Teachers' social class, professional dispositions and pedagogic practice

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Through theoretically driven case studies, the research reported here considers the ways in which students in different social class settings are inducted into school knowledge. The paper brings to the centre the social class positioning of teachers in considering their role in schooling processes. The central question of the paper is whether we can establish a relationship between teachers' own social class backgrounds, their professional dispositions and their pedagogic practice. The interest emerges from a long-standing assumption that teachers are middle class, and reproduce the practices associated with that social location. The paper is exploratory and is not able to provide a definitive answer to the question of the relationship between class, professional disposition and pedagogic practice. Although it suggests a relationship between teachers' social class position and schooling practices, the main contribution of the paper is to offer a metric for exploring the issue further. That is, through a specifically selected sample, the paper provides a means for considering the implications of teachers social class background, professional dispositions and pedagogic practice for the processes of the reproduction of social inequality, and its interruption.

1. Introduction

This paper is part of a broader study which considered how social inequalities were reproduced through pedagogy in a sample of primary schools in South Africa (Hoadley, 2005, 2007, 2008). The focus in this paper is on the role of the teacher in the process of social reproduction through schooling. When considering teachers at the level of the classroom, what emerges from the extensive number of studies into teachers and teaching is that research that focuses on pedagogy backgrounds the role of the teacher, whilst those that study teachers, generally neglect pedagogy. As a result of this, the teacher becomes in a sense "invisible" in the pedagogy, and is afforded no systematic position in the process of social reproduction of difference that schooling engenders. This absence can be explained in terms of a long aversion to "teacher blame" explanations within research on teaching.

The paper attempts to re-insert the teacher into a systematic explanation of a system of 'sub-relays' within the schooling process, in particular in relation to pedagogy. It brings to the centre the social class positioning of teachers in considering their role in schooling processes. The central question of the paper is whether we can establish a relationship between teachers' own social class backgrounds, their professional dispositions and their pedagogic

practice. The interest emerges from a long-standing assumption that teachers are middle class, and reproduce the practices associated with that social location. The paper is exploratory and is not able to provide a definitive answer to the question of the relationship between class and professional disposition and pedagogic practice. Although it suggests a relationship between teachers' social class position and schooling practices, the main contribution of the paper is to offer a metric for exploring the issue further. That is, through a specifically selected sample, the paper shows how a model is developed for considering the implications of teachers' social class background, professional dispositions and pedagogic practice for the processes of the reproduction of social inequality, and its interruption.

There has been very little work that explores teachers' social class backgrounds and associated dispositions as an explanatory aspect of pedagogic practice. Research on teachers' social class has generally been addressed in terms of analyses of the labour market and teaching as a category of work. The work highlights the ambiguous or contradictory class location of teachers' work (Connell, 1985), the proletarianization of teachers, and the 'labour process of teaching' (Ginsburg, 1987; Ozga and Lawn, 1988; Robertson, 2000). In this work, teachers' class position – as members of the bourgeoisie and/or working class – as a category of worker is interrogated, but not the subjective social class positioning in terms of background. Metz's (1994) study is one of a few that does take account of teachers' social class background in a consideration of their work. Her study looks systematically at teachers' social class

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backgrounds and work identities in three different social class contexts, considering categories of influence that shape the daily work of teachers. Metz is concerned with how teachers' social class affects their definition of their jobs, but does not relate this to their pedagogic practice. Metz's primary interest is in teacher cultures, and her work points to distinctions between more 'professional' and more 'civil servant' orientations towards work, relating these to social class. Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, and Dowsett (1982) relate these distinctions of professional and civil servant to social class and to the schooling type that teachers find themselves in, i.e. state school or private. They identify the contradictions of some state school teachers' social class position, coming as they do from working-class backgrounds. More recently, Maguire (2005) considers the social class background and identities of teachers, understanding social class as a "complex amalgam of the material, the cultural, the emotional and the social" (p. 429), and crucial in understanding teachers' classroom practices.

The issue of social class positioning is given sharp focus in this paper, but less on the affective dimensions of class and its contestation and negotiation, and more on certain structural aspects. In this regard, Bernstein and Bourdieu are useful theoretical resources for the description of teachers class positioning, professional dispositions and practices. After a discussion of the theoretical orientation of the study in the next section, the methodology of the study is briefly described. The paper then discusses the social class positioning of the teachers in the study, their professional training, and their professional dispositions. These are then linked to different pedagogic practices and student outcomes. The paper concludes with a consideration of the implications of the research presented for teacher education, and the question of the interruption of the cycle of poor performance in working-class schools.

2. Theoretical orientation

Basil Bernstein provides the main theoretical resource for the study. Consequently, a particular aspect of schooling is privileged in the investigation – that is the ways in which pedagogy opens up the potential for the acquisition of school knowledge, and school ways of making meaning and organising experience. Bernstein (1990) talks about this in terms of 'orientation to meaning', and his concern is with the 'specialization of consciousness' with respect to school knowledge.

Orientation to meaning refers to the transmission and acquisition of more context-independent meanings (elaborated codes or a 'school code'), and more context-dependent meanings (or a community code).[1] Previous research drawing on Bernstein's code theory shows how working-class students enter the school with a 'community code' and do not have ready access to the school code. Developing the school code is not prioritized in the family prior to encountering formal pedagogy. Middle-class students, whose processes of primary socialization are regulated by pedagogic codes similar to school codes, acquire the school code more efficiently. To put it another way, a '*code*', consonant with that of the school, which entails ways of thinking, reasoning and speaking required for school, is much more likely to be developed in a middle-class home than in a working-class home. Rothstein (2004: 2) explains:

If upper middle class parents have jobs where they are expected to collaborate with fellow employees, create new solutions to problems, or wonder how to improve their contributions, they

are more likely to talk to their children in ways that differ from the ways of lower-class parents whose jobs simply require them to follow explanations without question.

In relation to *teachers*, the interest is in whether there is a relationship between the social class and professional socialization of teachers, and how teachers 'carry'[2] and transmit the code. Do teachers of different social class backgrounds realize different orientations to meaning in the school?

