initiated by governmental decree in 1998 (DfEE 1998), with the expressed aim of raising the standards of literacy skills of pupils in England and Wales. Teachers were trained in a prescribed approach, which included a set lesson structure and a particular language taxonomy. Compliance to this approach was assured through visits from inspectors of the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) and the publication of results in school league tables with the promise of 'zero tolerance of failure' and of 'naming and shaming' underachievers (see Blunkett in TES 3rd March 2000: 1). Independent evaluation of the strategy subsequently reported that, indeed, standards, at least as measured by official tests, had improved (OISE 2001). However, such apparent improvements have been bought at a price. Frater (2000) concludes that because of the way language is defined, taught and tested, discrete skills exercises largely displaced longer narrative. In other words, to follow the NLS is to be taxonomy driven; in particular, the stress on language concepts and skills at word, sentence and text level as demonstrable measures of success has undermined 'integrated' language competence. Moreover, the effects of OfSTED and league tables have encouraged an over-literal interpretation of the NLS where teachers' own expertise is devalued leading to a draining of professional self-confidence.

The literacy hour is divided into four parts: the first two and last involve whole class instruction. The third part is for 'independent reading, writing or word work, while the teacher works with at least two ability groups each on guided text work'. During this third part, pupils not working with the teacher should be trained 'not to interrupt the teacher and there should be sufficient resources and alternative strategies for them to fall back on if they get stuck' (DfEE 1998: 9-12). Alexander (2000) has carried out a large international comparative study of primary education classrooms. The following (p.482-83) is an extract from this third stage of a literacy hour lesson:

(1)(*Tables 1 and 3 have prominent signs announcing 'We are working with the teacher'*)
T   (To tables 3, 4 and 5) Right, I'm closing the magic curtain (*Mimes closing a curtain. Some pupils laugh*) / which doesn't work. (*Smiles, puts finger to lips.*) Now, if it's a curtain I can still hear you. And I'm working going to try and work with these

two tables and you're trying, / (*frowns at pupil who is talking loudly*) trying to work on your own. (*Goes to table 1*).

(2) (*Teacher is walking towards table 4 to help B*).
C   (*Sitting at table 3, calls out as teacher passes*) Miss, um Miss Newton, can A be in our group?
T   A./ We'll work out where A is sitting. (*To B*) Oh, you've done it! (*Moving to table 5*) Well done! (*Places her hands on D's shoulders*)
D   Miss, can of, off be...?
T   Of, off, it needs 'f' not 'v': of. (*Moves to table 3*)
E   (*Calls out from table 4*) Miss Newton, Miss Newton (*Teacher stops, looks and smiles in E's direction*) shall I do a short one?
T   (*Nods and moves on to table 1*)

(3) C Miss, Miss, Miss Newton, miss Newton...
F   (Table 1, pointing to as word in her word book) Is it that one?
T   (*Leaning over to look at F's work*) It is, well done! Good girl. 'I want...' (*moves to table 2*)

(4) G Miss Newton, Miss Newton, can you spell 'what'?
T   (*Leaning towards G with her hands resting on the table*) 'What'? There's a hat in 'what'. (*Picking up G's wordbook, moves round to stand behind him*) Shall we see if it is in here?
G   (*Nods*)
T   (*Notices F is not working, but staring at the teacher's radio microphone*) hello F, shall we get on with the third word?
F   (*Pointing to the microphone*) I've seem that on television on Count Me In.
T   (*Smiling*) It's listening to you F. (*Continues to scan G's word book. To G*) We're looking for 'w'. Help me find 'w'. (To F) No you are . 'w'. 'w', 'w', 'w', what! It's the 'w' – 'h' page. Sh-sh (*To F, while walking towards her*) Come on now, the best thing you can do would be...
H   Mrs Newton, Mrs Newton (*Reads from his own writing*) 'I will help you.'
T   'I will help you.' Very good. (*Moves to table 2, I's shoulder. I lean back from J*) Let's sit separately. (*Looks over I's shoulder and reads*) 'Hello, oh no my letter has blown away. Help catch it', 'Shall we help?' Right, move you up a little bit J (*Pushes J worksheet away from I's. J moves to the next chair, leaving a space between herself and I*) 'cause your stories are very much the same. I stood on your toe, I'm sorry. (*Moves to table 1*)
K   Miss, Miss
T   (*Nods to K as she passes, but has noticed that F is distracted again*) Right F. (*F goes back to work. T sits down next to H*)
H   I've done, 'I will do',

