Developing Pre-Service Teachers' Critical Literacy Perspectives: A Bourdieusian Analysis

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Abstract

Many student teachers commit to the belief that education is for all pupils regardless of gender, race or class. This is not surprising because schooling is expected to be socially just, and should not, therefore, be influenced by discrimination through sex, language, culture, ethnicity, religion or disability, socio-economic status or geographical location (Cumming-Potvin, 2009). However, the field of education does not provide an equal playing field for all. Schools are geared to the interests of the dominant group, the middle classes (McLaren, 2015). Traditional literacy pedagogy is implicated in this dynamic because it has been built on 'a set of tacit beliefs and unconscious norms' that privileges those already at home in the classroom and advantaged in society (Mayher, 2015: ii). The solution, Giroux (2004) suggests, is to cultivate the capacity for critical judgment by developing the capacity to question, to recognise social injustices and systemic wrongs, and to challenge these.

Critical literacy is understood, not just as an instructional practice, but also as a philosophy and mindset that is committed to socially just teaching. This mindset, grounded in Freire's (1970) theory of conscientisation encompasses a fundamental set of tendencies and sensibilities that help us to 'situate everyday life in a larger geopolitical context' (Apple, 2015). Among these dispositions are the beliefs, values and attitudes we hold about our selves and others; our capacity for self-determination, individual autonomy and social agency; our ability to pose and solve problems; and our capacity for complex critical thinking.

This research was motivated by a desire to understand if student teachers have the capacity to develop a critical literacy mindset, and, if so, whether developing this skill can help orientate them in the direction of socially just teaching. These issues are explored using Bourdieu's (1977) distinctive concepts (habitus, capital and field) that frame literacy as an ideological act, an act of misrecognition that results in 'symbolic violence'. This is not violence in the everyday sense of the word. It is the imposition of a 'cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power' (Bourdieu, 1977:5). What it means is that our pupils play a game in which not everyone is equal. Chances of succeeding in the game are predetermined (Mills, 2008). This is explained by Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory of reproduction which shows how the social world reproduces itself through social structures such as schooling. Having a critical literacy mindset I argue can help student teachers towards recognition, to seeing the world as it is. This can engender a commitment to transform or resist the symbolic violence the system exerts.

This study took place in a small, specialist teacher education College, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. It is an esteemed institution that demands high-level entry grades. A group of eight self-selecting third year student teachers participated in the study. Mirroring national trends, the students made up a largely homogenous group, being of similar age, they were Caucasian, female, monolingual English speakers, from a Christian background, and all had ambitions to be primary school teachers. Growing up in Northern Ireland meant that they had little previous exposure to racial, linguistic, or religious diversity. Five of the eight students self-identified as middle class and three as working class. Two of the three had parents who studied for University degrees as adults, and as such I considered them to be 'borderline' middle class.

The methodological design is based on action research using semi-structured interviews. A semester-long, pre-existing literacy programme was restructured to embed critical literacy. Following an initial semi-structured group interview that took the form of a guided conversation, the student volunteers participated in the revised Literacy programme along with their peers in the knowledge that they were being observed. At the end of the programme each participant took part in a one-on-one semi-structured interview.

Findings reveal that the student teachers had a positive orientation towards critical literacy and, to varying levels, were negotiating a critically literacy perspective. However, a number of factors had a constraining impact on the students' capacity to develop critically literate tendencies and sensibilities. Most notable of these was the deeply embedded nature and mindset of privilege (Swalwell, 2013) that manifested in a number of beliefs including a tendency to conflate poverty with prejudicial stereotypes, attribution of fault to others who are located differently in the social world, and unquestioning acceptance of the education system. With the exception of one participant, the student teachers struggled to see beyond their structural privilege, and they tended to unquestioningly accept 'the ideologies of domination around them' (Stahl, 2015: 24). A complicating factor is that these dispositions tend to be reinforced within the privileged confines of teacher education in which students are rarely asked to recognise their own privilege, or to question the ways in which they have been, and continue to be shaped and constructed by societal forces. I suggest that the students' misrecognition and inability to see outside the dominant, hegemonic discourse, is not their fault. They too are products of a system that has structured and continues to structure them (Bourdieu, 1998). This means that the beliefs, values and attitudes they hold operate below their level of consciousness. Hence I argue that if we are to avoid reproducing existing patterns of privilege and disadvantage then there is a need for a more nuanced, specifically a sociological and structural understanding of the root causes of inequity, and that Bourdieu's concepts can provide us with a way of seeing the world in a highly perspicuous light. Seeing and thinking with Bourdieu's tools, that is, having a structural view and understanding could help bring subjectivities to light, giving student teachers a much better 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1977).

I argue that preparing pre-service teachers to work with difference and diversity in the interests of social justice is critical. This study shows that a privileged ideology cannot be shaken off easily and that the task of enlivening student teachers' critical sensibilities is challenging. My data shows, however, that it is possible, but it takes time. If we want to address the root causes of inequity, we must surely attend to the ideological dimensions in student teachers' professional development (Gorski, 2018). Therefore, acquiring a critical orientation, I conclude, can have positive effects on student teachers' capacity and readiness to understand and commit to socially just teaching. It can help them to recognise their power and how they can use that power as agents of change against oppression in the field of education. On this basis, this Dissertation emphasises the need for a sociological, specifically a critical literacy orientation in student teachers' preparation. I conclude that designers of literacy curricula, syllabi and policy, might usefully review the literacy agenda with a view to making critical literacy a compulsory element of all teacher education programmes.

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Acknowledgements

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Chapter One:
Introduction

Introduction

This research seeks to understand how a Bachelor of Education (BEd) (graduate professional degree that prepares students to work as teachers in schools), might challenge and nurture ideas about literacy and social justice. The study focuses on a group of BEd3 (year three of four) student teachers taking a semester long, pre-existing literacy course. For the purpose of this study the course was adapted to embed critical literacy. These study uses Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) conceptual tools which frame literacy as an ideological act, an act of symbolic violence upon some of our pupils. Traditional literacy pedagogy is implicated in this dynamic because it has been built on 'a set of tacit beliefs and unconscious norms' that privileges those already at home in the classroom and privileged in society (Mayher, 2015: ii). Schooling is expected to be socially just, which means it should not be influenced negatively by discrimination through sex, language culture, ethnicity, religion or disability, socio-economic status or geographical location (Cumming-Potvin, 2009). Yet we live in a world in which social practices and structures may reveal, sometimes explicitly and, most often implicitly, prejudice, racism, sexism and questionable values. Our duty is to question, to recognise social injustices, and to challenge these but the ability to identify systemic wrongs requires, as Giroux (2004) explains, a cultivation of the capacity for critical judgment. Adopting a socially just literacy pedagogy, understood briefly as fairness premised on a belief that all children can learn (Chubbuck, 2010), privileges an approach to teaching literacy that includes not only knowledge acquisition and skill development but also critical engagement (Luke, 2000; Smith, 1992). Cumming-Potvin (2009) believes this is essential for moving beyond a technical model of teacher education to helping student teachers understand the socially constructed nature of literacy. In this introductory chapter I will outline the rationale for this study, briefly introduce Bourdieu's logic of practice theory, and consider the nature of critical literacy. I will conclude by stating the research questions, and providing an overview of the chapters to follow.

Rationale

From an early age it was my dream to be a teacher but coming from a working class background it was a tall ambition confirmed explicitly by teachers and implicitly by others. However, I succeeded, and spent eleven very happy years teaching in a primary school and for the past twenty-two years I have worked as a teacher educator, teaching pre- and in-service teachers. When I examine my professional life there are a few fleeting yet significant moments that stand out, not because they were notable highs or lows but because they were game changers in my thinking and understanding of what being a teacher is really about. These are described here briefly with all names changed and identifying information not included.

Tony

Undoubtedly and very regretfully as a teacher I failed children in my care. Reflecting on my thirty-three years of teaching the one achievement I am most proud of however is my work with Tony. In my fifth year of teaching a new boy came into my Primary Five class mid-September. He was nine years of age and living in a children's home as a result of having two alcoholic parents. Tony had been expelled from his previous three schools. He spent his first few weeks in my class rampaging around the room, growling and terrorising the other pupils, and me. I was at a loss to know what to do. By December however, Tony had calmed considerably, he and I had developed a very good rapport. We had come to like one another and were working well together. To this day he is the one pupil I still think and wonder about, although a few more Tonys as an early career teacher might have meant I jumped ship.

Sean

A few years later I was teaching a class of six year olds. As part of our topic on transport my young class was enthusiastically telling car stories. Sean innocently regaled his story about his daddy going to jail for joy riding. Recently I asked a group of BEd3 students how they would reply to a crucial moment like this in a classroom discussion. Collectively they agreed that the teacher should address the issue of theft and let Sean and his peers know that this was wrong. I asked them how that response would impact on Sean. They still thought Sean and the other pupils would benefit most from a lesson on theft and felt that not addressing the issue would be unethical. I dealt with this situation by trying to encourage empathy, encouraging the students to see how different teacher responses might impact on Sean. Even when presented with alternative ways of dealing with the situation that would not invalidate Sean and his life experience, the students were not convinced.

Orla

I interviewed Orla as part of a research project in which I was involved. Orla was a mother of three living in inner city West Belfast. Her third child was in Primary Four when she was identified as having specific literacy difficulties. Orla was relieved. Referring to the class teacher, she said, "I burst into tears. I could have hugged that woman". Orla had spent the first three years of her child's schooling trying to convince her teachers that she was experiencing difficulty with literacy but no one listened. The awful fact of the matter is that Orla's daughter did not receive the additional support or intervention she needed for all of her early years education. Would Orla have been listened to if she had been an affluent, middle class parent?

Strabane

One cold February I visited a school in Strabane, County Derry to observe a student teaching. I was not in the classroom long when I noticed a boy with only one button on his school shirt. When the bell rang for break, the children dashed out into the winter cold some grabbing their coats, all but one was wearing a coat. After break the student

teacher's lesson progressed and to my surprise the student pressed this boy to read aloud to his peers even though he had not volunteered. In the post lesson debrief it became apparent that the student had not identified signs of potential neglect. I also discovered that the child had been asked to read because he had not done his reading homework and the student judged that he needed the practice.