Bernstein offers two key theoretical concepts to describe the acquisition the school code, and the specialization of consciousness with respect to school knowledge: classification and framing. Classification refers to the 'what' of pedagogy, and to the organisational aspects of pedagogy. Classification considers boundaries, and refers to how students, teachers and knowledge and the relations between them are demarcated. It is related to power, in that power is required to determine the boundaries of the what, what is in and what is out, and how strong the insulation is between knowledges, subjects and discourses. Framing on the other hand is about the interactional aspects of pedagogic practice. It tells us about the locus of control within the differentiation – who has control over the way in which knowledge is selected, sequenced, paced and evaluated in the classroom, and who has control over the way in which communication between teacher and taught is conducted. Classification and framing in the analysis are used to describe different pedagogic modalities found in different social class classroom settings, as well as to delineate different professional dispositions of the teachers.

Both classification and framing is expressed as being strong or weak. Where classification is strong, boundaries are explicit and categories are insulated from one another. Where weak, there is integration or blurring of the boundaries. In this study, classification is expressed in terms of a continuum, from C^{++} through to C^{--}. Relations between discourses, disciplines, agents and spaces are considered. To take an example, strong classification (C^+) of the discipline of mathematics would mean that there is little integration between mathematics and other subjects, or between mathematics and everyday knowledge. Framing, as stated above, conventionally has to do with the way in which the relationship between the teacher and the learner is set up, where strong framing refers to a limited degree of options for students, and weak framing implies more 'apparent' control by learners. Again, framing is expressed in terms of its strength or degree of control along a continuum from F^{++} through to F^{--}. Strong framing would imply that students have limited control over the over the sequencing, pacing, selection and evaluation of the knowledge transmitted.

In the research presented in this paper, classification and framing are used to define different pedagogic modalities, or different configurations of the dimensions of classification and framing in the pedagogic practice of the teachers. The pedagogic modalities also consider the way in which students are organised for learning (are they treated as individuals or as a collective?), and the kind of knowledge that is distributed to them (is it specialized, school knowledge or local, everyday knowledge?).

Classification and framing are also used to consider teachers' professional dispositions. In other words, how do teachers think and speak about their subject knowledge, students, pedagogic practice and the relationship between themselves and their students. These are characterized in the terms introduced above. The use of 'dispositions' in 'professional dispositions' is loosely based on Bourdieu (1974), referring to relatively stable ways of

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[1] The distinction is usefully exemplified in the food sorting task presented later in the paper.

[2] In the Hegelian sense of 'trager', as bearer or supporter.

looking at the world that guide action. These are structural classificatory and assessment propensities and are *socially acquired*, and manifest in opinions and outlooks.

Finally, Bourdieu's notions of social and cultural capital, unequally held resources across social class actors, are also used in the analysis to think through what teachers bring to the classroom by virtue of their social class position. Cultural capital represents an individual's cultural status and knowledge and includes "verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the [education] system, and educational credentials" (Swartz, 1997: 75). Social capital is about the "contacts and group memberships which, through the accumulation of exchanges, obligations and shared identities, provide actual or potential support and access to valued resources" (Allard, 2005). Further elaboration of the concepts will be provided in the presentation of the findings below.

3. Methodology

The research reported here constituted case study research, which often involves multiple sources of information for the collection of the data. Data were collected in four schools over a one-year period, beginning in February 2003 and ending in December 2003. The sample consisted of 8 teachers and 80 students. Teachers and students were selected on the basis of social class background, determined using conventional sociological scales of parental education and occupation levels. Four of the teachers were middle class, teaching middle-class children in two schools in affluent suburbs in Cape Town. These classes were multiracial. The other four teachers came from working-class backgrounds, and taught in two schools in a lower working-class urban setting about 30 km from the centre of Cape Town. All these students were black, and came from surrounding shack settlements with high levels of poverty and unemployment. The sample was purposively selected in order to represent two ends of a social class continuum: lower working class and upper middle class.[3]

Each of the eight teachers was observed for three days, and their literacy and numeracy lessons videotaped. A total of 89 lessons comprised the data for the analysis of pedagogic modalities. The teachers were also interviewed using a structured interview which lasted between 1.5 and 3 h. Ten students in each of the eight classes were tested, and some general school level data were also collected.

4. Findings

Summary findings and exemplary data texts from the research are presented below. The purpose here is to show how a metric for further research was developed, and the suggestions that emerged from the study around the relationship between teachers' social class background, professional dispositions and pedagogic practice. The analysis begins with a discussion of the teachers' social class positioning derived from the interview data.

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[3] The study focuses was on class as opposed to race as an explanatory social category. Seekings (2003) argues that a focus on race obscures the social stratification within racial groups, and 'the extent to which race has ceased to be the key cause of inequality' (p. 2) in South Africa. Chisholm (2004) also argues for the importance of social class in understanding inequality. An unequivocal conclusion emerges from her edited collection on post apartheid education: "Despite the best will and policies in the world, an educational system has unintentionally emerged that privileges a deracialised middle class". In this regard, it could be argued that social theory that privileges concepts of class, power, conflict and inequality has more to say about the unfolding character of South African education (Chisholm, 2004:11). This is not to say that the racial basis of difference has disappeared, nor that race or racism do not persist (Chisholm, 2004: 9), or are unimportant, but simply that race is, arguably, no longer the primary explanatory social category that it was prior to 1994 in South Africa.

4.1. Teachers' social class positioning

The teachers' social class positioning was established through an analysis of their social class background, the type of education they received and the social and material conditions of their lives. We show how the sample of teachers comprises those teachers who are middle class and those teachers who occupy a 'hybrid' social class positioning, between working and middle class.

4.1.1. The teachers' social class background

Using scales from (Seekings, 2003), the teachers' social class backgrounds were characterized in the first instance using parental education and occupation levels. Three of the teachers in the working-class setting came from working-class backgrounds. The occupations of four of their parents were classed as 'marginal working class', which includes domestic work and manual labour. One of the teacher's social class backgrounds was more ambivalent. Her mother was employed in semi-professional work (nursing) and her father worked as a doorman at a hotel. The education levels of the parents of the teachers in the working-class setting were similarly low and none had completed high school. One of the teachers' mothers had had no schooling, her father having received some primary schooling.

In the middle-class setting, the teachers all came from middle-class backgrounds, where their fathers were engaged in professional work. Two of their mothers were in secretarial work, one was in the education field and one was a medical doctor. Of the eight middle-class parents, all had completed secondary school and five had attained a university qualification. Taking parental education and occupational levels as indicators of social class background, the teachers in the middle-class setting all came from an unambivalently middle-class backgrounds.

4.1.2. The teachers' education

The teachers in the working-class schools in this study were black, and the middle-class teachers were white. The teachers had all been schooled and trained under the racially differentiated apartheid system of education. This meant very different quality of teaching and learning for people of different race groups and exposure to vastly different forms of pedagogy. Race under apartheid (and currently) correlated strongly with social class (Chisholm, 2004). The working-class teachers had attended schools that were part of the inferior apartheid Department of Education and Training – schooling that was academically impoverished, disrupted and significantly under-resourced. The middle-class teachers were schooled in well resourced, middle-class schools that were well funded by the apartheid state.

The professional training of the teachers had also taken place in different kinds of institutions. The middle-class teachers' training had been in colleges and universities originally established for white pre-service training. The teachers in the working-class setting had received most of their training in formerly black institutions located within or near working-class communities. It was possible, therefore, to categorise the teachers' educational experience as stratified along racial and class lines.

The nature of the stratifications and their associated pedagogical forms are described by Enslin (1990). Institutions established for black students broadly focused on 'Christian National Education', and its attendant philosophy of 'fundamental pedagogics'. This was an authoritarian pedagogical philosophy, where the child was regarded as ignorant and undisciplined, in need of guidance from the teacher, whose authority was derived from the God of the Dutch Reformed Church (Ensor, 1999). It also promulgated a pedagogy devoid of analysis and critique. What many of the black colleges of the time offered were courses that were repetitions of

the three final years of an impoverished secondary school pro-gramme (Freer, 1993: 36). Particularly in the 1980s, black teacher training colleges were understaffed and the college lecturers seri-ously underqualified (Hartshorne, 1992). Students entering teaching had very low schooling results. In 1988, for example, 93% of the successful senior certificate group from which the main pool of student teachers were recruited had scored 33–39% in their school leaving exam (Hartshorne, 1992: 249). The quality of training received in black colleges was severely compromised as a result of these various factors. All the teachers in the working-class setting received their initial teacher training at a teacher training institute in a black township in Cape Town, originally established for the training of Black teachers, and in the 1980s, consistent in its structure with the description above.

In some institutions established for white students, especially White English universities, and in colleges linked to these institu-tions, the dominant discourse of Christian National Education was challenged and alternative offerings became possible – from radical populist to liberal progressive approaches (Ensor, 1999). The pedagogical philosophy was more critical and course offerings were at a higher academic level, often requiring a bachelor's degree for entry or entailing a bachelor's degree qualification. All four teachers in the middle-class setting received their initial training in institutions falling into this category.

From the description of the teachers' schooling and training given above, it is apparent that there was a consistency in the type of education that the teachers *within* the different social class contexts had been exposed to. Given the broad characterization of South African schooling and teacher training types, the two sets of teachers in the sample had all undergone a programme of special-ization for the teaching profession and were formally, fully qualified to teach. They had, however, been exposed to very different types of knowledge and socialization into pedagogic practice.

4.1.3. The material and social conditions of teachers' lives

The teachers from working-class backgrounds in the study rep-resented a form of class mobility that is very common in South Africa. These teachers emerged from working-class backgrounds and had formally, via teaching, entered the middle-class. Because of the rapid change in the South African economy, it is not uncommon for children to occupy very different occupational levels to those of their parents and grandparents (Seekings, 2003: 42). To probe this mobility further, the study looked more closely at this movement of the teachers from one social class location to another. What were the actual shifts in the teachers' particular lived experience? Although ostensibly having education and occupation levels consonant with a middle-class social positioning, a consideration of the material conditions and social relations of the teachers' lives revealed significant differences. To summarize (further detail can be found in Hoadley (2005)), the analysis considered the teachers' family structure, dependents and the disbursement of their salaries; where the teachers lived; and their social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). This analysis allowed us to conclude that although we see the lineaments of class mobility in the teachers in the working-class setting in terms of educational qualifications and occupational position, they had not physically or socially relocated into middle-class milieus. A consideration of the teachers' social networks indi-cates differences, not only in the kinds of networks that the teachers established (what the people they interacted with did and what their educational levels were), but also in the spatial configuration of those networks. The teachers in the working-class setting engaged in activities and formed relationships which derived from the community in which they lived (neighbours, people in their home, and people at church), whereas the middle-class teachers' relationships were not contingent on immediate community.

Although the teachers in the working-class context all had post-school qualifications, including degrees and diplomas, and osten-sibly earned middle-class salaries, they all came from and were firmly rooted within working-class communities, from which their social networks were drawn and with which their leisure activities were associated. Through a consideration of the teachers' geographical locations, and their possession of economic, social and cultural capital, it was possible to characterize the teachers from the working-class setting as occupying a *hybrid* social class posi-tion. Although the lineaments of social class mobility are evident in the education and occupation of the teachers, their material and social conditions point to an ambivalence in social class location. In general, the familial obligations of the teachers in the working-class setting, in particular their financial obligations, were very different from those of the teachers in the middle-class setting. Whereas the latter all had sole claim on their salaries, the teachers in the working-class setting had a network of relations who were dependent on their salaries. The teachers in the working-class setting were all the main breadwinners for their families and extended families.

In the next section, we move from the teacher in the commu-nity, and their social class positioning, to the teacher in the school and their professional dispositions.

4.2. Professional dispositions

Loosely drawing on Bourdieu (1974), 'dispositions' here refer to relatively stable orientations informing practice. These are struc-tural classificatory and assessment propensities that inform judg-ments. 'Strategic' and 'professional' confine the consideration of teachers' disposition to the education field – to their position as *teachers*. These dispositions entail a theory of instruction. This theory of reading the child – where the child is 'transformed into a text' – contains assumptions that teachers make about children and how they learn – i.e. an instructional discourse. It also contains a regulative discourse – of what the relation between teacher and student should be, and what appropriate conduct, character and manner entails.

The professional or strategic dispositions of the teachers were read off the ways in which the teachers spoke about learners, learning and knowledge in the interviews. In the analysis, classifi-cation and framing, conventionally applied to analyses of class-rooms, was used here to characterize the teachers' dispositions. Classification was concerned with the ways in which the teachers constituted *boundaries* in relation to knowledge, and to learners. In other words, how they specialized particular aspects of their practice when they spoke. How did they talk about the subjects they taught? What was the ideal student like? Framing, which is about control within these boundaries, was used to consider how the teachers constructed the relation between themselves and their students, the hierarchical nature of that relationship and who had control over the way in which classroom practices unfolded. Clas-sification and framing in this way offered a way for talking about teacher's professional dispositions. In summary, different strategic dispositions aligned with the teachers' different social class posi-tioning: a communalizing impetus in the teachers' constructions in the working-class setting, and an individualizing orientation with respect to middle-class students by teachers in the middle-class setting.

4.2.1. Knowledge: the classification of discourses

Two interview items were used to consider the way in which teachers spoke about school knowledge, or in the terms introduced above, how they classified discourses. The first item asked teachers how they thought children learnt, and then more specifically, how

children learnt phonics. We found that middle-class teachers were concerned with the particular specialized requirements of phonics, differentiating the learning of phonics clearly from other learning. Their construction of phonics learning can be described as strongly classified. In general descriptions of learning, the middle-class teachers provided a number of relatively precise conceptions of how students learn. These conceptions focused on 'inner' cognitive aspects – the child's thinking and acquisition processes. For example, one teacher explained that learners learnt "through repetition. Because they are making the pattern themselves, you know the brain is a pattern detecting device and you've got to provide the opportunity for the brain to make its own pattern".

The teachers in the working-class setting, on the other hand, presented generalized statements on learning, which in the first instance focused on more 'outer', non-cognitive aspects, such as behaviour and enjoyment, and secondly provided diffuse comments on phonics learning which did not always take into account the specialty of the subject. For example, one teacher responded, "I think children they learn through play sometimes, and even /…/ if you introduce something to them, just introduce it as if they are in a game you know. Don't be serious when you talk to them, in order they learn so they must enjoy it". Another stated: "Um, children they learn phonics, you know by, by spelling maybe. Spelling first and then you take that letter with that letter". In other words, their construction of phonics learning was more weakly classified than that of teachers in the middle-class context. The middle-class teachers emphasised individual learning styles and the need to provide for diversity in learning processes among students. In the working-class setting no such distinctions emerged in the interviews.

In the second interview item, the teachers were shown a set of four potential resources for use in a lesson on creative writing in order to access their orientation to school knowledge in a particular area of literacy learning – writing. The teachers were asked which of the resources they would use, and why. Again the interest was in the classification of subject knowledge, the extent to which the knowledge is bounded from other knowledge and whether elements of literacy knowledge were highlighted. The teachers in the different settings classified subject knowledge differently in their selection and of tasks. In the middle-class setting the focus was generally on the learning potential that they recognized in a particular task. The discussion of the knowledge was strongly classified with respect to the instructional potential of the tasks by taking into account specific elements of literacy learning and the cognitive level of both the tasks and the students. For example, one teacher selected a detailed picture of a city scene. She generated a range of potential tasks and referred to a range of literacy elements related to writing in her response: sensory description, the poem and direct speech.

In the working-class setting the focus in the teachers' selection was generally on the potential enjoyment of learners and their familiarity with the subject matter (often a theme that had been covered). For example, one teacher selected a task containing a birthday invitation and a set of questions, saying "It's going to be easy for them. They know the birthday party, they know the birthday parties, you know, we teach them, it is in their lessons". Subject knowledge was more weakly classified with respect to the instructional dimensions of the task. Weak boundaries were drawn between writing as an area of literacy and other knowledge. The teachers' criteria for selection tended more to aspects such as enjoyment, or to the everyday content of the resources.

4.2.2. Relations between teachers and learners

We showed above how the teachers in the working-class context differed in their emphasis on the outer, non-cognitive aspects of classroom activity, such as enjoyment and the behaviour of learners. This was compared to the middle-class teachers who placed greater emphasis on the cognitive dimensions of learning. How did the teachers' construct the relationship teacher–learner, and how did they construct the child as learner? Again, interview data were analysed in relation to classification and framing.

The typifications of learners in the middle-class context were generated through a school ethos, exemplified in terms such as 'the Arbor child', and statements like 'We don't do that at Rhodes'.[4] In the working-class setting typifications of learners appeared to be strongly regulated by a community ethos. Teachers made constant reference to the types of homes and communities that the learners came from, and the social problems that they confronted. Typifications were also ascribed to learners on the basis that they came from the 'homelands', referring to historical, racially defined 'reservations'. The school itself, then, conferred on the learner a community, or local, identity.

Thus the classification of agents, or the strength of the demarcation of students' pedagogic identities differs in the two contexts. In the middle-class setting there was a strong classification of the student and what being a student entailed. In the working-class setting this classification was weaker, with a focus on the child and their community (as opposed to school) location. These differences in the typifications of learners were mirrored by different orientations to the child. In the middle-class context the emphasis was on the learner (in a particular school and its set of practices) and learning, and in the working-class setting the emphasis was on the child (from a particular community) and *caring*. The latter was exemplified in statements by the teachers like "You encounter problems like, in fact from the kids, social problems. Then you as a teacher you need to be a mother to these kids, a counsellor, a social worker". And, "I've got the love for the children, I've got the patience for the children. I can solve some problems for the children". The middle-class teachers emphasised the instructional aspects of their work: "The best thing is seeing something click, seeing a learner getting it". Another way of articulating these differences is to say that, in response to the interview questions, *in the working-class context, the student is first a child and then a learner, and in the middle-class context, the student is first a learner and secondly a child*.

Finally, through an analysis of the interview data it was possible to access the construction of particular framing relations (the teacher–learner relation) in the way in which the teachers spoke about their interactions with the learners in their classrooms. In the middle-class context the relations were more horizontal. Learners were seen as coming into the school with knowledge and interests. Three of the teachers mentioned learning from the children, and enjoying listening to their ideas. One teacher describes in some detail her interaction with a learner whose parents had complained that she was targeting him for discipline.

> Now, and their perception is that I'm picking on him. So, am I? I don't mean to, but is it happening so often, is he not changing, is my voice getting an edge? I've got to look at how am I coming across to this little chap. So I spoke to him today, I said see this, and this was privately, I didn't do it in front of everybody, and his eyes just welled with tears, and I said Marty, I'm not cross, we need to understand each other.

'We need to understand each other' indicates a weakening in the framing of the teacher–student relationship and an individualised, negotiated approach to interactions with students. In the working-class context we encounter a very different orientation to

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[4] 'Arbor' and 'Rhodes' were pseudonymns used for the schools in the study.

learners. One teacher commented about children in her class who struggled:

> Thando hasn't got brains. There's just nothing in his head but the TST [Teacher Support Team – in charge of professional development in the school] people don't want us to label the children as stupid, but it helps sometimes. One day I lined up the slow ones and I told them that God will take away their brains if they don't use them. Now they have started borrowing books and they read on their own. The support teacher says that they have improved. Sometimes it helps to tell a person what she is.

Setting up '…we need to understand each other' against 'Sometimes it helps to tell a person what she is' is not to imply that the latter indicates a lack of care or concern. It simply indicates a different construction of the child and how the relationship between teacher and student is set up. In the broader Bernsteinian theory, different adult–child relations have implications for the development of different orientations to meaning (see also Hasan, 2001). In the analysis of the pedagogy we will see how this may have consequences for the nature of knowledge made available in the classroom, how it is transmitted, and what is learnt.

In the foregoing discussion we have seen a difference in the way in which the teachers classified the knowledge aspects of their practice, and a difference in the framing of the relation teacher–student. In the middle-class context we see a strong classification of the instructional discourse and of agents, and a weaker framing of the social relation between teachers and students. The converse was true in the working-class setting where pedagogic identities and the instructional were more weakly classified, and the relation teacher–student was more strongly framed.

Despite quantitatively equivalent training (albeit in stratified institutions), the teachers exhibit very different professional dispositions. In the working-class context these are more localised, communalized and less inclined towards strongly classified knowledge and agents. Here the student is first a child and then a learner. In the middle-class context teachers' dispositions reflect a strong classification of knowledge, of learning and of the pedagogic subject; the student is first a learner and then a child.[5]

4.3. Pedagogic modalities

In order to suggest connections between the teachers' professional dispositions and social class positioning and their pedagogic practice, *pedagogic modalities* derived from the broader research are briefly described (Further detail on these aspects of the study can be found in Hoadley, 2007, 2008). The data analysed here were classroom observation data of literacy and numeracy lessons of the eight teachers.

From the two contexts, working class and middle class, two different pedagogic modalities emerge – one which is termed a horizontal modality, and the other a vertical modality. These modalities differ crucially in the potential they carry to specializes students' consciousness with respect to school knowledge. Such specialization refers to whether the students' identity is strongly or weakly marked and bounded, and whether their knowledge, thinking, comportment and language potentially gives voice to particular knowledge, such as school mathematics. The specializing work of pedagogy was analysed, and pedagogic modalities were derived along the dimensions described below.

- Particular *classification and framing* values (how knowledge and its transmission is structured). Classification refers to how students, teachers and knowledge and the relations between them are demarcated. Framing tells us about the locus of control within this differentiation – who has control over the way in which knowledge is selected, sequenced, paced and evaluated in the classroom, and who has control over the way in which communication between teacher and taught is conducted.
- *Instructional strategies* (what kind of knowledge tasks refer to). Instructional strategies help us to analyse the extent to which the knowledge transmitted is specific to the discipline, or draws more on the everyday knowledge and experience of the learners. In other words, is the knowledge distributed to students more specialized with respect to school knowledge or is it localised?
- *Instructional form* (how students are grouped for instruction, and how they are differentiated). Instructional form elucidates the way in which students are organised for learning and how knowledge is distributed. In other words how are students grouped, and is knowledge distributed to different groups differentiated or uniform? Are students individualised or communalized through the pedagogy?

Different configurations of these dimensions will result in greater or lesser potential for students' voice to be specialized; for students to be inducted into the school code. The two pedagogic modalities are described briefly below with reference to exemplary data texts.

In describing the two modalities that were derived from the research, we generalise across teachers within the social class settings. Whilst there were differences between teachers within the same social class settings, these differences were minor on the dimensions measured. We must also bear in mind that the sample was selected in order to maximise differences between social class contexts, and minimise within context differences.

4.3.1. The horizontal modality

The horizontal pedagogical modality emerges from the working-class school context. The following data were taken from one of the working-class classrooms and is used to draw out the salient characteristics of this pedagogic modality.

> *The teacher has just finished a lesson on rounding off to the nearest 100, which the learners have not been able to grasp. The teacher begins the following lesson, saying to the class:*
>
> Teacher: When I look at you it seems you don't understand properly, but now we are going to do patterns. It says here complete the pattern. There's a pattern I want you to complete. They link with the nearest hundreds but we'll come back to them. Now that you have an idea of nearest hundred I want to see if you have an idea of patterns. For now, for example I want you to do this pattern.
>
> *The teacher stands in front of the class looking at a textbook. She copies out the following on the board from the textbook:*

Complete the number pattern
50   100   150   ____ ____ ____
1   2   4   7   ____ ____
4   7   12   15   22   ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

> Teacher: Complete the patterns. Write. Complete the patterns.
> *The teacher leaves the class for five minutes and then returns. She arranges for the distribution of milkshake to other classes (part of the school's state funded feeding*

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scheme (She chats to another teacher at the classroom door.

Teacher: Listen, when I am busy with something or being disturbed, don't make a noise. Noxolo hand out the maths books.
The learners continue to make a noise.

Teacher: You are uncontrollable.
The teacher walks around the class with a big ruler which she raps on the desks.

Teacher: Hey, let's not talk. Let's work.
She wipes the board clean of the previous day's work and the current rounding-off lesson. A learner starts to sing.

Teacher: No, no, what's that? You can't just moo like a cow.
The teacher goes out for a few minutes. She returns and begins a new lesson on literacy. None of the learners are observed to complete the patterns successfully. The rounding off and pattern task are not completed that day or on the following two days. The lesson lasts for 36 minutes.

The first dimension of the pedagogic modality pertains to the classification and framing arrangements of the pedagogic discourse. In the horizontal modality, sequencing, selection and pacing are strongly framed: the teacher has control over what knowledge is selected, in what order it is taught, and the expected rate of acquisition. Students in general are not given the opportunity to intervene in how their learning takes place. There is very weak framing over the evaluative criteria, and the requirements for the production of a legitimate text are unclear or implicit. In the example given above, the learners are not able to complete the patterns here, and no criteria for the successful execution of the task are transmitted. The teacher generally does not draw out the knowledge principles in exposition, and very little (in this case, no) attempt is made to make explicit what it is that learners should know, do or understand. In the horizontal modality, the hierarchical rules are strong and the teacher has control over the order, character and manner of the conduct of learners in the relation between teacher and learner. Rules are based on assertion, or are simply stated without the reasoning or bases for the rules being given. The classification of discourses is weak, and the relation between school knowledge and everyday knowledge in particular is blurred. In this extract, no specialized language is used – everyday terms such as 'patterns' and 'to the nearest hundred', rather than 'rounding off' or 'estimation'. There are also no specialized practices evident with respect to mathematics. The lesson appears to be more about keeping order.

The second dimension of the pedagogic modality, instructional form, refers to the classroom organization and differentiation between agents and contents. In the horizontal modality, learners are communalized in the instructional practice of the teacher, and instructional knowledge is undifferentiated. In other words, as we see in the extract above, all pupils are treated as the same, they all work on the same tasks and the teacher works with the class as a whole, undifferentiated group. At no point in the lesson above does the teacher interact with individual students.

Thirdly, for the instructional strategies for individual tasks, each of the tasks is characterized in terms of localizing and specializing strategies (Dowling, 1998). Simply, these indicate whether the knowledge is concrete, local or everyday (localizing), or whether it is more abstract knowledge referring to the knowledge of the discipline (for example specific literacy knowledge or mathematics operations, concepts or principles). The predominant strategy in the horizontal modality is that of localizing, as the tasks refer to non-specialized knowledge. The tasks incorporate knowledge that is familiar and particularistic, and meanings that are concrete and context-bound. In

the extract above, the only instruction given to the learners by the teacher is to 'Copy the patterns and complete them'. No evaluative rules are transmitted, neither those for the principles underlying the tasks nor procedures for its completion. The learners' task, therefore, became one of mechanically copying out what was on the board. Although there was mathematics present in this example, the strategy used to induct the learners into the task did not require the learners to engage in the application of mathematical understandings, reasoning or procedures in order to derive a solution.

4.3.2. The vertical modality

The extract to illustrate the vertical modality, which emerges from the middle-class context, is taken from a literacy lesson in one of the middle-class classrooms.

The teacher writes up a 'memory sentence' on the board, a device used at the school for phonics learning. Each week learners are given a sentence containing a particular phoneme, and the sentence changes each week. In this lesson the memory sentence focuses on the phoneme 'ow', and reads:
'They saw the little fellow throw his yellow arrow into the snow below the window.'
The learners copy the sentence into their workbooks. The teacher reads through the sentence. She talks through most of the words as she goes along, pointing out different spellings of saw and sore, and different meanings of the word saw. The learners read the sentence out aloud and click when they get to an 'ow' sound. They then read through the sentence twice more, once softly to themselves, and once aloud as a class.
The teacher then asks the learners to think of other words with the 'ow' sound in them. She draws two columns on the board, heading the columns with the words snow and cow to indicate the different sounds of the letter combination. Learners offer words which the teacher writes in the columns. The teacher discusses some of the words as she goes along. In response to a learner offering the word 'bow', the teacher says:

Teacher: When you have this word in a sentence you will need to see what it says in the sentence in order to know how to say it.
The learners read through the lists. The teacher asks a learner to place the word 'crow' in a sentence and then writes eight words on the board:

Teacher: Each word is a noun, so I want you to draw a small little picture next to each word, and then you are going to write a sentence for each one.
The learners copy down the columns of words, and write a sentence and draw a picture for each of the eight words. While the learners do this work, the teacher takes a small reading group on the mat in the front of the classroom. As learners complete the work they select new readers from a reading box on the side of the classroom, and read. The duration of the lesson is 39 minutes.

In the vertical modality, strong framing over sequence and selection is found. Framing over pacing is weaker, moderated by students' questions and interjections, for example, in the student above introducing the word 'bow'. There is strong framing over the evaluative rules: what learners are required to do and know is very explicit, and knowledge principles are drawn out of explanations and activities. In the extract, students are given numerous activities to grasp the sound of the phoneme, and its usage in words and sentences. The hierarchical rules are weaker; relations between student and teacher are more personal, and reasons and justifications for actions are given. The classification of agents and discourses is strong: the pedagogic identity of the child as 'student' of particular specialized knowledge is clearly marked and bounded.

Table 1
Pedagogic modalities.

			Horizontal modality	Vertical modality
1. Classification and framing of pedagogic discourse	Sequence & selection		F^{++}	F^{++}
	Pacing		F^{++}	F^{-}
	Evaluative rules		F^{--}	F^{+}
	Hierarchical rules		F^{+}	F^{-}
	Discourses	Inter-disc (subjects)	C^{-}	C^{++}
		Inter-disc (school/everyday)	C^{--}	C^{+}
	Agents		C^{--}	C^{++}
2. Instructional form	Content		Undifferentiated (uniform)	Differentiated & uniform
	Classroom organization		Communalized/homogenous	Communalized/homogenous & individualized/specialized
3. Instructional strategies	Individual tasks		Localizing	Specializing

School knowledge is strongly bounded from everyday knowledge, and subjects are distinct from one another.

In the instructional form, learners are individualised in the instructional practice of the teacher, and instructional knowledge is differentiated. Different learners are required to do different tasks, and the teacher interacts with different learners as individuals and in groups. Learners are treated as different, with different learning competences and requirements (reading groups are ability-graded).

In the instructional strategies for individual tasks the predominant strategy is that of specializing, where the tasks are generated by knowledge of the subject – in this case literacy.

The two data texts presented above provide typical examples of the pedagogic modalities found in the analysis of the classroom data. The complete analysis entailed the coding of 58 literacy and 31 numeracy lessons across the eight teachers, videotaped on three consecutive days in each of the classrooms. Table 1 below presents a summary of the analysis and presents the differences between the two modalities. Conventional Bernsteinian notation is used in the table to indicate strong boundaries (C^{+}) and weak classification (C^{-}) and strong and weak framing (F^{+} and F^{-}).

A very definite picture of the contrasts emerges, whereas, in reality, classrooms are likely to exhibit hybrid forms of the two modalities defined, as well as more complex and nuanced interplay between social class actors. Nonetheless, Table 1 makes explicit certain orientations to classifying experience and creating meaning privileged in the classrooms in the different social class contexts. The vertical modality presents greater opportunity than the horizontal modality for the transmission of context-independent meanings, the specialization of learners' voice and the acquisition of the school code.

4.3.3. Learning outcomes

How do these pedagogic modalities relate to what the students in the different classrooms can do? Ten students in each of the eight classrooms (a total of 80 students) were given two tasks.[6] The first was a mathematical task where both learners' solutions and the strategies they used for solving problems were recorded (the latter

through observation). The task consisted of 13 Grade 3 – level items. In terms of scores, the averages for the working-class classrooms ranged from 32% to 48%. Students scored on average between 80% and 91% in the middle-class context. 25% of the working-class sample (10 students) was not able to do more than 2 of the 13 test items. Students in the working-class classrooms used concrete strategies for solving problems, predominantly the drawing of small counters in the form of lines on a page and using these for counting, or counting on fingers. In general, the methods used for calculation in the middle-class context consisted of mental calculations and the decomposition of numbers for solving problems (i.e. the use of a specialized mathematical procedure).

The second task was a sorting task adapted from Holland (1981),[7] where learners were asked to group pictures of food, and offer their criteria for their sorting. Twenty colour photographs of food items on cards were presented, including butter, cheese, potatoes, cabbage, butternut, rice, chicken, etc. The interest in this task was to note whether students used 'school-based' criteria for their sorting initially (such as dairy, meat, cereal), or whether they initially used everyday categorisation (for example 'I like those'; 'my granny cooks those on Sunday'). Holland (1981) had previously identified a class-based difference in sorting deployed by children, and had drawn out the implications of this for school learning.

As in the original experiment, in this study students from the working-class setting operated with context-dependent meanings; the way in which they organised experience was based on their everyday, particularistic experience. The middle-class learners initially deployed context-independent categories, which they construed as appropriate to the setting of the task – i.e. the school. When asked to sort the cards again, they shifted their categorizing and deployed more particularistic categorizations. The working-class students, on the other hand, retained the same principles for their first and second sorting, and those were primarily context-dependent. Middle-class students were able to both produce both context-independent and particularistic categorizations; working-class students realized predominantly context-dependent categorizations, and were mostly unable to recognize context-independent meanings.

The significance of these tasks lies in the notion that school knowledge is 'uncommonsense knowledge. It is knowledge freed from the particular, the local…' (Bernstein, 1975: 215). What both tests showed in the case of the working-class students was that localised commonsense, concrete meanings and understandings were not interrupted by the schooling process. A community code persisted, despite three years exposure to schooling. Middle-class students had undergone an induction into the specialized

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[6] See Hoadley (2005, 2007) for more detail.

[7] In the original experiment, seven-year old working-class and middle-class learners were shown pictures of different foodstuffs and were asked to group them in any way they wanted. They were asked the reasons for their groupings. They were then asked to group the food a second time, and provide criteria for the grouping again. The experiment showed that working-class children generally used context-dependent principles for their sorting in that their groupings referred to personal and particularistic meanings (e.g. 'I like those things.'; 'That is what mother cooks for breakfast.') which generally referred to everyday use. They did not change their principles for sorting the second time, demonstrating a single (restricted or 'community') coding orientation. Middle-class children were found to respond to the task first by referring to general non context-dependent principles (e.g. a food category) and, in a second grouping, to more personalized, local meanings. They thus demonstrated two coding orientations, elaborated and restricted, where context-independent meanings were privileged for the school context. In this way, different social class groupings displayed different 'orientations to meaning', a concept introduced at the beginning of this paper. It was argued that the focus of the child's selections were not a function of the child's IQ or cognitive power, but rather a difference in the way the children read the particular context (the school), made selections (around what is appropriate given the context), and realized a particular text (their groupings of the food).

knowledge of schooling and could recognize and realize a school coding orientation.

5. Discussion

Are we able to suggest relations between teachers, their social class positioning, their professional dispositions, pedagogic practice and student outcomes? The connections are tentative – the central purpose of the research as discussed here is to develop a metric for exploring these issues more broadly.

By virtue of being salaried employees in semi-professional occupations, with a certain level of education, all the teachers could be positioned as middle class. However, an analysis of the teachers' material and social circumstances, including a consideration of their access to economic, social and cultural capital and their geographical location, showed how the teachers' social class positioning was in fact very different. The teachers in the working-class setting occupied an emerging middle-class social class position, between middle-class work and education levels, and working-class material constraint and social relations. This reflected a hybrid social class positioning.

From an examination of the professional dispositions of the teachers, we also found differences. In the working-class context, the teacher prioritized the *child* and the need for discipline and caring, and the pedagogic identity of the learner was more weakly classified. Students were communalized, particularly through the invoking of local, community identities. In the middle-class context, the emphasis was on the knowledge dimensions of the students' schooling experience, subject knowledge was more strongly classified and, in the relation teacher–student, the teacher prioritized the learner and his/her cognitive development. There was a strong demarcation of the student's pedagogic identity, and an individualizing disposition was evident in the way in which the teachers spoke about students. Table 2 below summarizes the argument presented thus far.

The final columns show the pedagogic modalities identified in the classrooms in the different contexts and the differential way in which student voice is specialized (identified through the two tasks). Bernstein's theory of the social points to the crucial relation between "the material base of society (its class relations) and the forms of relay of 'symbolic controls' (discursive ways which structure our social experience)" (Shalem, 2004: 60). The Table 2 raises the question as to which configuration is most likely to act as an amplifier or interrupter of particular codes brought to the school by students. It could be argued that there was an alignment between the home and the school in both the working-class and middle-class contexts in terms of the pedagogic modalities which they confronted in the school, and the individual/community emphasis.

Here a tentative comment can be made in relation to the teacher as a sub-relay, and the links between teachers' social class, strategic dispositions and pedagogic practice. The teachers from working-class backgrounds, rooted in working-class communities and located in working-class schools, demonstrated particular strategic dispositions. Confronted by working-class students they were in a sense "held" within a community code and constructed their practice along the lines of the horizontal pedagogic modality. This resulted in a weaker specialization of the students' voice with respect to the school code. What the working-class students required was a greater break between the school and the home, an *interruption* such that they may be inducted into the school code. In the middle-class setting, the middle-class teachers deployed a vertical modality. Situated in middle-class schools with middle-class students the pedagogy supported the development of elaborated orientations to meaning and the strong specialization of students' voice with respect to the school code.

What the theoretical analysis allows us to identify is a structural similarity between teachers' strategic dispositions and pedagogic modalities. This is particularly clear in the table, and the way in which the instructional and regulative aspects of pedagogy are constituted both in the analysis of the teachers' professional dispositions and their pedagogic practice.

If the fit seems neat, that is because the study was set up in order to develop a model for further investigation of greater variation in terms of social class. A greater range of forms and relationships would be expected across a greater number of research sites. However, by selecting the extremes of the social class continuum, the lineaments for a broader investigation are established in the metric.

6. The teacher as interrupter

The literature on social class and the home-school interface emphasizes the challenge for working-class children to access the culture (Bourdieu, 2006; Lareau, 2000; Serpell, 1987), language (Heath, 1985) and code (Bernstein, 1975, 2000) of the school. In the case presented here, we see how the mismatch between the home and the school is in fact potentially reduced by the teachers in the working-class context who make available local, community meanings with which the learners are probably generally familiar. This is speculative, for we can't be sure what meanings are privileged in the home, short of going there. Nonetheless, the analysis shows that the pedagogy in the working-class context does little to specialize the learners' voice with respect to the reproduction of school knowledge.

It appears from the discussion above that class does make a difference, not only for learners' performance in school, but also for teachers. The teachers in the two schooling contexts are confronted by learners who enter their classrooms with very different coding orientations. In the middle-class context, the majority of learners bring from the home an elaborated coding orientation consistent with that privileged by schooling. In the working-class context, the teachers encounter learners who make meaning and negotiate experience according to a community coding orientation. Whereas in the middle-class context, the teachers in constructing their pedagogy are able to rely on the students' domestic acquisition of the school code, and this supports the vertical pedagogic modality, the teachers in the working-class context are confronted with a very different pedagogic sanction. Crucially, what is required is that they *interrupt* the community code of the learners in order to

Table 2
The teachers' positioning: social class, pedagogic disposition and student outcomes.

Social class of teacher	Pedagogic dispositions			Classroom pedagogic modality				Specialization of student voice
	Instructional (knowledge relations)	Regulative (teacher–student relation)	Agents	Modality	Instructional (knowledge relations)	Regulative (teacher–student relation)		
Hybrid-class	C^-	F^+ Communalized	C^-	Horizontal	C^-	F^+ Communalized	$\Rightarrow$	Weak
Middle-class	C^+	F^- Individualised	C^+	Vertical	C^+	F^- Individualised	$\Rightarrow$	Strong

induct them into school ways of organising experience and making meaning.

We are not able to offer any argument here about whether the working-class teachers, in another context and given a different set of circumstances and learners with different social competences would deploy a different pedagogic practice. Through a particular selection of schools, teachers and learners we have shown the mutually re-enforcing aspects of class in the schools. The suggestion is made that teachers' social class backgrounds and strategic dispositions are possibly related to particular pedagogic modalities and outcomes for students. These claims can be made, however, only in relation to this particular sample, with a specific school–teacher–student configuration in terms of social class location. Nonetheless, a metric is developed for setting pedagogic practice up against relevant school and teacher characteristics, the latter explored in terms of social class and professional dispositions. However, if we are to find these mutually reinforcing aspects of social class, professional dispositions and pedagogic practice, what do we do about it? The crucial lever of teacher education is often presented as a point at which significant intervention can be made with respect to teacher practice. We turn to this issue briefly in the concluding discussion.

7. Conclusion

What do the arguments presented in the paper suggest? Although tentative, it is that the privileging of horizontal modalities in working-class schools has something to do with teachers' professional socialization and their constructions of knowledge and learning, something to do with what students from working-class communities bring to the school, and something to do with shared community and school life of teachers.

It is possible that teacher education can assist teachers from working-class backgrounds, moving into working-class schools, to privilege a vertical modality if the teacher education courses inter alia take note of particular design features. Teacher education has been at fault in the recent past in associating weakly framed pedagogic strategies with the key to academic success at school (Ensor, 1999, 2001). Its model, especially in primary school teacher training, is that of a highly individualised, middle-class relation between mother and child. As a range of Bernsteinian studies have shown us (especially, Neves, Morais, & Afonso, 2004), these types of pedagogy widen the gap between working-class families and the schools that serve them. Weakly framed, or 'learner-centred' pedagogies are not necessarily those recognized or deployed by teachers and students in working-class settings. We need greater sensitivity to the social relations of the home and school in working-class communities and how these might be aligned in ways that allow the privileging of a vertical modality. Teacher education should take this as a starting point, especially for primary school teachers. The question is how this might be done, and is a matter for further study.

It is true that social relations in the home support particular orientations to meaning. The gap between home and school is at its widest when we consider the working-class child and the progressive primary school of the new middle class. But is there a way of narrowing the gap between working-class homes and working-class schools which privileges a vertical modality – one which is more closely aligned with relations in the home and builds on them?

This leaves open the issue of the content of courses. Do we want to "make" all teachers middle class through the content we teach? Hardly. Rather, perhaps it is necessary to consider who it is that will be teaching, what prior socialization into

practice they have undergone, which learners they will be teaching and in what particular settings. These considerations could inform models of teacher education that directly address the real exigencies of interrupting the process of social class reproduction for working-class learners, and ensuring their *right* to the acquisition of the school code. That is, we need to interrogate models of teacher education, and curriculum, in the light of who is teaching and who is taught. The research reported here suggests the importance of social class, not just of students and parents, but of teachers, as a key factor in these considerations.

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