(5) L (*Approaches from table 3*) How do you spell 'can't'?
M   Miss Newton, Miss Newton...
T   Find the 'c' page in your word book (*Raises her palm in a calming gesture towards M*) Ssh
N   (*Reads to herself*) 'We are working with the teacher'.
M   Is that how you spell 'shouted'?
T (*Drawing M's word book towards her*) It's very much like that.

O (*Queuing behind L*) I need 'that'

T   Bring me your 't' page (*O goes to fetch her word book. To H, in a whisper*)
Come on, you're doing ever so well. (*To M, starting to spell 'shouted' for him*) Sh...

N   (*Reads to herself*) 'We are working with the teacher'

Alexander argues that the teacher's language in this extract originates very much in an educational discourse, which favoured 'child-centredness': for example, her oblique formula for commanding silence (1 – I'm going to close the magic curtain) or class control (Now it's a curtain I can still hear you); the inclusive use of 'we' as a way of blurring the oppositional (I, you); indirect in the management of turns (Hello F, shall we get on with the third word); and in a tone which is gentle and approachable. From a Bourdieuian perspective, this personal teaching disposition might be seen as a *cultural psychobiography*, which develops into a specific *pedagogic habitus* (see Grenfell 1996, 1998) characteristic of the 1970s and 80s. The teacher's methodological principles are a form of cultural capital enacted in a practical field site of the classroom. In other words, what the teacher does is bring her own professional *habitus* into the classroom, which characterises her language and shapes the classroom discourse.

What the National Literacy Strategy has tried to do is to change the constituents and the valuing of this *habitus* and capital: it values something else. In place of child-centredness is put 'instruction'; in the NLS case, children are required to be inducted into the terminology of language. This technical discourse of the NLS breaks through in the above extract in the teacher's focus on phonemes (for example, 'f'. 'v' and 'w' sounds). Elsewhere, the teacher uses the term 'phoneme', albeit in a rather self-conscious way. Alexander contrasts this lesson with the language of a teacher trained more recently. In place of the inclusive language, the teacher is more direct and instructional: 'Have a look..', 'No, it's not in that one...', 'Is it the right word...?'. 'See if it's in the other book'. ' Don't you even have the letter in that one?', 'How do you know that then?', 'What do you think she did...?' (p. 478). Such a difference comes from a different professional *habitus*; one formed in the full force of criticism of previous progressive and inclusive approaches. These differences in *habitus* are themselves the product of the field, or the social space of education. In the 70s and 80s, this space was a relatively protected and teachers were relatively autonomous. However, enormous restructuring occurred in the 1990s, which radically changed relationships – managerial, intellectual, and financial – between institutions and individuals in education. These changes were brought about by governmental edict. The products of education have been changed; what is valued (cultural capital) has been redefined. This change of product has been brought about through changes in process by field restructuring, with the consequential impact on the professional *habitus* of those involved. Education is ruled by capital values, which take their legitimacy from governmental intentions to shape policy in line with economic exigencies. It is not surprising, therefore, to see cultural capital, the language of pedagogy, and the valuing of scholastic content defined in terms congruent with an economic discourse. As Alexander concludes: 'This lesson reveals an albeit gentle collision of discourses which manifests a sharper underlying collision of educational values' (p.486).

The example shows differences in pedagogic culture and the interaction at one time between different field structures as expressed in the classroom discourse, the

teacher's pedagogic *habitus*, and the impact it has on pupils' own language and learning. Cultural capital is always relative and only possesses value to the extent to which it is legitimised within the larger field. It is not surprising therefore that there are differences in the pedagogic discourse (field and thus *habitus*) of systems from different national cultures. Alexander sums these up: rote learning (India), democratic pedagogy (United States), readiness (England and United States), acceleration (Russia) and conciseness and rapidity (continental Europe) (p.429). These features operate in fields and through *habitus* in terms of expectations, dispositions, and orthodoxy. They are present and brought into being in the organisation of education, managerially, physically and intellectually and so can be seen as the expression of cultural capital brought to life.