Poleglass

While visiting student teachers in a school in a highly deprived area of inner city Belfast, I noticed some great art on the walls and commented on it to the Principal. The art depicted self-portraits of pupils who were in their final year of primary school in various occupational roles (nurse, fireman, teacher, mechanic, judge and so on). The Principal explained that this was part of a project to get the pupils to aspire to an alternative future. The project came about because when asked what kind of job they would like when they left school, the pupils could not respond. They did not have ambitions or aspire to a role in society, nor did they seem to have the vision or language to create a future for themselves. Most of the pupils came from intergenerational non-working families. The work this school was engaged in is a concrete example of transformative educators aiming to help their pupils actively resist societal hegemony and to take the power of education into their control. What they are resisting are the inequalities and social roles expected of their pupils because of their starting points within the education system and beyond.

What these anecdotes have in common is that the pupils are all in some way disadvantaged. In a system that privileges the already privileged the odds are stacked against these children. As educators we are in a position of privilege to work towards a qualitatively better life for all (Giroux, 2006). Like many who have come before them, my teacher education students have spent a significant amount of time in traditional school settings with the large majority having attended a post-primary grammar school, a system in which traditional methods of teaching hold strong. Having taken and succeeded in the 11 Plus examination, Key Stage tests, GCSEs and A-levels along with formative tests, their view of education and its purpose is constrained. My challenge as a teacher educator is to determine how best to help the pre-service teachers I teach to negotiate the terrain between the conflicting social worlds of classroom and initial teacher education. In this context I too am challenged by the pressure to prepare students for more exams and testing whilst trying to develop them into concerned, critically reflective, socially just teachers. The reason why this is so important is outlined in the following section.

Groomed to Fail

Education is not a neutral activity. Schools are geared to the interests of the dominant group, the middle classes (McLaren, 2015). Yet many teachers commit to the belief that education is for all pupils regardless of gender, race or class. In other words they commit to the myth of meritocracy, that you reap the benefits of the effort you put in. Accordingly, education is therefore perceived as society's great equaliser. Yet research

shows that one of the most powerful determinants of educational success is socioeconomic background. McLaren makes this point powerfully:

> Economically disadvantaged children are being groomed by society at an early age to fail, doomed to perpetuate a vicious and endless cycle of poverty. (2015: 114)

For those of us who have been fortunate enough to be successful in the education system it can be difficult to recognise and understand how disadvantaged children can come to be disenfranchised in this way. The majority of teachers in Northern Ireland (and thereby the student teachers I teach) are mostly middle class, white, and female. For example, of the student teachers currently registered in the College in which work 80% are female, 100% are white, and only 17% are from quintile one, the lowest social deprivation group. In addition to this, their progression through the education system has likely internalised the norms of that system so they see its effects as ostensibly committed to positive outcomes for all, in other words, as meritocratic (Mayher, 2015: x). The pupils we teach however come from much more diverse backgrounds and life experiences. They come from homes where poverty, crime, illiteracy, drug addiction, alcoholism, family break ups, joblessness, obesity, suicide, and poor mental health mark their lives. Research by Thompson, McNicholl and Menter (2016: 3) suggests that there is ignorance about the impact of socio-economic class amongst student teachers who they say hold stereotypical views about the disadvantaged and attribute blame to them for the inequity in their performance in education. Gale and Densmore (2000) explain that this deficit ideology leads educators to define the problem in terms of pupils' inabilities to achieve and their families' inability to understand the problem, rather than pointing to the many barriers that impede their achievement. The problem with such an ideology is that it can lead to low expectations of disadvantaged pupils thereby exacerbating already inequitable circumstances. I do not for one moment suggest that teacher education can eliminate these deeply rooted societal issues, but I shall argue that there is a hugely significant role to be played by teachers and schools in mitigating the barriers that exacerbate inequity. However, to fulfil this role and make a difference in the lives of the disadvantaged requires dispositions to teach all learners equitably (Villegas, 2007). This raises the question about what is needed for teachers to act justly towards all pupils. The benefits of studying for an EdD have made me more certain than ever of the need for teachers to understand theory and how it is implicated in our professional practice. The theories of Pierre Bourdieu are, I shall argue, particularly relevant in helping to conceptualise the field of schooling. Bourdieu saw his methodology as a way of freeing people from imposing social forces and liberating them from suffering (Grenfell, 2012) and I turn now to Bourdieu and his logic of practice theory.

Bourdieu's Thinking Tools

As a sociologist Bourdieu was interested in the social construction and reproduction of social class. His theoretical tools of habitus, field and capital are particularly applicable in helping to broaden our understanding and exploration of the social world. Bourdieu uses the theory of reproduction to explain the unequal scholastic achievements of

children from differing social classes, those who society 'grooms to fail' (McLaren, 2015). Reproduction theory (discussed in detail in Chapter Three) explains how some pupils are rendered 'fish out of water' by schooling (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 94). What this means is that some pupils encounter schooling as an unfamiliar habitus and field and as a result pedagogic failure seems inevitable (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1997). In contrast, some pupils find that they are 'fish in water', that is, those with a favourable start in life succeed because they are already favoured by the system. This occurs as a result of Pedagogic Action, a concept used by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) to describe the curricular activities undertaken in schools. These activities are arbitrary in nature because they are not chosen by an identifiable agent. Yet they appear as natural and inevitable, but exist only because of the power of the dominant class. Pedagogic Action is imposed by the dominant group which is in itself an arbitrary power. This is done at the expense of other sociocultural groups in what Bourdieu and Passeron term 'symbolic violence' (1997). Violence here does not mean violence in the conventional sense but because it is arbitrarily chosen. The fact that we do not recognise the arbitrariness of Pedagogic Action and of the dominant power means that we 'misrecognise' it (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In this way the education system is perceived as meritocratic. For example, as one of the student participants in this study said, *being working class doesn't generally mean that you're not going to succeed, even though the statistics show otherwise*.

Bourdieu and Passeron's theory, suggests that education serves to mask the operation of social selection by imposing the dominant discourse of meritocracy. What this means is that an individual cannot succeed without mastering the tools of the system. These tools centre on the Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) concept of 'capital' of which there are four different types: economic, cultural, social and linguistic. Carrington and Luke describe capital as 'an index of relative social power' that has social effects and consequences for the individual (2010: 101). For Bourdieu and Passeron, capital is the primary way in which conditions of social inequality are identified, organised and transmitted so as to separate those who will dominate from those who are to be dominated and marginalised. Capital therefore serves the interests of the state and in doing so legitimates the dominant discourse, hence its arbitrary nature that results in symbolic violence. Those children who are lacking in capital, who are 'fish out of water' are thereby groomed by the system to fail (McLaren, 2015).

Following this analytical framework, the social effects and consequences for those children living at the sharp end of society, that is, those who are marginalised, are that they may have no concept of a future as a broad field of innumerable possibilities (Wolfreys, 2000). Rather, the future is something to which they submit resignedly as an aspect of the subjective expectations attached to their class. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) conviction is that the working classes by virtue of their relationship to capital either eliminate themselves from the outset or condemn themselves to eventual elimination. Disadvantaged pupils' subjective expectations are therefore linked to the objective probability or expectation of success. Bourdieu and Passeron suggest that this accounts for:

> The educational mortality of the working classes and the survival of a fraction of those classes…[and] the survivors' attitude towards the system. (1977: 156)

Teachers are implicated here because failure to recognise the taken-for-granted social practices and power relations means that these go unchallenged. The responsibility of teachers is to recognise social injustices, identify systemic wrongs, question the status quo, and then to challenge these. In the next section I consider how having a critical literacy perspective might help to foster these dispositions.

Cultivating a Critical Literacy Perspective

The term literacy refers to the generation and transmission of meaning through speaking, listening, reading and writing of text. Critical literacy involves a fundamentally different view to literacy. It refers to:

> The technologies of print and other media of communication to analyse, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of everyday life. (Luke, 2012: 5)

What Luke is indicating here is that the critical literacy discourse is an essentially political orientation towards literacy. Discourses are never innocent or neutral. In all their forms they provide insights into, and are reflective of, our social world. These insights can empower visions of groups and individuals, practices and structures but they can also advance prejudice, racism, sexism and questionable values. The aim of critical literacy is to encourage discriminating readers, writers, speakers, listeners and thinkers who analyse how discourses work and the need for such skills has never been more relevant. As Comber explains:

> Critical literacies involve people using language to exercise power, to enhance everyday life…and to question practices of privilege and injustice. This sounds grand, but often, perhaps usually, it may be in the more mundane and ordinary aspects of daily life that critical literacies are negotiated. (2001:173)

Comber's point that being critically literate can help us in negotiating our everyday lives is key and the need for such skills is becoming increasingly more relevant. We live in a globalised world where we have never before had so much information available to us, with ever more complex forms of text production, reproduction and dissemination (Janks, 2012). Consequently, as Janks explains we often become unconscious agents in the distribution and reproduction of powerful discourses that are disseminated not only to us but also through us, for example, through social media. Following this argument, traditional literacy pedagogy with its reliance on technical proficiency, may not be enough and may not empower teachers or pupils. Developing a critical literacy perspective would cultivate our capacity to:

> Question dominant epistemological, axiological, and political assumptions that are often taken for granted and often prop up the dominant social class. (McLaren, 2015: 8)

What can be concluded from this viewpoint is that mastering critical literacy skills has the potential to act as a strategy in teaching in the interests of social justice (Luke, 2000: viii). In this study I seek to ascertain the extent to which this possible. I begin below by examining the epistemological nature of critical literacy.

Critical Literacy as an Impure Discourse

There is no blueprint, no correct, no universal model of critical literacy. This would go against its foundational principles. It is what Morgan refers to as an 'impure discourse', by which she means that critical literacy has a complex conceptual history derived from various discourses (1997: 83). The various understandings that have historically contributed to the discourse of critical literacy combine among others, critical theory, as well as Freirean and post-discourse influences (Cervetti, Paradales and Damico, 2001). The founding concepts of these schools of thought are themselves diverse and are influenced by many antecedents and discourses, which will be discussed later in this chapter. At his point however, I shall consider the concept of discourse.

All discourses are complex, composite and powerful. In the following four defining points, taken directly from Morgan (1997) the scope of discourse as constituting not only our thinking, but also our actions, attitudes, and our sense of self is made clear:

i. Discourses constitute and are constituted by social practices and institutions, for example, through policy, syllabi, curricula, and through pre-service training. The dominant discourse conveys a sense of what teachers should value, how they should act, and what knowledge and competences they and their pupils should aspire to. What is the dominant literacy discourse today? In what ways would a critical literacy discourse differ from this?

ii. Discourses converse with one another offering alternatives to what other discourses have to offer. As individuals we all have affiliations to cultural, political, ethnic and religious discourses that mediate and arbitrate with one other to create friction that can change the balance and shift the tension between discourses.

iii. Discourses do political work. As mentioned earlier, education is not a neutral activity. Schools are geared to the interests of the dominant group, the middle classes and economically disadvantaged children are groomed to fail.

iv. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They have a purchase on us that gives us our identity, for example, whose voice is legitimised and institutionally sanctioned and whose is silenced? (Morgan, 1997: 2-4)

Morgan (1997) leaves us in no doubt as to the powerful nature of discourses to construct and shape us. The point of critical literacy is that it aims to cultivate individual and collective agency to change and critically understand discourse and in doing so to redefine ourselves and remake the social world. Or as Shor puts it, 'discourse is not destiny…words can rethink worlds' (1999: 1). Echoing Comber's (2001) point above, questioning and challenging the status quo can enhance everyday life by replacing unjust practices with more just alternatives. We can be agents of change and this point is fundamental to critical literacy. In the following section I discuss the discourses and socio-historical contexts that have shaped critical literacy as a social and intellectual trend. The aim of providing this brief account is to understand and set the directions for the ideal of critical literacy today (Janks, 2012).

Critical Theory

Critical theory, not to be confused with critical literacy, was a term coined in 1937. It emerged from the Frankfurt School, which was constituted by a group of activist intellectuals whose inner circle included Horkheimer, Adorno and Habermas. Its members shared a concern about the organisation of human activity whereby the dominant culture maintained power over the working class. Morgan explains:

> Struggles to define the world and claim its goods are carried out by unequally matched contestants, for certain social groups have historically controlled ideologies, institutions and practices of their society, thereby maintaining their dominant position. (1997: 1)

This hegemonic discourse impacts on all dimensions of people's lives and Horkheimer's vision (1973) was that critical theory would become a kind of public philosophy whereby ordinary people would come to exercise autonomy and strive for a more just social world. In other words critical theory was concerned with not just how things are but how they could be. Ideas most commonly associated with critical theory are alienation, which occurs through the lack of working class consciousness, and reification, how the working class are dehumanised and exploited instrumentally as objects for labour in the interests of capitalism (Brommer, 2011).

Critical theorists maintain that the social inequalities that manifest as a result of alienation and reification are maintained as Morgan (1997) explained through society's ideologies, institutions and practices. Education, as an ideology, as an institution and as a practice, is implicated here as a vehicle for socialisation and social control (Anyon, 1980; Fine, 1991; Finn, 1999). Critical theorists believe that cast as a form of moral and political practice, education can provide students with the critical skills, knowledge and potential for social agency (Giroux, 2004).

Horkheimer's vision still holds for critical theorists today who see education as a discourse that has the potential to cultivate students' capacity to critique texts, contexts, and dilemmas highlighting the relationship between social systems and people. The ultimate goal and the hope is to abolish social injustice. To do this would require freedom from the hegemonic social arrangements that continue to perpetuate

socioeconomic inequality (Leonardo, 2016). The solution according to critical theorists such as Freire (1993) is contestation through praxis, or in other words, the use of individual and collective agency to change oppressive social arrangements. Breaking cycles of injustice, exploitation and oppression therefore lies at the heart of the work of critical theory and of one of its most inspirational philosophers, Paulo Freire.

Freire: A Pedagogy Powered by Love

There is no question as to the legacy and power of Freire's ideas, and Apple (2015) describes critical literacy today as an essentially Freirean approach. Freire is best known for his advocacy and contribution to the literacy education of adults in his native Brazil but his pedagogical philosophy and methodology extend beyond geographical boundaries to the oppressed everywhere. His work, from the 1970s onwards received substantive recognition and continues to provide primary theoretical guidance for critical scholars across the globe. As Gotttesman writes, 'Freire emerged, where he stands today, everywhere' (2016:25).

Freire's pedagogical goal was to move from naive to critical consciousness, from passivity to understanding and becoming conscious of our relationship to the world and its impact on our lives. In helping students reach critical consciousness teachers would use problem-posing, problem-solving strategies that encourage learners to explore their own experiences and actions in the world. Through this act of 'unveiling reality,' Freire (1970: 54) envisioned students learning to 'read the word and the world' critically (Freire and Macedo (1987) refer to this as a process of deliberative reflection of how ideologies stem from readings of the world we have developed. In other words students would gain the capacity to understand the ways texts portray a view of the world and position them as readers to read and interpret that portrayed world in particular ways (Lankshear, 1997). This involves exploring cultural hegemonic concepts, ideas and everyday practices embedded in texts. This was important because at the heart of Freire's pedagogic ideal is praxis which means recognising oppression and taking action to overcome it.

Freire's vision, detailed in 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', outlines a pedagogic approach that is 'forged with and not for the oppressed' (1998: 34). His philosophy condemned what he referred to as a 'banking model' (1970: 84) of education in which learners' own lives and experiences were not taken into account, where pedagogy was didactic, and teachers mere technicians and imparters of knowledge (Luke, 2012). This he argued encouraged passivity and naive consciousness. Freire's alternative was to transform the very nature of pedagogy to make it a pedagogy powered by love (McLaren, 2015). On the topic of love, he writes:

> Here I mean lovingness not only toward the students but also toward the process of teaching… . It is however that this love be an armed love, the fighting love of those convinced of the right and the duty to fight, to denounce, and to announce. It is this form of love that is indispensable to the progressive educator and that we must all learn. (1998:40-41)

Here Freire invokes the quality of lovingness as a human duty in the struggle for democratic citizenship and social justice. He sees it as a necessary disposition in authentic, respectful teaching and learning in which teachers help students to recognise the relationship between pedagogy and politics and in doing so, work towards breaking free of dominant discourses. This work would be grounded in students' own experiences and actions in the world, and in the teacher-student relationship.

Criticisms of Freire are that beyond this political stance there is a lack of specificity on how teachers and students can engage with the practical issues of implementation (Luke, 2012:8). A second criticism is that his approach overlooks the need for pupils to master knowledge of the 'genres of power' and so his methods might actually dis-enable students from gaining essential knowledge and in doing so, prohibiting redistributive social justice (Luke, 2012: 8). Thirdly, as much as Giroux admired Freire's work, he noted that Freire, failed to offer a clear conception of ideology that adequately addresses contextual issues (1979: 267). What Giroux meant is that the conditions of domination in the West are concealed and are all the more powerful for being so. This raised significant challenges for those trying to implement Freire's pedagogy in the West, as Giroux concludes:

> It would be misleading as well as dangerous to extend, without qualification, Freire's theory and methods to the industrialised and urbanised societies of the West. (1979:270)

What Freire and Giroux agree on is that schools and classrooms can and should be sites of struggle and possibility. They also concur that there is a need to teach theory, to teach knowledge as part of moving from naive to critical consciousness, as 'it is theory that permits students, teachers, and other educators to see what they are seeing' (Giroux, 1988:47). Moving on from Freire, I now turn my attention to Giroux.

Moving on from Freire to Giroux

In 'Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling', Giroux (1984) outlines his conceptual direction for critical literacy. At the core of Giroux's thesis is the need to expose the dominant rationality of the educational field. Importantly, like Freire, he saw the possibility that the conditions of learning in schools may be counterhegemonic. His is a pedagogy of hope and a framework for emancipatory activity in which he envisioned school as a terrain of contestation rather than an ideological machine. To achieve this teachers and students would be empowered by enlivening their critical sensibilities. Students, argued Giroux:

> Need to learn how to be able to move outside of their frame of reference so that they can question the legitimacy of a given fact, concept, or issue. (1978:299)

Also like Freire, Giroux advocates for dialogue, critical consciousness and, and humanisation (1976). Resonating with Bourdieu, and to be discussed in Chapter Three,

his focus was on teacher-pupil relationships, collaboration, and inclusivity - all voices should be valued. For example, he argued that:

> Students use the linguistic and cultural capital they bring to the classroom. If students are subjected to a language as well as a belief and value setting whose implicit message suggests that they are culturally illiterate, students will learn very little about critical thinking, and a great deal about what Paulo Freire has called the culture of silence. (1978:300)

The 'culture of silence' here is the imposition of the linguistic and cultural style of the dominant class, a concept is discussed further in Chapter Three. Giroux is not saying that education should not equip students with the skills they need to enter the workplace, it should, but it is and should be much more.

> It should also educate them to contest workplace inequalities, imagine democratically organised forms of work and identify and challenge those injustices that contradict and undercut the most fundamental principles of freedom, equality and respect for all people. (Giroux and Giroux, 2006:29)

What we can draw from this is that Giroux saw schools as sites for social struggle in which public values could be fostered and social problems addressed. In summary, his conceptual direction suggests that students, (1) be active participants in the learning process; (2) be taught to think critically; (3) develop reasoning that helps them understand their own histories; (4) 'learn not only how to clarify values but also learn why certain values are indispensable to the reproduction of human life'; and (5) 'learn about the structural and ideological forces that influence their lives' (1983: 202-203). He envisioned this reform taking place within and through schooling by progressive educators teaching the principles of critical literacy (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985). The role of the progressive educator in this context is to:

> Critically interrogate the fundamental links between knowledge and power, pedagogical practices and social consequences, and authority and civic responsibility. (Giroux, 2004: 40).

Teachers he warned should be aware of the partial nature of their views. In other words teachers need to be able to think critically, to be able to analyse their relationship with the greater social order, recognise their own ideologies, values and cultural politics, and their complicity with forms of oppression (Giroux, 1992).

A further unresolved issue in regard to Freire's work relates to the binary opposition of oppressor/oppressed (Luke, 2012, 2014). Amongst the critics was Foucault (1972) who believed that binary opposition had the potential to obscure the complexity of classroom discourse. In similar vein, Weiler (1991) was critical of Freire, accusing him of not addressing the nature of the power held by teachers in relation to their gender, race, and the socio-cultural contexts in which they carry out their work. Freire's

pedagogy, she claimed was not self-reflexive. She suggested the need to make our own histories, our positionality explicit by recognising the power and privilege of who we are. Moving on, this final section considers the post-discourse influences of postmodernism and post-structuralism as discourses that have contributed to shaping critical theory.

Post-Discourse Influences

Postmodernism and post-structuralism while nominally different share similar philosophical foundations. They both describe theoretical movements in the late 20th century that focused on ideological structures of society and personal identity. Ideology is equated here with false consciousness that because it is lived in our daily lives, it cannot easily be shaken off (Belsey, 2002). Broadly speaking poststructuralism derives of the predecessor movement , structuralism, and postmodernism, which, in turn derives from modernism (Peters, 1999). Briefly, what distinguishes the two disciplines is that poststructuralism is a theory of knowledge and language, whereas postmodernism is a theory of society, culture and history (Agger, 1991: 112). Both however concern themselves with ways of reading and according to Meacham and Buendia (1999) conceptions of literacy have changed as a result of their influence. Modernist reading instruction, they suggest, consists of a mechanistic pedagogical model delivered by authoritative figures using texts that impart the social values and morals of the dominant discourse (Meacham and Buendia, 1999). In contrast, postmodernists and poststructuralists recognise that reading is ideological and is bound up with producing and maintaining unequal arrangements of power (Cervetti, Paradales and Damico, 2001).

Foucault (1975) a profound critic of the modern project considers in 'Discipline and Punish', how society impacts on and through us in every aspect of our lives and contends that meaning is the product of struggle. For Foucault, all relations are relations of power. He asserts that the structural content of texts is of little importance compared with the power of disciplines and institutions, which advocate for particular kinds of meaning and behaviour. Those who do not submit to these values are punished. The postmodern call is then to exercise power by challenging, deconstructing and resisting dominant, oppressive ideologies in texts (Gottesman, 2016). In this way literacy reading must be performed with reading of the networks of power or 'reading the word and the world' (Freire 1970). The teacher's role as public intellectual (Giroux, 1992) is to create a curriculum that explores the cause-and-effect of social issues and representations. For Aronowitz and Giroux (1992) this expansion of the notion of literacy encompasses the idea of citizenship and exercising one's voice for social change.

The postmodern debate 'has spurned little consensus and a great deal of confusion and animosity' (Giroux, 1995: ix). Many critics dismiss it as, 'reactionary nihilism, fad, or simply a new form of consumerism' (Giroux, 1995: ix). McLaren refers to it as, 'wet-sock formlessness' and goes on to say that its danger is in becoming an unwitting companion to neoliberalism (2015: 264). In postmodern theory scepticism replaces certainty and theory is rejected as one theory cannot be more correct than any other. The contradiction here is that postmodernism's anti-theoretical stance is essentially a

theoretical stand (Rosenau, 1992). Such criticisms apply also to reactions against poststructuralism.

Giroux's (1992) thesis that conceptualised the teacher as a public intellectual engaged in a transformative educational project has met with criticism from some poststructuralist thinkers. The concept of an intellectual, privileged, modernist-knowing subject was viewed with suspicion. Ellsworth (1989), a poststructural feminist whose thinking was otherwise closely aligned to Giroux's, was one of the foremost critics of this concept. Her main objection was that Giroux's critical pedagogical project did not adequately deconstruct the teacher as a self-interested and subjective voice whose narrative is partial and socially situated. She viewed classroom dialogue as problematic and inherently distorted if the teacher retained a privileged position. She says:

> I cannot unproblematically bring subjugated knowledges to light when I am not free of my own learned racism, fat oppression, classism, ableism, or sexism. No teacher is free of these learned and internalised oppressions… . Critical pedagogues are always implicated in the very structures they are trying to change. (1989: 307-308)

She called for the voice of the teacher to be problematised and decentred on the basis that classroom discussions retain the privileged starting points of some subjects. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) term this 'pedagogic authority', which they describe as the right to exert symbolic violence in the interests of an arbitrary power.

As a teacher educator I have over the years tinkered on the periphery of critical literacy but as a result of my own recent professional development (EdD study) I have come to the conclusion that as Glazier puts it, 'taking hold of a critical literacy stance in many ways seems like a no brainer' (2017: 377). I am hopeful that developing a critical literacy perspective will help my student teachers to better navigate socially just teaching and that it will provide possible direction to guide them through the challenges they will face in the classroom. As someone committed to the principles of critical literacy for social justice this research project provides me with the opportunity to contribute to the field. The need for additional studies has been identified for example by Skerrett (2010: 56) who unequivocally states 'additional research is needed about how to support pre-service and in-service teachers' growth in critical literacy teaching'. In similar vein Mosley observes that there are few studies of how critical literacy pedagogy develops within pre-service education programmes (2010: 405). For the most part Mosley says the research community has not studied just how pre-service teachers learn to take up critical literacy pedagogy in their teaching. This research addresses these issues, interpreting findings through a Bourdieusian lens. Discussion and analysis are guided by the following research questions which I explain further in Chapter Four:

- Do student teachers have capacity to develop a critical literacy perspective?
- How might a Bourdieusian reflexive sociology help student teachers better understand reproduction and transformation in literacy teaching and learning?

- What are the implications of this investigation for my work in preparing pre-service teachers to teach critical literacy in the interest of social justice?

As a precursor to exploring these questions, it is useful to consider what existing studies have shown regarding pre-service teachers and critical literacy. In general, the research suggests that student teachers are lacking in critical literacy and that the implications of this are significant. Twiselton (2004) concludes that the way in which student teachers view themselves as teachers, how they understand the education system, and the beliefs and values they hold about children and parents, have a direct impact on their capacity and approach to effectively support children's learning in literacy. This was apparent in O'Donohue's (2013) study that focused on working-class women in Ireland. O'Donohue's findings showed the extent to which women as parents felt negatively stereotyped and 'othered', by teachers, so much so that they viewed themselves as 'occupying the borderlands, the peripheral places' (2013: 201). Thompson, McNicholl and Menter (2016) conclude that the reason for these beliefs and attitudes is that as a relatively homogenous group most student teachers have limited direct experience of poverty, yet all will encounter and teach pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Adding to this, Zion et al found that they 'often they see themselves as prejudice free' (2015:919). This tendency for student teachers to benefit from relative positions of privilege leaves the potential for apathy with Petrone and Borsheim (2015) concluding that if student teachers are to overcome this potential apathy they need to be pushed to question that which seems normal, comfortable, even beneficial to them (2015). For these reasons, Gale and Densmore (2000) argue that student teachers must learn to connect the discourses of education to those of their pupils' lives. This can be achieved concludes Breunig (2016) by equipping students with the knowledge, behaviour and skills to become transformative educators. Shor (1991), Luke (2008), and Apple (2015) argue that this requires student teachers to develop critical literacy skills and perspectives. What this suggests is that critical literacy has become a social imperative. It should, claims Mora (2014) be a key element of teacher preparation. These issues are explored in depth in the following chapter but here briefly, I provide an overview of the dissertation in its entirety.

Dissertation Overview

In order to address the three key questions above, this Dissertation consists of seven chapters. Having introduced the rationale, purpose and aims of this research study in this chapter, the following chapters expand on the issues introduced. Chapter Two, places a particular focus on the concept of critical literacy, identifying the specific tendencies and sensibilities that are required to enable someone to become critically literate. In Chapter Three I examine Bourdieu's theory of practice and outline the potential benefits of a relational examination of reproduction and transformation for critical literacy. Chapter Four examines the design and analytical tools used to gather and analyse the data in this study. In Chapters Five and Six I analyse and discuss the findings. The thesis is drawn to a close in Chapter Seven, in which I discuss what I have learned, and consider the implications.

Conclusion

I have argued here that schooling is expected to be socially just (Cumming-Potvin, 2009). Yet as the anecdotes shared earlier in this chapter suggest, this is not always the case. Social practices and structures, including those in teacher education often reproduce inequity. Becoming critically literate can, I believe, help student teachers to cultivate critically literate tendencies and sensibilities, that would enable them to recognise social injustices, identify systemic wrongs, and be prepared to challenge these. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the potential of a group of BEd3 student teachers to acquire a critical literacy perspective. Findings will be analysed and discussed using a Bourdieusian lens. In the following chapter I turn my attention to critical literacy and consider what exactly critical literacy is, and what implications are there in teaching it.

Chapter Two:
We Make the Road by Walking[1]

Introduction: Conditions of Inequality

Chapter One made reference to the educational conditions that perpetuate inequality for socioeconomically disadvantaged children. These issues will be addressed in-depth in Chapter Three. However, in order to try to make sense out of the infinitely complex terrain and discourse that is critical literacy, I briefly revisit these issues here. Following this, I consider how critical literacy might contribute to the social justice agenda. Thirdly, I identify and describe the key tendencies and sensibilities that are required to be critically literate. After this, discussion turns to an exploration of the pedagogic principles of critical literacy, before a final reflection on the implications for teacher preparation. Since this study is concerned with the inequality for socioeconomically disadvantaged children, this is where a consideration of critical literacy must begin.

Conditions of inequality will be a recurring theme in this chapter and so to cite McLaren again:

> Economically disadvantaged children are being groomed by society at an early age to fail, doomed to perpetuate a vicious and endless cycle of poverty. (2015: 114)

According to the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2017) an estimated 23% of children in Northern Ireland are reported to live in poverty. Without doubt childhood poverty is a significant factor contributing to inequality as I shall I demonstrate. Poleglass, for example, an impoverished constituency in West Belfast with the third highest crime rate and the second highest hospital admission rate for self-harm in Northern Ireland (hereafter NI), 24% of residents claim disability-related benefit (NI average is 4.6%), the teenage pregnancy rate stands at 34 in 1,000 as opposed to the NI average of 17 in 1,000, and 30.5% of post-primary pupils have a statement of special educational need (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2016).

In their monumental study focused on inequality and social change in the United States, Bowles and Gintis conclude that 'education over the years has never been a potent source for economic equality' (1976: 8). More recently, McLaren (2015) takes the issue further when he says that the education system (as a societal structure) is actually complicit in grooming children to fail. It does this by reproducing, cultivating and nurturing the values of the dominant middle-class culture to the detriment of the working classes. Teachers, largely a homogeneous group, 'continue to mirror an overwhelming portrayal of exclusion' (Darder, 2017: 26). This means that as conduits of middle-class beliefs, values and attitudes, teachers consciously or unconsciously act as

[1] The phrase 'we make the road by' is an adaptation of a proverb by Spanish poet Antonio Machado. The phrase 'se hace camino al andar' directly translates as, 'you make the way as you go'.

moral agents of the state in reproducing inequality (Gramsci, 1971). Addressing this inequity, Freire argues that:

> The dominant class, then, because it has the power to distinguish itself from the dominated class, first rejects the differences between them, but, second, does not pretend to be equal to those who are different; third, it does not intend those that are different shall be equal. What it wants is to maintain the difference and keep distance and to recognise and emphasise in practice the inferiority of those who are dominated. (1998: 71)

What Freire is describing here is a politics of disposability whereby some groups are rendered dispensable at the expense of others. For teachers to break through the hegemonic forces at work here is a huge challenge requiring 'understanding of civic responsibility and social value of all human beings' (Darder, 2017: 31). For Freire (1993) and his followers the solution lies in teachers developing a critical perspective that would radicalise their vision for education, reshape and redefine their practice to counter the conditions of inequality by teaching for social justice, and in so doing to democratise education. He envisioned students learning to 'read the word and the world' because in his view, the world, as a human creation could be transformed (Freire, 1970: 54). In other words, students 'gaining an understanding of the cultural and political forces that shape one's status in society' can make a difference (Zion, et al, 2015: 917).

This chapter begins by acknowledging the various tendencies and sensibilities within the field of critical literacy that draw educators together, as well as some of the contested views, and in so doing identifies the principles that define the discipline and offer a conceptual direction for critical literacy pedagogy. The notion of critical literacy for social justice is an often-repeated mantra that implies that this is an empowering and transformative pedagogy (Apple, 2015). I will consider for whom it is empowering and for what purpose, asking whose interests will be served and who might benefit. Finally, overlapping with these concerns are the implications for teacher preparation including the challenges, concerns and constraints of this approach. Firstly, I consider below what critical literacy actually is.

Critical Literacy for Social justice

The term critical literacy finds 'antecedence in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and places issues of power at the centre of considerations of education and social justice' (Mc Arthur, 2010: 3). Social justice issues are framed around what Young (2014) calls the five faces of oppression: exploitation, marginalisation, cultural imperialism, powerlessness and violence. The concept of teaching for social justice is widely contested but broadly speaking theories fall into one of three approaches, distributive, redistributive and recognitive social justice. In varying ways these models embrace a belief that, 'education and society are intrinsically interrelated and that the fundamental purpose of education is to improve social justice' (McArthur, 2010: 1). A distributive paradigm reflects concepts such as distribution of material and social goods; fairness

(Rawls, 1971); and entitlement (Nozick, 1974). The retributive paradigm privileges concepts of liberty and freedom to compete for material and social goods, for example, a belief in meritocracy in the schooling system as fair (Hawkins, 2013). Gale and Densmore (2000) describe distributive and retributive approaches as deficit models in preference to the recognition paradigm that offers a more expansive and plural view of social justice. Unlike the other two approaches, the recognition model does not regard people as the same and as in competition with one another, and does not focus on assets, goods or services. The philosophical assertion underpinning the recognitive approach is that 'marginalisation and exploitation results from inequitable and inadequate recognition of difference' (Hawkins, 2014: 725).

Working in the interests of the most disadvantaged, recognitive social justice is grounded on the principle that all individuals are entitled to respect in their lives and the role of the teacher is to foster individual self-respect and positive self-identity. This is achieved by educating children against any form of prejudice or oppression and in having positive regard for difference (Gale and Densmore, 2000). It means identifying oppression in its numerous forms and taking action in the classroom to challenge this oppression (Adams, Bell and Griffin, 2010; Russo, 2006). The aim is to alter current inequalities in society by equipping marginalised communities with strong future leaders who are able to succeed (Ayers et al, 2009). The role of the teacher is:

> To equip students with the knowledge, behaviour and skills needed to transform society into a place where social justice can exist. (Breunig, 2016:4)

This is reminiscent of Shor's (1999) development of Freire's educational objective for his students to become active subjects in their own lives and this will be a key theme in the research undertaken in this study. Pedagogically this requires expression through relationships rather than fixed outcomes. It requires dialogic interaction underpinned by critical literacy about controversial issues, beliefs, values and attitudes. Pupils need to feel that their culture is valued and respected and to do this teachers must learn to connect the discourses of education to those of their pupils' lives beyond school (Gale and Densmore, 2000). Enacting a social justice pedagogy therefore starts with the tutor identifying the ways in which:

> A social justice classroom should demonstrate a curriculum and classroom practice that is grounded in the lives of students, critical in its approach to the world and itself, hopeful, joyful, kind, and visionary, pro-justice, activist, academically engaging and rigorous, and culturally competent. (Ayers et al. 2009: 30)

This is a shift of emphasis, claims Young (2014), from one of having to one of doing. Within a critical theoretical context there have been numerous criticisms suggesting that the emphasis on critique will not in itself invoke change (Apple, 2000, 2006; Van Heertum, 2006; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007). Critical literacy for social justice, which requires the capacity for complex critical thinking, needs therefore to be understood as an invitation to create change in society in the direction of social justice,

what Freire (1993) termed critical praxis. Another area that has been a focus for criticism of critical literacy, is its tendency to generalise at the macro (societal) level while failing to address real issues of practice at the micro or individual level (Mc Arthur, 2010). Freire (1993) was adamant that theory and practice should be two-way and that the broad principles of critical literacy need to be 'interpreted and reinterpreted within each context' (Mc Arthur, 2010: 9). The challenge for teacher educators is to find a way of approaching what they do because as Mc Arthur says 'ideas cannot tell you what to do; but nor can you do much without them' (2010: 9). In other words, you make the path as you go. You make the road by walking. Yet, what educators such as Luke (2014) and Aukerman (2012) most notably concur is that critical literacy is both a philosophy of education and a teaching approach that has developed from the various discourses of critical theory. Inherent in these discourses are a number of tendencies and sensibilities, which will be discussed in the following section.

Critical Literacy: Tendencies and Sensibilities

Freire foregrounded the understanding that critical literacy is both a philosophy of education and a teaching approach, when he said that critical literacy is not an instructional practice, but a mindset, a way of viewing and interacting with the 'word and the world (1970: 54). As Freire fostered literacy among his Brazilian workers he was also teaching them to 'perceive themselves in dialectical relationship with their social reality' (1974:34). His educational objective for his students was that they become active subjects in their own lives. Shor captures the essence of this objective:

> We are what we say and do. The ways we speak and are spoken to help shape us into the people we become. Through speech and other actions, we build ourselves in a world that is building us. We can remake ourselves, and society if we choose, through alternative words and dissident projects. This is where critical literacy begins - words that question a world not yet finished or humane. (Shor, 1999:1)

Inherent in Shor's thesis are several fundamental tendencies and sensibilities of critical literacy and I will now discuss each in turn.

Beliefs, Attitudes and Values

If 'we are what we say and do' (Shor, 1999:1) then becoming critically literate depends upon our everyday relations with ourselves and with others. For example, being aware of our own contradictions, inconsistencies, and biases allows us to understand how we, and others, are 'positioned with inferences, interpretations, and conclusions' (Mulcahy, 2015:22). In other words, the way in which student teachers view themselves as teachers, how they understand the education system, and the beliefs and values they hold about children and parents has a direct impact on their ability and approach to effectively support children's learning in literacy (Twiselton, 2004). The students I teach are all white and, according to the Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP) the College submitted to the Department of Employment and Learning for 2019, 80% female with 17% are from quintile one, the lowest social deprivation group. Most therefore have limited direct experience of poverty of the kind described above,

yet all will encounter and teach pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (Thompson, McNicholl and Menter, 2016). Growing up in Northern Ireland they will likely have had very little exposure to racial, linguistic, or religious diversity. By virtue of having acquired a place in an oversubscribed University College, they will probably have had largely untroubled, successful experiences of education (as discussed in Chapter One). Further, as Zion et al suggest 'often they will see themselves as prejudice free' (2015:919). The potential for apathy is strong amongst teachers who benefit from such positions of privilege (Petrone and Borsheim, 2015). This Petrone and Borsheim argue, is compounded by the fact that they have not often been asked to recognise their own privilege, or to recognise the ways in which they have been and continue to be shaped and constructed by societal forces. As a result of these inherited positions of privilege, they will tend to subscribe to the majority view of meritocracy, that good education makes a difference to social mobility. The challenge, according to Chubbuck (2010) is helping such pre-service teachers learn to see outside the blinkers of their personal racial, cultural, or socioeconomic experience to identify how structurally imposed privilege and discrimination have affected both their and their future pupils' lives. Even the emotions educators experience as individuals:

> Operate as constitutive, politicised entities that either support or transform inequitable structures of power and privilege, such as which emotions are allowed for which groups of people and how individuals are emotionally attached to and then perpetuate cherished beliefs such as meritocracy. (Chubbuck, 2010:204)

This was evident in the analysis of data in this study (Chapter Five) in which the students demonstrated strongly held emotional attachment to, for example, a middle-class teacher identity and to belief in the system. The challenge of critical literacy then, is to expose such beliefs, values and attitudes, to help students to see themselves and their pupils in their contexts, and to see the ways in which we are all socially constructed and shaped by our experiences (Chubbuck, 2010). Petrone and Borsheim believe that this is important if are to overcome the potential apathy that can be the result of being part of a constructed and invisible mainstream. They suggest that student teachers need to be pushed to question that which seems normal, comfortable, even beneficial to them (2015:183). The challenge Comber points out is that, 'we are remarkably incurious about those that get left behind in prosperity's wake' (2015:366). In addition, 'mainstream culture is largely invisible to those who are natives of it', and exploring issues of culture, identity and privilege can make many people feel uncomfortable and vulnerable (Dozier et al, 2006:9). For this reason, Sleeter argues strongly for the value of practising critical literacy in all classrooms, including those with little diversity, and with all students including those 'who occupy social positions of privilege' (1995:416). Failure to develop students' critical literacy leaves them in danger, Nieto claims of being 'miseducated to the extent that they receive only a partial and biased education' (1996: 312). To address this issue, Shor (1999) argues for the need to put language and identity at the heart of the critical literacy project. With echoes of Bourdieu's thesis (1977) discussed in Chapter Three, Norton and Toohey sum up the ways in which learners can understand themselves through language and in

doing so help us to understand the significance of working with language and identity issues:

> Language is a practice that constructs, and is constructed by the ways language learners understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories, and their possibilities for the future. (2004:1)

Shor, and Norton and Toohey, characterise language as a medium for self-construction with transformative potential. To cite Shor again:

> Through speech and other actions, we build ourselves in a world that is building us. We can remake ourselves, and society if we choose, through alternative words and dissident projects. (1999:1)

According to Fischman and McLaren, 'it is not enough to understand any given educational reality; there is a pedagogical mandate to transform it' (2005:425-6). In this study, I argue that self-determination and agency are fundamental goals to being critically literate, and to being a transformative educator as I explain below.

Self-determination, Individual Autonomy, and Social Agency

Freire (1993) described such a transformation critical praxis, which he described as, an alliance and reflection on theory and practice that is purposefully motivated and leads to transformative action. Critical praxis goes beyond describing the world to taking radical action to change it. For Freire the role of theory in directing reflective practice is indispensable. He insisted that neither was sufficient on its own and that:

> Practice does not by itself represent a theory of itself. But without practice, theory runs the risk of wasting time, of diminishing its own validity. (Freire, 1993: 101)

Critical praxis according to Giroux 'is about more than understanding; it is also about the possibilities of self-determination, individual autonomy, and social agency' (2004: 84). The key themes here are informed reflection and subsequent action. This is a significant departure from a conception of literacy as reading, writing, speaking and listening as mere communicative acts. What it offers is an expansive view that extends the scope of understanding literacy to include ideological and political dimensions. It is essentially about politicising the individual and the collective through literacy.

The concepts of self-determination, individual autonomy and social agency are taken up by Janks, a critical literacy scholar. Janks invokes Lorenz's (1972) metaphor of 'the butterfly effect' to illustrate these characteristics (2005: 31-32; 2014: 350). 'The butterfly effect' proposes that if a single flap of a butterfly's wings can be instrumental in generating a tornado, so too can the wings of other creatures and indeed of our own species. Lorenz's point is that if we can generate tornados, we can also prevent them. This entails seeing the world as a set of related systems. In other words, 'our actions here generate effects there' (Janks, 2005: 32), and so for example, products we use here

might have been made in sweatshops elsewhere, so a simple, arbitrary purchase, can be part of a complex system contributing to the suffering of others. The 'butterfly effect' involves questioning the social construction of the self, understanding how words and the world work to produce effects that lead to hegemonic actions, and importantly, understanding that we can redesign texts and the social world to generate different, more positive effects. In critical literacy terms this is the ability to recognise and deconstruct oppressive practices and systems, to confront difficulties and problems that are unequal and unjust (Kellner and Share, 2007). To further illustrate this point, an individual might decide to boycott, write public letters and/or actively campaign to raise awareness of retailers who sell goods made in sweatshops or produced using child labour. Underpinning this is the idea of harnessing productive power to challenge and change existing practices and discourses that recognise the importance of human creativity and ability to generate new meanings (Janks, 2000). This requires stepping outside of oneself, and one's social context and asking questions that problematise issues in relation to the politics of poverty or the politics of disposability. For the educator such questions extend to oneself as well. Cumming-Potvin (2009: 94) suggests that teachers and teacher educators might ask, for example, how does where I come from influence how I see and think about this issue, student or parent? Am I contributing to the underachievement of pupils who are different from me? What is described here is a type of agency that Dozier et al view as a 'personal narrative in which the self is a protagonist who confronts and solves problems, with associated motive and effect' (2006: 12). Confronting and solving problems is the third sensibility I equate with critical literacy and shall now discuss.

Problem-Posing, Problem-Solving

Freire defined the above as a problem-posing, problem-solving approach to education:

> Problem-solving education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic, only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation. In sum, banking theory and practice, as immobilizing and fixing forces, fail to acknowledge men and women as historical beings; problem-solving theory and practice takes people's historicity as their starting point. (1970: 84)

The underlying premise here is that neither the word nor the world (the latter including social systems, including teaching and education) are neutral. Both perpetuate systems of oppression and suppression that directly impact on people's lives (Lankshear and Knobel, 1998; Comber, 1999; Luke, 2000). Pedagogy for example, has traditionally been built on 'a set of tacit beliefs and unconscious norms' that privileges those already at home in the classroom and privileged in society (Mayher, 2015: ii). In traditional schooling these unconscious norms often remain unchallenged and misrecognised (Bourdieu, 1977), thereby 'fixing' and 'immobilising' learners in their lives, in their social histories. Teachers are implicated here because for teachers to teach without perceiving 'themselves in dialectical relationship with their social reality' (Freire, 1974: 34), that is, without critiquing and analysing power relations, and the root causes of

social inequalities, 'risks disguising those relations as natural, as the way things are and should be' (Fairclough, 2002: 163). Luke (2000) warns that with the weight of an institution behind it, texts and contexts (including the written and spoken word, curricula, policy, learning materials, tasks, forms of assessment, cultural artefacts, multimedia products, social practices), can come to stand beyond criticism. In critical literacy there is no pretence at being objective. All interpretations and analyses are value-laden and tied to the social, cultural, and historical context in which a text is examined. Meaning in texts is, therefore, always contestable (Cervetti, Paradales and Damico, 2001), and learners need to learn how to read against the text. This means learning to problematise and subsequently, to problem-solve (Loewen, 1996).

For Freire (1993) this starts by learners being able to recognise oppressive connections in their own lives. He was adamant that to achieve this we should put the learners' historicities, their experiences of the world, at the centre of the curriculum. Freire's thesis moves the learner from being 'an object of to a subject in their historical realities, as interveners and transformers of their own oppressive conditions' (Petrone and Borsheim**,** 2015:180). Giroux explains this as moving 'beyond the issue of understanding to an engagement with the deeper affective investments' (2004:44). 'Affective investments' refers to the beliefs, values and attitudes we hold about ourselves and others. Learners need therefore to acquire the skills, dispositions and habits of mind to pose and solve problems with the aim 'to understand, question, and potentially challenge and transform the status quo' (Petrone and Borsheim, 2015:179). This is not an easy task, especially as my students may have been the recipients of what Freire (1970) termed a 'banking model of education', whereby teachers as the owners of knowledge fill passive students with this knowledge. 'Banking education' acts as a pedagogy of deskilling in which the learner is expected to 'adapt to their world of oppression' (Wallowitz, 2015: 3). They will therefore not have been challenged to reflect on and critique the world. They will not be in the habit of deconstructing texts, identifying injustices, expressing their own voice, or questioning reality. One of the fundamental goals of critical literacy therefore requires us to question how words and concepts are commonly used to create worldviews and ideologies that lead us into hegemonic actions (Shor, 1999; Love, 2015). This requires capacity for what Kincheloe and Weil (2004) term complex critical thinking.

Complex Critical Thinking

Hegemony is defined by Gramsci[2] (1971), as the predominance of one social class over another. The predominant class act as arbitrary agents of the dissemination of the ideas, beliefs and values held by society. The oppressed class unconsciously perpetuate their own oppression by cooperating with this dominant power structure (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). So the purpose of questioning the world involves 'unveiling reality', making the invisible visible in order to give learners a feel for the game, particularly the

[2] Gramsci's (1971) ideas have influenced popular educational theory including Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Gramsci's insights viewed hegemonic power as constituted in the realm of ideas, beliefs and values as achieved through consent rather than force. In other words the subordinate class are complicit in their own oppression. Gramsci inspired the use of strategies to contest hegemonic norms.

ways in which they are positioned by the dominant power structure in relation to gender, race, class, and sexuality (Wallowitz, 2015: 3).

In the traditional literacy classroom, critical thinking, often linked to critical reading, tends to focus on high-level comprehension skills (Spache, 1964; Cervetti et al. 2001; Mulcahy, 2015). Critical literacy is not a new concept by any means but many of the models of critical thinking tend to be reductionist in nature. A significant difference between critical thinking and critical literacy is that the latter, on the account I shall use here, is set in a socio-political context. In illustration, to understand a research article on phonics teaching, student teachers might be asked to find the thesis of the article and evaluate whether the evidence used by the researcher to support the thesis is convincing. This is critical thinking. The Frankfurt School[3] would find the idea of critical thinking ideologically limiting in its unquestioning approach to the status quo. In the critical literacy classroom students will be asked to problematise the ideas and concepts presented in the paper, for example, they might frame consideration of the article from Luke's anti-fundamentalist reminder that 'you can't eat phonics' (2004: 11), meaning that curriculum reform is not a substitute for social policy. They will reflect on who stands to gain from the viewpoints expressed and who might be disadvantaged; to identify the values and world-views held by the researcher, and to query the theoretical, philosophical and ideological position held by the writer and by themselves in regard to the issues raised. While critical thinking and critical literacy overlap, the latter should not be reduced to the former.

The critical literacy tendencies and sensibilities outlined previously identify critical literacy as a paradigm of thinking about the 'word and the world' (Freire, 1970) and this has overt implications for practice and for change (Wallowitz, 2015; Behrman, 2006; Luke 2000). Kincheloe and Weil (2004) advocate for a more sensitive form of critical thinking which they term 'complex critical thinking' (2004:29). Complex critical thinking resonates with the dispositions associated with critical literacy, as Kincheloe and Weil explain:

> Teachers who are complex critical thinkers expose the power-related dynamics that prop up the status quo, undermine social mobility, and produce ideologies that justify anti-democratic practices. (2004: 36)

As complex critical thinkers, teachers need to be able to see and deal with the complexities of social domination (or hegemony) in everyday living. They will understand that different people (specifically teachers, pupils and parents) with different frames of reference will perceive and understand the meaning of the same experience quite differently (2004:11). Pupils from middle-class backgrounds will likely experience schooling profoundly differently to Sean and Tony and to the pupils in Poleglass and Strabane (see Chapter One). Teachers who are critically literate will have the capacity for complex critical thinking. They will understand that education is not an

[3] The Frankfurt School was a group of activist intellectuals whose inner circle included Horkheimer, Adorno and Habermas. Its members shared a concern for the organization of human activity whereby the dominant culture maintained power over the working-class. Bonner, S. E. (2011) *Critical theory: a very short introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

equal playing field. They will be able to see how public issues of power manifest in academic and cultural contexts and relations. They should understand relations between values and different interpretations of the world, that is, how some members of society are privileged and entitled while others are marginalised and arbitrarily othered because of class, gender, race, religion or sexuality (Weinstein, 1995). When student teachers begin to recognise how power and privilege are dispensed differently to different groups of people, when they realise that they too are part of that inequitable distribution, and know how these social positions shape and determine self-concept and world-views, they will be positioned towards complex critical thinking. In other words, they are acquiring the ability to question the comfortable, taken-for-granted constructedness of everyday life specifically through literacy. Knowing this they may then be better equipped to enact a much more positive pedagogy and I start to outline this below.

Critical Literacy: A Positive Pedagogical Model

Humanistic Pedagogy

In a chapter that he titles 'Pedagogy as Gift', Luke (2008) uses the metaphor of a gift to affirm the notion that teachers have the potential and power to expand literacy education. He claims that 'they have as available resources blends of traditional and radical, didactic and dialogic, rote and constructivist pedagogies' (2008: 89). Pedagogy as gift is a 'humanising pedagogy that respects and uses the reality, history, and perspectives of students as an integral part of educational practice' (Bartolome, 1994: 173). Luke warns that this is not unproblematic. The development of such a model or, habitus, to use Bourdieu's term (1977), can be akin to other models of reproduction, in which teachers engage students in discourses and world views that align with their own and/or with hegemonic world views. In order to acknowledge and move forward from reproduction in this sense, Luke says that teachers must find ways to recognise and work with and through the literacies and historicities that pupils bring to pedagogical spaces (Luke, 2008). The recognition is that we live in history (Short, et al, 2002) and that experience is a fundamental resource in teaching and learning. If not critiqued however, experience can be a barrier to change and potentially reproductive. To problematise pupils' experience, Hull (2003) advocates adopting multimodal pedagogies, such as storytelling, music, multimedia and popular culture, and encouraging pupils to relate their own narratives and experiences in ways that celebrate their out-of-school literacies and funds of knowledge, such as, artwork, music and social media technologies. Darder (2017) believes such activities will help identify the conditions and limitations imposed on them in their daily lives. To illustrate, Norris et al (2012) give the example of challenging student teachers' perceptions of a popular children's book, 'The Giving Tree', by Shel Silverstein (1964). The story is about how a tree selflessly gives to the protagonist, a boy, throughout his life. The message the book teaches children is one of sharing with and loving others. On a second reading students are asked to listen, paying attention to gender issues such as which gender is implied for the tree? Who is always giving and who is always taking? What messages does the story suggest for girls/women and for boys/men? Students might then be tasked to explore other popular children's texts for same or similar gender issues so as to become aware of the extent to which this world-view is perpetuated in mainstream patriarchal

culture and encouraged to shift their awareness to a way of thinking that goes beyond the seemingly natural, inevitable order of things.

However, crucial as experience is as a resource, Freire (1993) was adamant that it needs to be viewed and critiqued through theory which should itself be an object of analysis. Students would explore how the subtexts of books and texts they have read, viewed or listened to have contributed to their world-view, their beliefs, values and attitudes regards male-female relationships, and how these are enacted in their daily lives. Such cultural referents are not only very powerful for learners but they also contribute significantly to inclusive pedagogy as suggested below.

Equity Pedagogy

Equity pedagogy (Banks, 2007) also known as culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) is an instructional method that maintains cultural integrity by building on the, "cultural knowledge, norms, and communicative practices of students" (Banks, 2007:18). Culturally responsive teachers construct a curriculum that builds on the funds of knowledge available to pupils. By using cultural referents and focusing on issues of diversity, such as race, culture, language and gender, pupils are empowered intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically (Banks, 1994:18). To illustrate, one of our recent Masters students was researching early years pupils' self-perception and identity. She asked the pupils to paint portraits of themselves. Without exception all of the young children painted themselves as white and with western features. The teacher worked with the pupils using mirrors to explore skin colour, facial features and hair types. She then asked the pupils to paint themselves again. The outcome the second time was hugely different for this multiracial class with the children representing their physical features realistically and not as the hegemonic representations portrayed in the mass media. Culturally relevant teachers also see pupils' and parents' questions and dilemmas as important, for example, equality issues such as being comfortable hearing and using languages other than English in the classroom, and finding mutually acceptable solutions when culture or religion conflicts with school policy. They engage pupils in thought-provoking discussions and experiences that connect to their lives enabling them to move beyond the status quo. They challenge pupils to question, to disagree, to examine power relations that exist in texts and in real life (Freire, 1970). They teach pupils to read from multiple perspectives, to explore how power and ideology are inscribed in texts (Wink, 2000). They teach pupils to ask whether a text is attempting to win their consent to a dominating power and, if so, how (Smyth, 2001), by for example, asking children to examine their collective birthday cards, investigating the extent to which the images on the cards are culturally diverse. This can be a starting point for some purposeful discussion and other classroom work such as designing greetings cards that reflect cultural diversity and the range of cultural events that are celebrated, writing letters to the manufacturers of greeting cards, the creation of counterhegemonic artefacts, organising a school or community campaign, and engaging in tasks that challenge bias and stereotype (Molden, 2007). The ultimate aim of culturally relevant teaching is not simply to make pupils feel good, it is to get them to value what they have and where they come from. It is also about developing, 'a broader

socio-political consciousness that allows them to critique cultural norms and values' and not to be trapped in the status quo (Ladson-Billings, 1995: 163).

Various studies reveal that the challenge of enacting culturally relevant pedagogy is that mere content and coursework in multicultural education has limited power to change student teachers' cultural understanding and commitment to equity pedagogy. Many student teachers report feelings of helplessness in confronting issues of cultural difference because of their limited exposure to anything other than white middle-class culture (Cole and Knowles, 2000). Echoing Shor (1999), the problem, Cole and Knowles suggest, is that 'we teach, research, and otherwise practice what we know and feel. In short, we teach who we are' (2000: 188). Hence the power and the danger of reproduction. An issue explored in this study was the extent to which the cultural capacity of student teachers, who are a largely homogenous group, can be developed through critical literacy work. Fundamental to this is the capacity for another critical literacy sensibility, namely dialogic thinking which I consider in the next section.

Dialogic Pedagogy

At the cornerstone of critical literacy is a pedagogy of dialogue. Dialogic classroom interaction is distinctive from everyday classroom conversation and debate in that it is moves away from 'banking', transmission, authoritarian processes towards problem-posing, problem-solving interactions based on pupils' lived experiences, thoughts, ideas and perceptions (Darder, 2017). 'Classrooms die', Shor argues, 'when they become delivery systems for lifeless bodies of knowledge' (1993: 24). In contrast, problem-posing through dialogic engagement is the key to critical literacy. Freire (1993) believed that dialogic interaction develops critical consciousness. As pupils reflect on texts and classroom activities, they are also asked to consider the ways in which they connect to their lived experiences and to the world. So, for example, as pupils are learning about the Irish famine they might be reading Marita Conlon McKenna's novels, 'Under the Hawthorn Tree' and 'Wildflower Girl'[4]. In the dialogic classroom, pupils would consider, discuss and decode the ideological dimensions of the text. In doing so, they might reflect on favourite foods and food experiences, the feeling of being hungry, reflect on the abundance of food in our supermarkets, homes, fast food outlets and restaurants, whether this food is readily available to everyone in our society or not. They will be encouraged to reflect on food waste, food banks, hunger in the world today, consider the causes of that hunger, and what is being done and could be done to solve this local and global issue, and importantly, what they as an individual in a global community can do about the issue of hunger. The texts can also be catalysts for reflecting on emigration, immigration and anti-immigration sentiment. Expanding on this work teachers and pupils might wrestle with and critique some of the multitude of relevant social texts. This pedagogic approach examines and locates literature in its social, cultural and historical framework. Through these dialogic interactions pupils might begin to explore the politics of poverty, the ideology of domination, and the concept of economic

[4] *Under the Hawthorn Tree* and *Wildflower Girl* are the first two novels in a trilogy by Marita Conlon McKenna that focus on the Irish famine. In the second novel, the protagonist Peggy emigrates to America. The novels are often studied at Key Stage Two in Northern Ireland primary schools.

democracy. This dialogic, problem-posing process raises pupils' learning experience from simply comprehending a text, to a greater critical consciousness that fosters pupils' 'intellectual formation as cultural citizens of their world' (Darder, 2017: 97).

However, Giddens (1994) warns that dialogue can function ideologically to reproduce relations of power and domination. To counter this Giddens identifies three dispositions that characterise the dialogic democratic classroom: active trust, mutuality, and negotiated authority (1994: 117-120), all of which are based on respect and positive mutual regard, dispositions commonly associated with teaching for social justice to which I now turn.

Doing Critical Literacy: From Critique to Realisation

Importantly, the consensus is that critical literacy is both a theoretical and practical attitude, an evolving concept, and not a formula, procedure, or specific set of practices (Luke, 2000; Aukerman, 2012). However, providing teachers with models and frameworks of critical literacy that they can adapt to their local context, far from being fundamentally spurious, is a crucial step in ensuring that a critical literacy perspective is enacted (Luke, 2000; McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004). A number of reviews have set out to bridge the theory practice gap and to identify the essential features of classroom critical literacy. These include models by Janks (2014), McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), Jones (2006), Rogers et al (2009), and Freebody and Luke (1990). They provide useful interpretive reference points for teachers in the form of classroom-based strategies consistent with a critical literacy orientation.

In Janks' model method and procedure are second to purpose, with learning viewed not as a linear process, and the focus on 'how' rather than 'why'. Janks identifies the following five steps to doing critical literacy:

- Find and name the issue.
- Link the issue to learners' lives.
- Access relevant information using dialogic, problem-solving pedagogy.
- Examine who benefits and who is being disadvantaged. (Janks, 2014: 350)
- Imagine possibilities for making a positive difference.

McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004: 54-55) identify the following four organising principles:

- A focus on issues of power that promote reflection, transformation, and action
- A focus on the problem and its complexity
- The use of techniques that are dynamic and adapt to the contexts in which they are used
- An examination of multiple perspectives

Meanwhile Jones (2006) proposes a three-part pedagogical framework to encourage pupils to think critically about texts, themselves and their worlds. The framework

involves, deconstruction, reconstruction, and social action. Rogers, Kramer and Mosley, the Literacy for Social Justice Teacher Research Group (2009) include four dimensions:

- Building a community that is sustained over time
- Developing critical stances
- Critical inquiry and analysis
- Action, advocacy, and social change

Finally, Freebody and Luke's Four Resources Model (1990) includes developing the following four skills specifically in relation to texts:

- Code-breaking
- Meaning making
- Text using
- Text analysis.

The outcome of a review by Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) that spanned thirty years of professional literature on critical literacy identified several common dimensions to doing critical literacy. These include (1) disrupting common understandings to gain different perspectives of a text or situation; (2) examining multiple viewpoints; (3) focusing on socio-political issues by examining power relationships; and (4) taking action to bring about change in inappropriate, unequal power relationships between people. The nuances in the language used to describe the concepts in each of the above frameworks is open to interpretation but significantly, they all demonstrate the essential skills identified by Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002). These skills map readily on to the tendencies and sensibilities associated with critical literacy as discussed earlier in this chapter and summarised in Figure 1 at the end of this section. Some of the conceptual terms have been clarified with the addition of expanded descriptors (in italics).

The similarities across the models are clear. Each demands that pupils are equipped with the tools for critiquing, analysing and appraising texts, ideologies, values and positions (Cervetti, et al, 2001), with the aim of helping learners understand the codes of the dominant culture (Kincheloe and Weil, 2004). This implicitly involves age appropriate exploration of the politics of power and domination in pupils' lives. It requires understanding on the part of the teacher of the work of hegemony and to use Freire's (1993) language, an ability to read the word and the world. Despite variances in terminology, the underpinning goal in each case is for learners to be able to:

> Read contexts of everyday use, assess how the technical features (for example, genre, grammar, lexicon) of a text might be realised in these contexts, and size up the variable, power relations, and their options in that context. (Luke, 2000: 455)

'Options in that context' could be said to relate to Freire's (1993) concept of praxis. Each of the models encompasses praxis, that is taking action to bring about change (Lewison,

Flint, and Van Sluys, 2002). In some cases, however, for instance in Freebody and Luke's (1990) model, the language used is a little opaque and so for example, they refer to 'text using'. The literature, however makes it clear that Freebody and Luke's aim is directed towards pupil agency and empowerment. Also important to note also is that the models offer broad schemas, road maps, and tools for planning that are non-prescriptive. Another common and important feature is that none of them propose a developmental hierarchy of teachable skills. Their focus is on developing critical literacy tools in simultaneous and recursive mode. For example, as discussed previously in this chapter, teaching critical literacy should be context specific and begin with questions, dilemmas and issues arising from pupils' texts and contexts. In this way, critical literacy should look different across different classrooms and schools. Teachers and learners should blend, shape and reshape practices in complex, clever, local and innovative ways (Luke, 2000). In other words, the road is made by walking (Machado, 1982).

The nuances between the various models are subtle. While Freebody and Luke focus on the need to acquire four critical literacy skills as 'resources', and Rogers, Kramer and Mosely talk about building a 'community', the other models provide us with an insight into desirable pedagogies to support the development of critical literacy. Janks (2014) for example, references a dialogic, problem-solving pedagogy; Mc Laughlin and DeVoogd (2006) advocate using techniques that are dynamic and Jones' (2006) emphasis is on deconstruction and reconstruction approaches. These nuances are not, however, departures in technical practical knowledge and application, but in essence reflect the positive pedagogic principles discussed previously and developed in the following section that considers their practical implications.

The pedagogic principles, models, tendencies and sensibilities of critical literacy discussed in this chapter together informed the development of the critical literacy course that formed the basis of this study (shown in Appendix 1). As alluded to previously, the course was pre-existing and in some ways this made the task easier. It was a question of reframing some content, adding new learning in the form of discrete sessions, and accommodating this by removing that which was overly skills focused, for example, tuition on Jolly Phonics. In order to develop the students' critical literacy perspective the aim was to develop a course that would help to externalise thinking about literacy (Luke, 2000). What Luke means by the 'externalisation of literacy' is to view literacy not as knowledge and skills in peoples' heads but to understand literacy as a social construct embedded in social practices. This is important because as Luke argues, 'as long as we locate literacy within human subjects, we will invariably find lack and deficit' (Luke, 2000: 459). The ensuing course therefore focused on the macrosocietal factors contributing to underachievement, that is, on the role of literacy in the reproduction of societal inequity (as discussed in Chapter Four).

Figure 1. Comparing Models of Critical Literacy

Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002)	**Janks (2014)**	**Rogers, Kramer and Mosely (2009)**	**Jones (2006)**	**Mc Laughlin and DeVoogd (2004)**	**Freebody and Luke (1990)**
Disrupting common understandings to gain perspectives of a text or a situation	Access relevant information using a dialogic, problem-solving pedagogy	Critical enquiry and analysis Building a community that is sustained over time	Deconstruction *[The tools to deconstruct practices within and around text while foregrounding issues of privilege, marginalisation and the construction of subjects.]*	Focus on the problem and its complexity Use techniques that are dynamic and adapt to the contexts in which they are used	Code breaking *[All texts are constructions and can therefore be deconstructed.* *All texts contain belief and value messages.* *Each person interprets messages differently.]*
Examining multiple viewpoints	Examine who benefits or is disadvantaged	Developing critical stances	Deconstruction	Examination of multiple perspectives	Meaning making *[Text deconstruction. Each medium develops its own language in order to position readers and/or viewers in certain ways.]*
Focusing on sociopolitical issues by examining power relations	Find and name the issue; link to learners' lives	Critical enquiry and analysis	Deconstruction *[Recursive and reflexive practices that examine textual practices and social relations.*	Focus on issues of power	Text analysis *[Texts serve different interests. Recognise own power as a reader/viewer. Challenge ideas and assumptions about the world.]*
Taking action to bring about change	Imagine possibilities for making a positive difference	Action, advocacy and social change	Reconstruction and social action *[Repositioning practices that connect directly to issues of identity and power.]*	Focus on issues of power that promote transformation and action	Text using *[Agency; what do I do with this text?]*
Critical literacy tendencies and sensibilities **Exploring beliefs, values and attitudes; problem-posing, problem-solving; self-determination, individual autonomy and social agency; complex critical thinking**					

Implications for Teacher Preparation

Fundamental to critical literacy are important questions about what we believe the purpose of education to be; what we believe about the pupils we teach and about their parents/carers; and what we believe about the communities we teach (Freire, 1998). Reflecting on the anecdotes in Chapter One, what values and beliefs did the students and newly qualified teachers hold about Orla, Sean, and the boy in Strabane? How did this differ from the values and beliefs held by the teachers in Poleglass? When teachers fail to recognise and acknowledge the significance of poverty and social class they fail to use their authority in the interest of the learner and they are not enacting a critical pedagogy. As a teacher educator committed to implementing the teaching of critical literacy for social justice, it is important for me to be aware of my own positionality, by which I mean biases and preconceived notions about pedagogy, my own previous training, the university climate, and student composition as all impact on how I approach students' preparation to teach literacy. This extends to consideration of what is taught, how it is taught, and what is left out of the programme (Breunig, 2016). If student teachers are to develop a critical literacy perspective, it goes without saying that their tutors need to develop dispositions and practice to act as agents of change and 'do meaningful equity work in the context of public education' (Zion, et al, 2015: 915). I am conscious that while critical literacy has been intensively researched and become widely known in academia, it has not taken root in classrooms and schools (Lee, 2011). To expect teachers to be critical in a state system might be as Luke says, 'a bit like the paradoxical injunction – be spontaneous' (2000: 459).

In the highly competitive teacher job market in Northern Ireland, and for reasons of self-preservation, teachers do not tend to stray away from the dominant discourses. Rather, the tendency is to be ideological mirrors maintaining the dominant culture, working with the particular socio-political and cultural agenda. The preparation of teachers to teach literacy has always reflected the political and social anxiety that exists about literacy standards (Perkins, 2013:294). To this end various policy technologies in the shape of performative measures, for example, international benchmarking, target setting, appraisal and school inspections, are in place to ensure that teachers adhere to the policy line (Ball, 2003). In the confines of this constrained context it is a challenge for pre-service teachers to imagine or enact critical literacy pedagogy. The challenge is compounded by several factors. Firstly, system oppression and 'banking' pedagogy is consistent with the practices used in much teacher training. Secondly, the authoritative process used in teacher training, often demands conformity. Thirdly, there is no one-way, no single formula to apply critical literacy and neither, as discussed previously should there be. This leaves it difficult for teachers and teacher educators to know where to begin, what to do, and how to do it. Neophytes and Valiandes draw on three primary principles in developing student knowledge and commitment to the philosophy of critical literacy that go some way to addressing these issues (2013: 417) and I turn to these now.

The Inclusion Principle

The inclusion principle addresses the risk of pedagogical imposition. If conducted in banking model mode critical literacy could engender conformity leading to passiveness and a form of naive consciousness (Freire, 1993). This compromises the philosophical principles of critical literacy. In other words if students are just informed about critical literacy, by being given pre-selected knowledge and then expected to apply it without questioning, they become alienated from the vision. They will likely become the oppressed and the tutor the oppressor and failure of the student to comply could have negative consequences, for example in examinations, coursework or school placement. The inclusion principle requires students to take responsibility for their learning. For students who are used to a 'banking model' transmission pedagogy that is exam focused, asking them to participate in their own development could risk resistance, disaffection and tutor ridicule.

Fennimore (2000) suggests that the starting point must be for teacher educators to commit to, and embrace the philosophy of critical literacy before applying its principles to their practice. A next logical step is to consider what it is that student teachers need to learn. According to Habermas (1972) there are three aspects of knowledge required by pre-service teachers: the technical, the practical and the emancipatory. Freire was adamant that teaching knowledge was important for teaching thinking. He advocated teaching content within a 'critical reading of reality', that is, to learn in relation to the world (1993: 24). Knowledge, Freire argued, should not be taught by itself in the hope that critical perspective would emerge. The progressive educator teaches 'a critical reading of the world alongside a critical reading of the word' (Freire, 1993: 75). So for example, in teaching students about the range of textual genres, instruction would explore, critique and analyse how the genres of power use vocabulary, grammar, and discourse to perform their function in shaping a world view, a version of reality that establishes and reinforces the relations of power (Kalantzis and Cope, 1996). In this way students develop the ability to recognise oppression, assumption, bias, inequality and injustice in texts, structures and attitudes. As Apple says, they develop a 'greater sense of how meanings are inscribed, encoded, decoded, transmitted, deployed, circulated, and received in the arena of everyday social relations' (2015: 11).

The challenge for the teacher educator is that students bring with them 'deeply socialised histories, highly practiced routines and tightly woven beliefs and values that do not always frame pupils productively' (Dozier, Johnston and Rogers, 2006: 11). Dozier, at al suggest that in addition to this, most of what students will read will reflect a gendered, classist, racist society. The key question is if these beliefs, values and attitudes be unlearnt or changed? One of the ways we can begin to change mindsets is to move away from 'banking pedagogy' (Freire, 1993) and problematise texts, issues and contexts student teachers might bring to the classroom and this leads me to the second of Neophytes and Valiandes (2013) three principles.

The Problem Posing, Collaborative Commitment Principle

Principle two is the problem posing, collaborative commitment principle. The concern here is with regard to students accepting the underlying principles and validity of

critical literacy and having their needs supported in order to apply critical literacy effectively in their teaching (Neophytes and Valiandes, 2013). Student teachers have been successful in the school context; therefore, and so unless their autobiographical histories and epistemologies can be disrupted, they will likely perpetuate the status quo (Dozier, Johnston and Rogers, 2006). Additionally, