Curriculum Policy and Pedagogic Practice in a South African Classroom: A Bernsteinian Analysis

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ABSTRACT in this paper the researchers analyse the classroom practices of a South African teacher in the aftermath of the introduction of a new curriculum policy in the schooling system of that country using concepts of classification and framing from the area of sociology of knowledge. The introduction of the new curriculum policy known as Curriculum 2005 at the time of the research marked a shift from a teacher-centred approach to teaching to a more learner-centred one that was geared towards creating more equitable classrooms. Before embarking on the process a portrait of the teacher and her classroom and institutional contexts in which she worked, was sketched. In doing so, we acknowledge a persuasive body of literature that has consistently argued that educational policies can only be completely understood if the contexts in which it is enacted is also accounted for. Next, is an explication of the theoretical framework guiding the study, the research methodology, and finally follows a discussion of the findings.

INTRODUCTION

The ways that power is instantiated through curriculum continues to be a critical issue within education policy today (Au 2011; Apple 2012b), one that continually raises the issue of the relationship between education and social change (Apple 2012a). This struggle over the politics of knowledge is particularly sharp in nations built upon the colonization of indigenous populations (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez 2013). This has been particularly true with regards to curriculum reforms undertaken in post-apartheid South Africa, where one of the most controversial issues in education in the recent past has been the development and implementation of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) which is now called the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements after several revisions. The salience of C2005 should be viewed against the backdrop of one of its central aims, namely the dismantling of one of the most unequal education systems in the world. Chisholm (2003: 268) puts it succinctly: 'Not only is it expected to overcome centuries-old educational practices, social inequalities linked to educational difference, and Apartheid-based social values, it is also expected to place South Africa on the path to competitive participation in a global economy'.

C2005 was put forward by the South African Department of Education (DoE) as a radical move away from the Apartheid school curricula (Meerkotter 1998; DoE 2011), and it has a very different philosophy from the syllabus/examination dominated practices of the past. C2005 is modeled on outcomes-based educational principles, and it incorporates many practices that have gained favour world-wide such as child-centred learning and continuous, performance-based assessment (Rogan and Grayson 2003). Outcomes-based education (OBE) is the underpinning philosophy for C2005 and can be described as a global educational curriculum reform phenomenon whose origins and evolution can be traced to competency based debates in Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Canada and limited circles in the United States. Although OBE has been referred to differently in these countries, it has common or similar practices (Cross et al. 2002).

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The adoption of C2005 not only signaled a dramatic departure from the Apartheid curriculum, but also represented a paradigm shift from content-based teaching and learning to outcomes-based practices. Government documents on education policy are calling for teachers to become reflexive practitioners, able to guide learners in their efforts to achieve the critical outcomes, which are intended to develop a competent citizenry of lifelong learners (DOE 1997). Studies that were conducted soon after the implementation of this new curriculum and ever since indicated that teachers struggled to make sense of this curriculum in the translation from policy to classroom practice (Jansen 1999; Blignaut 2008; Spreen and Vally 2010; Makeleni and Sethusha 2014).

This paper analyses the implementation of C2005 policy, using Bernstein concepts of classification and framing. The introduction of C2005 at the time of the research marked a shift from a teacher-centred approach to teaching to a more learner-centred one that was geared towards creating more equitable classrooms. We use Bernstein's (1996) theoretical-conceptual framework to understand how one teacher, as an illustrative case (Stake 2000), makes sense of and engages with C2005. We begin here by explaining our research methodology and design, as well as our theoretical framework. We then offer a brief review of literature of research on South African education that makes use of Bernstein, as well as research that focuses on C2005. We follow with a discussion of the historical policy context of South African curriculum, as well as provide a contextual sketch of the South African teacher used as a case study here. We then offer evidence of this South African teacher's practice and beliefs relative to C2005, and conclude with an analysis of this evidence using Bernstein (1996) – with the intent of attempting to understand the politics of teacher sense-making amidst a critically important, wholesale effort to institute a curriculum based on more equitable politics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The research methodology employed in this qualitative study drew on the interpretive research tradition (Cantrell 1993). Fundamentally the research conducted here was explorative in nature and represented an attempt to understand the teacher's sense-making with regard to content and pedagogy, how these understandings mediated the teacher's interpretation of C2005, and how this act of interpretation was practiced in her classroom. This research project was designed as a case study (Stake 2000) that focused on one Grade nine teacher working in a secondary school in the Port Elizabeth Metropolitan area of the Eastern-Cape Province in South Africa. The participant was chosen as an illustrative case because she represented a significant proportion of the teachers working in the South African system of education who can be regarded as working in the privileged section of that system. Most of the earlier studies that researched the initial implementation of C2005 tended to focus on schools located in impoverished and working class areas characterized by difficult social and economic conditions. It was widely argued at the time that disadvantaged schools would struggle to implement such a sophisticated curriculum reform and further accentuate inequality which was the hallmark of apartheid education whilst perpetuating the privileges of middle class schools. She was also chosen for convenience purposes as this school is situated close to the University and the Faculty of Education had already established a good working relationship with the school due to the fact that the University's student teachers are placed here. And finally, it was also important to select an experienced and articulate teacher who could provide rich data. The research made use of semi-structured interviews and classroom observation to understanding how this teacher made sense of C2005 both in her self-reflection and in her classroom practices. The teacher and class were observed for four weeks. Observations were limited to the Human and Social Sciences learning area in Grade nine. Over the entire research period fifteen lessons were observed.

Detailed field notes were made during all observations and interviews, and classroom observations were followed up with post-lesson interviews to clarify meanings. As the main sources of data, field notes and interviews were then analyzed looking specifically for both how this teacher made sense of C2005 as well as whether or not the pedagogy and content integration suggested by C2005 manifested in classroom practice.[1]

Theoretical Framework

As a lens for analysis, in this study we use the framework provided by Bernstein (1996) and his work in the sociology of knowledge, specifically his conception of the 'classification' and 'framing' of knowledge. As Bernstein explains, classification focuses on the categories we create in our consciousness of the world and is a concept which specifically 'deals with relationships between boundaries and the category representations of these boundaries…whether these categories are between agencies, between agents, between discourses, between practices' (Bernstein 1996: 20). Classification does not define the category itself, however. Rather, it refers to the relations *between* categories. As Bernstein (1996) explains:

…[T]he crucial space which creates the specialization of the category – in this case the discourse – is not internal to that discourse but is the space between that discourse and another. In other words, A can only be A if it can effectively insulate itself from B. In this sense, there is no A if there is no relationship between A and something else. The meaning of A is only understandable in relation to other categories in the set…In other words, it is the insulation between the categories of discourse which maintains the principles of their social division of labour. In other words, it is silence which carries the message of power; it is the full stop between one category of discourse and another; it is the dislocation in the potential flow of discourse which is crucial to the specialization of any category.

If that insulation is broken, then a category is in danger of losing its identity, because what it is, is the space between it and another category. Whatever maintains the strengths of the insulation, maintains the relations between the categories…Thus, the principle of the relations between categories, discourses – that is, the principles of their social division of labour – is a function of the degree of insulation between the categories…(pp. 20-21)

Thus, whether we are referring to social categories, categories of disciplinary knowledge, or any other socially defined category, classification is ultimately about identity creation and maintenance of that identity in relation to others.

To further explain Bernstein's concept of classification, take for instance the education-related categories of 'teacher' and 'student'. These two categories exist in relation to each other. To varying degrees, the category of 'teacher' implies the existence of the category of 'student,' and vice versa. Indeed, under current social and educational arrangements, 'teacher' and 'student' only exist in relation to each other. In this case, classification refers to the boundary, limit, and even insulation between the categories of 'teacher' and 'student'.

Further, classification, as a concept, is meant to convey flexibility and can thus be weaker or stronger depending on the level of insulation between categories. Consequently, within any given set of relations, boundaries between categories can be delineated as either weakly classified (more integrated) or strongly classified (highly stratified). Taking the above 'teacher' and 'student' example, the relationship between a teacher and a student may be considered to exhibit strong classification if we see strong separation, or insulation, between the two. This would be the case when teacher authority and power over students is strong, thus indicating a strong separation, or a strong delineation, between teacher and student. In this case, direct instruction and teacher-centered pedagogy would be associated with strong classification because such pedagogy reinforces the distinction (the boundary relation) between teachers and students. In these forms of delivery, the teacher is *here*, and s/he 'delivers' the information to the students over *there*. In this example, strong classification means that teachers-are-teachers and students-are-students, and there can be no confusion or overlap between the two—they maintain distinct identities. A weakly classified relationship between teachers and students would be decidedly different, however. With weak classification, students may be placed more in the role of being teachers in the classroom, just as teachers may see themselves more as learners in relation to the students. Weaker classification exists in more student-centered, constructivist, and critical pedagogies (Au 2009; Bernstein 1996).

Generally speaking, classification is a translation of power at the individual level because power is required to be able to define, maintain, and enforce the categories and their boundaries. Thus, strong classification tends to point to-

wards increased social stratification and inequality, because stronger boundaries (or increased insulation) imply power to maintain those boundaries – like in the strongly classified 'teacher' – 'student' example offered above (Au 2009). As Bernstein (1996) explains, 'Attempts to change degrees of insulation reveal the power relations on which the classification is based and which it reproduces… [C]lassifications, strong or weak, always carry power relations' (p. 21). Finally, classification, as a translation of power, exhibits aspects of hegemony, for power relations are hidden through classification and appear as a natural ordering of the world, '…as real, as authentic, as integral, as the source of integrity' (p. 21). Framing is the counterpart to classification, and it refers to how classification is communicated within pedagogic discourse. Bernstein (1996) defines framing as the,

…form of control which regulates and legitimizes communication in pedagogic relations …[F]raming refers to the controls on communication in local, interactional pedagogic relations: between parents/children, teacher/ pupil, social worker/client, etc… (p. 26)

Whereas classification establishes the cognitive boundaries or limits of understanding within pedagogic discourse, framing establishes the way those boundaries or limits are communicated between people within pedagogic discourse. As Bernstein explains, 'Classification refers to *what*, framing is concerned with *how* meanings are to be put together, the forms by which they are to be made public, and the nature of the social relationships that go with it' (p. 27). Put more simply, framing refers to the communicative and discursive interactions between individuals within pedagogic discourse. Within pedagogic discourse in the classroom, we are then looking at two things: classification between teachers and students and the communication of this relationship within pedagogic discourse. It is the communication of this classification that constitutes framing. Thus, in pedagogic discourse, framing is about operationalizing both *how* meaning is communicated and *who* has control over what happens in the classroom, that is, who has control over the ways in which meanings are communicated. Framing is therefore about control, control over the selection of knowledge, its sequencing, its pacing, the criteria of selection, and the social interactions[2] that make transmission possible (Bernstein 1996).

Like classification, Bernstein's (1996) conception of framing is meant to denote a range of possibilities. Pedagogic discourse can exhibit strong framing as well as weak framing. Strong framing exists, for example, when a teacher has tight control over the selection, sequencing, pacing, criteria, and social interactions within the curriculum. Strong framing is therefore associated with teacher-centered pedagogies of lecture and direct instruction. Framing may also be weak, however, such as when the students have more control over the selection, sequencing, pacing, criteria, and social interactions within the curriculum. Weak framing is associated with student-centered or constructivist pedagogies where students are encouraged to 'discover' knowledge, learn 'on their own', have input in the direction and content of their learning experiences, and bring their own lives into the classroom (Au 2009).

Here we use Bernstein's formulation to analyze both the relationship between the policy context of South Africa and C2005 as well as the study's participant's own classroom practices and beliefs relative to C2005.

Review of Literature

Several studies of South African education have either made use of Bernstein's work or have focused on C2005. Many of these studies have focused on vocational and higher education, (Gamble 2004) mathematics education, (Adler et al. 2000; Coombe and Davis 1995; Davis 1995; Swanson 1998) teacher education, (Ensor 2004; Parker and Adler 2005; Davis et al. 2007) and other areas. Few studies however, specifically have focused on researching and analyzing pedagogic practice related to C2005 using Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing. The studies of Hoadley (2004, 2006, 2008), Reeves (2006) and Hugo, et al. (2008) are exceptions and the present study follows/builds on this work. This study is both similar in the sense that it also employs classification and framing to analyze pedagogy but different in that whilst the studies of Hoadley (2004, 2006, 2008), Reeves (2006) and Hugo et al. (2008) compared pedagogic practices across different social class settings to indicate how inequalities are reproduced in South African classrooms, this study is located within a singular middle class school. A few South African studies that have used Bernstein's

work to make sense of teachers' work in the classroom reaffirmed the thesis that children from working-class backgrounds struggled to make meaningful connections with formal schooling as represented by C2005 as they lacked the cultural capital to do so successfully. For instance, in an insightful paper Fataar (2006) explicates how the small but influential circle of Bernsteinian scholars in South Africa contributed to dislodging C2005. Despite such important work, a question that endures is whether it was necessarily only a curriculum problem or maybe other broader social factors operative in the complex and unequal schooling system of South Africa that also contributed to some of those findings. As Jansen (2011) suggests, when it comes to understanding education and curriculum in South Africa, 'until the systemic nature of the schooling crisis is recognized…all other kinds of…well-intentioned reforms will change nothing' (p. 113).

The Educational and Curriculum Policy Context in South Africa

The adoption of C2005 in South Africa must be viewed against the backdrop of the country's political, economic and educational history prior to the advent of a new democracy in 1994. It is a history characterized by division and alienation between the various racial and cultural groups that constitute the population of the country. For instance, prior to 1994 there were nineteen racially-defined education departments and nine examining bodies in the school system (Behr 1988). In view of this history and its legacy of inequality, it was deemed important to restructure these separate educational departments under one umbrella equally and fairly for the entire nation. The DoE thus restructured all the previous education departments into nine provincial departments coordinated centrally.

Within the schooling system, the most significant development was a radical departure from Apartheid education through an outcomes–based curriculum reform, known as C2005. The adoption of C2005 not only signaled a dramatic departure from the Apartheid curriculum, but also represented a paradigm shift from content-based teaching and learning to outcomes-based practices. It also marks a departure from teacher-centred pedagogies to progressive pedagogy and learner-centred teaching and learning strategies (DOE 1997).

A clear shift can be detected in C2005 as indicated in the following:
  (i) Align school work with workplace, social and political goals;
 (ii) Emphasize experiential and co-operative learning;
(iii) Pursue the value of diversity in the areas of race, gender and culture;
(iv) Develop citizens who are imaginative and critical problem-solvers (Cross et al. 2002: 179)

C2005 identifies eight learning areas. These are regarded as a way of breaking away from strict boundaries between traditional school subjects and ensuring integration within and across the different disciplines as well as developing and organizing the core curriculum. The traditional subjects, which previously existed as individual disciplines such as math, history, etc., were subsumed by eight learning areas: Arts and Culture; Language, Literacy and Communication; Economic and Management Sciences; Human and Social Sciences (HSS); Life Orientation; Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences; Natural Sciences; and Technology (DoE 1997: 9-10).

An important departure from the traditional objectives-model is the emphasis on critical outcomes in C2005. These are broad generic cross-curricular outcomes that have been developed to encourage further integration between the different learning areas and to give an integrated approach in all teaching and learning. These outcomes should enable learners to:
  • Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation;
  • Identify and solve problems using creative and critical thinking;
  • Organize and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
  • Work effectively with others in a team, group, organization and community;
  • Collect, analyze, organize and critically evaluate information;
  • Use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and
  • Understand that the world is a set of related systems. This means that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation (DoE 2002: 1).

Further, in a stark departure from the highly stratified and sharply delineated subject disciplines of the pre-1994 apartheid era, C2005 places a heavy emphasis on curriculum integration. One of the policy documents states:

South Africa has embarked on transformational [Outcomes Based Education]. This involves the most radical form of an integrated curriculum ... This ... implies that not only are we integrating across disciplines into Learning Areas but we are integrating across all eight Learning Areas in all educational activities... The outcome of this form of integration will be a profound transferability of knowledge in real life (DoE 1997: 31-32).

Thus, C2005 collapses traditional subject disciplines into eight integrated learning areas. This collapsing of the traditional boundaries between subjects means that teachers trained to teach Physical Science, for example, will now be required to develop and teach integrated science learning programmes involving Biology and Earth Sciences as well. The same applies to HSS where History and Geography are now combined. This has major implications for the implementation of the new curriculum.

C2005 also suggests significant shifts in teacher pedagogies, requiring more complex and demanding teaching methodologies, and less of the easier, traditional, transmission-orientated teaching based on content-laden textbooks aligned to a fixed curriculum. Thus: 'Teaching will become learner-centred, with emphasis on group work and developing the ability of people to think critically and research and analyze things for themselves' (DoE 1997: 9). Additionally the DoE suggests that through C2005:

- Learners will be actively involved in classrooms where the curriculum is relevant and learner-centred;
- Learners will be trained to work effectively in groups. They will learn the value of teamwork and how to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Learners will become analytical and creative thinkers, problem solvers and effective communicators;
- Teachers and trainers will focus on the outcomes of education rather than merely teaching information;
- There will be a shift away from content-based programmes where teachers aim to cover the curriculum in a predetermined amount of time;
- Teachers and trainers will become facilitators rather than transmitters of knowledge. They will use a variety of methods of instruction to help each learner to learn;
- Teachers and trainers will no longer be the "source of all knowledge" (DoE 1997: 27-29).

At the heart of the introduction of this new curriculum was an effort to move away from hierarchical and transmission orientated methods of education to an idea of knowledge construction that was constructivist and to equalizing classroom relations.

RESEARCH SUBJECT AND HER CONTEXT

Sheila Schreiner[iii] is an experienced female teacher in her fifties and has taught all her life at the same school – Grayson High School, a well-resourced elite school located in an upper middle class suburb of Port Elizabeth. She has more than 35 years teaching experience and comes from an English speaking background. After completing her university education and a University Education Diploma she started her teaching career in 1970 at Grayson High School for Girls. She taught for a few years and went back to university where she obtained a Bachelor of Education.

After so many years of teaching experience behind her, Sheila is naturally confident, a trait that was obviously also honed by her role as Head of Department of History. She is pleasant with good interpersonal skills and occupies her own office across the passage from where the principal's office is situated. When asked to name any highlights of her teaching career she responded: 'I think I enjoyed it when I went back to university because I think it made me a better person and a better teacher' (Interview: May 2005).

The Classroom Context

Sheila's classroom is on the ground floor of the rectangular shaped building, not far from her office. The classroom is bright, airy and well equipped. The front wall is covered entirely by a chalkboard with a built-in cupboard in one corner and a smaller wooden cupboard where a television set is stored, while above the chalkboard is a screen. Sheila keeps an overhead projector permanently in her class. At the front of the class-

room are a table and chair as well as a fan that could be used on humid days. Two of the side-walls have pin boards where charts and pictures hang.

There were 32 pupils in the classroom, sitting in pairs of two in three rows as two single desks were pushed next to one another. The class average of 32 is slightly exaggerated and misleading if one takes into account that some classes, e.g. the music classes often consist of only 4 learners and the art classes of approximately 10 learners. The class composition is diverse in racial terms and representative of all the racial groups of the country, with white learners in the majority.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Sheila's Classroom Practice

Pedagogy. Before all the observed lessons for this study, Sheila had a brief discussion with the researcher on what she planned to teach for that specific day. One morning she informed the researcher that she would not be doing 'an OBE' lesson that day since learners' content knowledge was weak and suspect. This was the second week after the schools re-opened after the June school holidays and she related how poorly the learners had performed in the June examinations. She said that she would predominantly work with a worksheet for that day.

She started off with what she called a 'quiz' and asked learners to take their notebooks out so that she could test their knowledge on work that she completed the previous day. It was basically a revision session where she asked them five questions. After Sheila marked the test she wrote the topic for that day's lesson on the chalkboard, which focused on the social results of the discovery of gold. She proceeded and covered different aspects of the topic. As the lesson unfolded a few central ideas and concepts were written on the chalkboard. Sheila preferred frontal, whole-class teaching in all the lessons observed, trying to get learners involved by asking questions throughout the lesson. The learners on their part were eager to answer although they did not always get it right. They were spontaneous and often initiated questions.

The role of the teacher as facilitator making use of small group discussions and collaborative methodologies was not visible in Sheila's

class. When asked in one of the post-observation interviews why she did not use group work she responded:

I do use group work now and again. I found that with group work your children have to be very disciplined, they have to be very structured, they have to know exactly where they are going, and they have got to get on with it. I think maybe in the lower levels, in the primary school, the children doing group work don't seem to be getting anywhere. I also find that having spoken to the children, they loathe group work, they absolute hate it. And so we try to do it, well I try to do it maybe twice a term if I want them to do a project or something like that. But I don't think it is necessary to use it all the time. And I also find that sometimes the children waste a lot of time (Interview: August 2005).

The above explication was congruent with her overall views about group work in general. Sheila never failed to point out the necessity of the importance for learners to be 'disciplined' when they engage in group work. She also stressed the need for learners to be quiet and orderly when she teaches. This can reflect her need to be in control in the classroom. But learners were not always quiet in her classroom and she had to reprimand and them on a few occasions before she could continue with her lesson.

The next time the lesson that the researchers observed dealing with the apartheid era and resistance was written on the chalkboard. The fact that they were now moving into the 20th century as opposed to the 19th century when gold was discovered was brought to the attention of learners. Sheila moved on to 1948 and beyond and the introduction of the different discriminatory legislation, for example, the Group Areas Act where everyone was separated according to their racial classification. After introducing the concept of petty apartheid, she concluded the lesson by telling learners that they would look at resistance and political action the following week and briefly introduced the topic in the remaining time.

Reference to the fact that Sheila never used group work in the observed lessons and her response to enquiries about this was quoted. Sheila was also never observed as making use of debate and discussion in her classroom, although learners were allowed at times to express their views on an individual basis and to ask

questions. When asked about the absence of debate and discussion she responded as follows:

We use class discussions, we use debate, we also use research, where they go out, like at the moment. This is what they are doing this week. They all went to the library yesterday. They were given topics to research. They have now looked up what they need to look up and they are going to do it for homework. And then on Thursday, they will go into the IT laboratory and they will get a chance if they need to do anything more, they can do it on the Internet and then they can write it up in the IT laboratory. So we vary it. It just happens that every time you have come in, it has been that style of lesson. But they are varied.

What Sheila referred to in the above is about project work that learners had to execute and not so much debate and discussion. She did give learners projects to do and in two observations she notified them that she would give them a library period and one period to work in the IT laboratory. The context in which Sheila's teaching played out made innovative and creative projects and assignments possible with their well-stocked library and state of the art IT laboratory. It was also possible that she used debate and discussion during periods of time she was not being observed.

In asking Sheila about why she taught the way she did, Sheila responded:

I think it was when I spoke to you originally it was maybe the way I was taught is the way that I feel comfortable. And I find that the children relate, the learners relate better when you teach that way. Well, to me, anyway.

After the final lesson observation, Sheila suggested that it would be interesting to see a similar study being conducted in five years time when things have settled down. She acknowledged that she might be too set in her ways and her insistence on quality. She again mentioned the fact that pupils could hardly write or read and that the teachers felt this at the matric level more than ever before. This is a point that she consistently made during observations of her classroom practice.

The above exposition of Sheila's classroom practice pertaining to pedagogy reveals her preference for frontal teaching or whole-class teaching. The teacher as facilitator was not present, and learner-centred and experiential pedagogy were not practised. Her teaching style predominantly could be characterised as a teacher-dominant pedagogy.

Content

Within an outcomes-based approach to education, content and outcomes are intricately intertwined. Once the outcomes have been decided upon, teachers are required to design down to determine which content and learning activities will be included. Since disciplinary integration is a strong driver in Curriculum 2005 where specific outcomes of other learning areas should also be indicated and addressed in the different learning areas, a high level of cooperation is required from teachers at the planning phase. Issues of outcomes, integration, content selection and learning activities are meaningfully linked and brought together in what is called a learning programme.

In all the lesson observations, Sheila never referred to any outcomes that she wanted to achieve. In accordance with Curriculum 2005 policy, the outcomes should be clearly stipulated in a learning programme. When asked about this, Sheila replied as follows:

Interviewer : Do you plan your lessons according to outcomes?

Sheila : I try to.

Interviewer : For example, specific outcomes and the broad critical outcomes?

Sheila : I think in the beginning when one starts you are not very good at that. But I have got to the stage now, before you actually start your lesson, say what am I hoping to achieve here, what do I want the learner to achieve. Yes, definitely, you are thinking in terms of your outcomes.

When later asked if she used a learning programme to guide her content-based outcomes, Sheila replied:

I definitely use a learning programme. Because if you don't you are lost. But I always have, you know, planning. But it is slightly different now, of course, because before you would plan it on a daily and weekly basis to cover all the work. But now there are little extras you have got to put in, like how you are going to assess it. And obviously working with a team, you have to do it. You know, you have got to try and keep together because at the end of the day we will be in a mess if we don't do that.

Sheila commented that a learning programme was slightly different to the planning they were used to. Planning in accordance with Curricu-

lum 2005 policy is fundamentally different from what it was for the previous curriculum. As experienced teachers the researchers were in no doubt that Sheila did plan her lessons well in advance. If the planning of the lessons was congruent with the requirements of Curriculum 2005 is a moot point. The specific outcomes around which all planning should be centred were never spelt out in her lessons. If she did plan her lessons in accordance with outcomes, it was certainly not apparent in her classroom practice. Although Sheila intimated in the interview that she liked to give learners an indication as to where they were going and exhibited an awareness of outcomes generally, this was not translated into her classroom practice. She only informed learners at the beginning of a lesson which topic/theme they would cover that day.

Learning programmes constitute an important part of teachers' planning as they simultaneously serve another important function, namely content and disciplinary integration. Sheila acknowledged that they do not consciously get together to decide on integration but that they tried to incorporate it into their teaching, although not always, but they think about it. Integration across learning areas was not evident in her classroom practice but integration within the learning area did surface when she presented the discovery of gold where the geography (Witwatersrand) was linked with the historical event.

The role of the teacher as a learning area specialist does not present Sheila and her school with any problems. Human and Social Science is split between two teachers who are specifically assigned to teach the History section and two Geography teachers who teach that section of the learning area for grade nines. Grayson High School has sufficient funds to employ additional teachers and under the profile of the school I mentioned that they have twenty-two governing body appointed teachers.

In sum, a careful examination of Sheila's classroom practices pertaining to pedagogy and content divulges a preference for teacher-centred content transmission, and a resistance to content integration, despite her occasional involvement of learners through classroom questioning.

DISCUSSION

The meaning that we make of Sheila's classroom practice must first be cast in light of a Bernsteinian (1996) analysis of C2005. Functionally, C2005 intended a radical, curricular policy shift away from the inequalities associated with the Apartheid regime. As such, and as explained above, C2005 emphasized the restructuring of knowledge away from traditionally distinct disciplinary boundaries to more integrated, interdisciplinary knowledge. This curricular reorganization exhibits what Bernstein would identify as weaker classification. In C2005, the insulation between disciplinary boundaries has been weakened in favour of more content integration. Similarly, the C2005 emphasis on student-centred learning demonstrates both a weakened categorical insulation between students and teachers, it also illustrates a commitment to weakened framing within classroom discourse. As we discussed earlier, following Bernstein's conception, weakened classification and weakened framing generally imply more equitable educational relationships and structures. Thus, given the post-Apartheid policy intentions of C2005, an emphasis on more equitable knowledge construction and pedagogy through weakened classification and framing would seem to correlate with a concerted attempt to develop more social equality.

Having laid out social and political implications of C2005, we can now better understand Sheila's classroom practices. Sheila's pedagogy was transmission-orientated and co-operative learning, or more specifically group work, did not feature in her classroom practice. She expressed herself in favour of group work provided that it was planned properly but had grave concerns as to the general direction it appeared to be taking. She was sceptical about how group work was practised at primary school and that learners generally loathed it. Besides her view that group work wasted a lot of time, and that pupils did not like it she was also worried about discipline problems. This could explain why Sheila did not use group work or was reluctant to use it and instead preferred frontal teaching.

Sheila was favourably disposed towards the disciplinary integration expressly promoted by C2005, but felt that it could be exaggerated. She tried to apply it within the learning area, but it was not visible across learning areas. The fact that outcomes were not specified suggests that Sheila's planning was not in line with the requirements of Curriculum 2005 which would further complicate integration across learning ar-

eas. Sheila had reservations as to the desirability of learning programmes especially as far as inexperienced teachers were concerned, as she put it: 'You know, you need something (a textbook) to cling to' and 'inexperienced teachers floundered'. She remarked that teachers' time was full and to expect them to still design learning programmes was expecting too much. The following cynical comment summarizes her posture: 'All you can develop is a nervous breakdown'.

When analyzing Sheila's classroom practices, as well as her explanation of those practices, within a Bernsteinian (1996) framework, it is evident that she was resistant to implementing both the student/learner centred pedagogy and the content/disciplinary knowledge integration both expressly embedded in the C2005 policy. Thus, despite the weaker classification and framing explicitly structured into C2005, Sheila continued to rely upon stronger classification and stronger framing of her past practice as she attempted to negotiate the curriculum policy reform.

While Sheila's resistance to the pedagogy and content of C2005 manifested in her individual classroom practice, it is critical that we recognize the broader, socio-political implications of her resistance, and Bernstein's (1996) theoretical framework provides some insight here. Bernstein's conception of classification and framing is essentially one of macro-micro relations. Power, or the ability to determine boundaries and limits of categories (and therefore determining the relations between those categories) in our consciousness and language (our framing of categories), is an expression of macro-social relations (Vygotsky 1987). This should be self-evident in how those with power in a hierarchical society manifest their power through their ability to define the categories, define the boundaries and their level of strength, and even shape the parameters of acceptable classroom discourse (Lipman 2004; Smith 2004). Thus, as Bernstein (1990) asserts, the relationships between categories have '…their origin in the social division of labour and its social relations of material production' (p. 47). Those without power, while never lacking the ability to define their own categories, lack the social and economic positioning for their definitions, their boundaries, and their discourse to manifest with equal effect as those with power.

We must be careful in this explanation of classification and framing, however. While strong classification and framing tends to serve as a marker for social stratification and inequality, the opposite does not necessarily hold true: weak classification and framing does not necessarily lead to the absence of social stratification and inequality, or the absence of power relations. For instance, Sharp and Green (1975) find that the open, progressive, child-centered classrooms of a primary school in their study were leading to increased social stratification of students. They assert that this process took place in part because teachers adopted a lassez-faire, hands off pedagogy as their interpretation of student freedom in the classroom. This pedagogy, in turn, led to some students gaining access to classroom opportunities while others did not, as an expression of increased alienation in these 'progressive', child-centered classrooms (see also, Shor and Freire, 1987, for further critique of lassez-faire approaches to teaching).

Sharp and Green's (1975) findings do not negate Bernstein's conception of classification and framing, however. Instead, their research points to the flexibility that, in my opinion, Bernstein strove for in his formulation. Even though strong classification and framing might indicate strong social stratification, weak classification merely points to the *potential* for the realization of different, and perhaps more equal, social relations. The existence of this potential, however, does not guarantee its manifestation in pedagogic discourse, does not guarantee that this potential is activated and realized in the classroom.

Indeed, Sheila's response to C2005 vis-à-vis her resistance to the pedagogy and content structured into the curriculum reform, corroborates the above discussion. C2005, as a curriculum policy with weakened classification and framing, is a policy constructed to explicitly communicate more equitable social relations. Because of its integrated content and its focus on student centred pedagogy, C2005 expresses a commitment to a decreased hierarchy of knowledge and classroom relations. It thus seems logical that a society interested in increasing social equality would likewise be interested in advocating for classroom content and discourse that promoted curriculum equality as well. C2005 attempts to articulate these goals and relations through policy structure. However, C2005 sim-

ply provides the structure and policy context. As such it only creates the potential for more equitable social and educational relations to arise through classroom practice. Sheila's classroom practice illustrates that such potential does not guarantee more equitable relations: Despite the policy expectations for more learner centred instruction and content integration provided by C2005, Sheila found little value or use in changing her past instructional practices or curriculum.

Further, if we take into account the explicit connection between social relations and the classification and framing of knowledge in the classroom, then we also must read Sheila's resistance to C2005 also as a resistance to the changing social and political relations happening in South Africa more broadly. Whether conscious of it or not, on some level Sheila's curriculum resistance is a form of resistance to the development of more equitable social relations. In Bernsteinian terms, teachers are 'agents of symbolic control' (Bernstein 1990: 138) whose role within the process of the regulation of consciousness, within the communication of pedagogic discourse, is that of 'reproducer' of particular forms of consciousness. As a teacher trained in the old, Apartheid system, she struggles with both her own identity within C2005 as well as the forms of consciousness she is expected to communicate to students in post-Apartheid South Africa.

CONCLUSION

This study clearly points to the difficulties of pushing for equitable reform through curriculum policy if teachers either disagree with the politics of the policy and are resistant to the social relations implied through such policy. A Bernstenian analysis allowed us to look underneath the layers of Sheila's classroom's practices and to its attendant meanings and how it relates to her identity as a teacher operating in the complex South African schooling system that is still largely organized around race and class. There was a disjuncture between what the policy required her to do and what she actually did in her classroom. The requirements of policy clearly did not sit comfortably with Sheila and left her with a dilemma that she chose to resolve through strong classification and framing, thus contradicting policy and perpetuating the past. These findings remind us that educational poli-

cy reform, in this case curriculum policy, is likely to fail unless the broader, structural changes dealing with social factors surrounding the implementers of these reforms are also addressed as critical stakeholders. The study demonstrated clearly that curricular change is not smooth, or linear, or without reverses. In fact, it portrayed change as being highly turbulent and difficult to navigate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While this study focused exclusively on a middle-class school and how this particular teacher read and enacted policy in her classroom, there are some important recommendations to be gleaned from Sheila's sense making of C2005. Policy guidelines need to adequately consider at both conceptual as well as at the level of policy implementation the complex ways in which teachers make sense of a curriculum. Since a curriculum is functionally operated based on teacher consciousness and in practice at the classroom level, teachers need to be involved in the development of any major curriculum as it is implemented.

NOTES

1. While this paper is co-authored, the original research design and implementation was carried out by the first author.
2. I am taking liberty with one piece of Bernstein's formulation here. He uses the term "social base" where I have used the term "social interactions." Unfortunately, Bernstein is absolutely unclear about what he means by "social base." He offers no definition, and even excludes it elsewhere when he just lists selection, sequencing, pacing, and criteria in reference to "framing." I take Bernstein to mean that, since paedagogic discourse implies social relations, at least in the classroom (social relations between students and social relations between students and teacher), then framing must also communicate some social norms regarding interactions between people. Thus, I use the term "social interactions" to connote the relationships that are embedded in any pedagogic discourse.
3 Pseudonym

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