Of course, within this nationally-based cultural diversity there is the still further diversity of individuals. When pupils enter the classroom, they do so shaped by such cultural determinants as gender, ethnicity, social class and individual personality. As we have seen above, so does the teacher. Where the field site is built on cultural requisites with affinities to these determinants, the response is to be like a 'fish in water'. But the match is normally never exact, and a truer picture would be one of differentials or proximities between what is offered and what is demanded. In some cases, the teacher is implicitly saying 'see it my way' (see Ogborn et al. 1996: 129-133). The danger here is that pupils do only that; in other words, they act in a behaviourist way, conforming to the terms of academic engagement without sharing the depth of knowledge that the teacher intends. Here, it is a case of simply dancing to a given tune. Alternatively, pupils may not be able or will not see it this way; perhaps, because this way of thinking is simply alien to their own cognitive habitus. In these cases, they exclude themselves and/or are excluded. We might evoke the image of pupils literally being put in their place by the encounters, which meet them in the classroom. The picture is complex and what occurs happens by stealth in thousands of small interactions. Although each of these points is an individual instance, there comes a time when the weight of experience becomes determinant. Willis concludes similarly in his ethnographic study of working class pupils. He asks:

> The difficult thing to explain about how middle class kids get middle class jobs is why the others let them. The difficult thing to explain about how working class kids get working class jobs is why they let themselves'.
> (1977: 1)

And concludes:

> The astonishing thing...is that there is a moment – and it only needs to be this, for the gates to shut on the future – in working class culture when the manual giving of labour represents both a freedom, election and transcendence, and a precise insertion into a system of exploitation and oppression for working class people. The former promises the future, the latter shows the present. It is the future in the present which hammers freedom to inequality in the reality of contemporary capitalism'.
> (p.120)

This analysis returns us to the points quoted from Gramsci, where the culture of class and its vision of the world, because it is part and parcel of the social hierarchy, acts to

produce a subordinate culture which ensures subordination through the impulses leading to affective responses to educational requisites and thus the choices made. Here, one has to be careful: the logical extension of this claim could lead to anarchism, and it is this implied notion that contributed to the temptation to see culture as a form of resistance and opposition in the 1970s, along with the fashion to 'de-school' pupils. A better way of seeing this perspective might be as one end of a continuum that has the 'non-conflictual' Vygotskyan approach at the other polar point. It is a case of being sensitive to mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion inherent in the pedagogic discourse. At the same time, it is the conviction of Bourdieu, that symbolic violence, literally to a lesser or greater extent, is everywhere present in the education system, perpetuated by authority on teachers, who then spend it on their pupils through the conditions, both physical and ideological, created for its operation. Moreover, it is brought about in the mundane, personal and common-sensical (*habitus*) as much as in explicit statements of policy (field conditions). The point I wish to stress is that this social class operation is not the only focus for a study of classroom discourse. We can see the same matches and mis-matches in the differentials of engagement between teachers and the systems which prescribe their actions, and of pupils to the teachers who attempt to induct them into certain ways of thinking and being in the world. For Vygotsky, there is a focus on talk and social construction. Bernstein and early Bourdieu were concerned with social class. However, Bourdieu's thinking tools support a more general application which goes beyond class and deals with differentials of gender, age, ability, race as part of a *habitus*, and addresses the 'legitimate' ways of thinking within the educational discourse at any one time. This field has been restructured: the cultural celebration of the 1970s, with its focus on the richness of individual diversity, and its intent to allow pupils to express it, has been replaced, with an emphasis on instruction and shared action. The skills of the NLS – spelling, correct sentence structure, etc. – are themselves skills associated with a particular social class; in this case, white, English speakers. In a world that is becoming more culturally diverse – one need only think of pupils who are refugees or those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) – education policy is often expressed through a language of 'inclusion'. But for inclusion, we also need to read compliance, orthodoxy, exclusion, and socialisation into a certain way of thinking, acting and being in the world.

Conclusion
There is a natural temptation to respond to these realisations by urging change in policy and practice. Bourdieu writes somewhat ironically of the possibility of training a teacher who works to minimise *code* mistakes by making those codes explicit in a system which functions through code transparencies (1977: 126), and questions the extent to which teachers can work 'freed from traditional complicities'. Such an awareness is behind a 'reflective practitioner' approach to teaching. This term became a guiding principle of teacher training courses in the UK in the 1990s (see Barrett et al. 1992) following the publication of Schön's book with the same title in 1983. In his 'epistemology of practice', Schön argues that professional expertise develops through practitioners reflecting *on* practice and *in* practice. It is as if practice is the source of knowledge. Such an approach is a logical extension of the teacher training in the 1970s and 80s. Here, generations of teachers were trained, amongst other things, in the sociology of education. Even the traditional evidence of differential achievement gave them food for thought, and the new sociology of education, which emphasised the role of classroom discourse in the differential construction of pedagogic

knowledge, added weight to the need to be sensitive to the way language is used in the classroom.

Reflexivity is also a founding principle of Bourdieu's approach, but it is reflexivity based on phenomenological constructivism outlined above. Here, the researcher applies the same theory of practice to their own activity as they do the object of research. What does that mean in effect? We have the concepts of habitus and field as thinking tools, and I have stressed that these need to be thought of as more than simply agency and context. They imply a particular relation to the world and thinking about it. Nash (1999) questions the usefulness of a concept such as habitus, the meaning of which may take thirty years to work out. It is precisely in the engagement with the term and the epistemology on which it is grounded that the value of the work is expressed. In an academic field which has its own cultural capital, and which operates according to the same processes as any other field, it is important to see the language used to discuss the language of learning as contesting for legitimate versions of the structure of pedagogy. It is clear that what goes on in the classroom is always open to interpretation. It seems that Bourdieu is accepting this, and that always, there is a struggle for dominant classifications. However, by employing these basic tools of habitus and field, with all that implies in terms of epistemology and theory of practice, we share a common philosophy of knowledge. It is possible to see how the focus for analysis of classroom discourse has changed over time; from class, to socialisation and knowledge, to literacy and conformity. These changes reflect the preoccupations of the day and the extent to which researchers have been guided by them. With epistemological concepts such as *habitus* and *field*, however, we have tools of analysis which do not change over time put remain active when used in a range of contexts and by individual researchers undertaking field studies in education; involving the construction of the object of research as well as *participant objectivation* (see Grenfell and James 1998, chapter 9)

I began this paper with reference to Margaret Mead, considering the authentication of visions on the part of North American Indians. This theme of vision and *legitimation* has been a key-note to the subsequent discussion. What is at stake is what is real and valued, and on whose say so. Ultimately, what Bourdieu is offering is a 'sociological vision', an alternative way of seeing things. There is danger in common sense and the pre-given, which can lead to closure and exclusion. Yet, he is warning us to beware of imagining ideal solutions. It is rather that in applying his philosophy of practice encapsulated in such thinking tools as *habitus* and *field*, we work for the restoration of meaning of our actions. We will never agree over interpretations. However, we can agree to work according to the same epistemological principles which, by definition, will bring us together rather than drive us apart.

Such a philosophy encourages work towards consensus in opposition to fragmentation and conflict. What this form of knowledge and understanding implies is what Bourdieu called 'a conversion of one's gaze'; that is a new way of seeing the world (see Bourdieu 1992: 251). The fact that this conversion implies 'a mental revolution', or transformation, is not lost on Bourdieu. Moreover, it is not the prerogative of the intellectual or researcher but available to teachers themselves. The power of Bourdieu's theory of practice is therefore in the possibilities it opens up to go beyond a restatement of the fact of social inequalities, and the sophistication of thinking tools made available to researchers in education. It also enables teachers to approach the

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classroom with a practical orientation which is sensitive to individual cognition and response, all whilst understanding the role of the collectivity and the exigencies of pedagogic performance. It makes possible a return to themselves for pupils and teachers, but not at the expense of underachievement and exclusion. The greatest gift that teacher can give pupils is themselves.

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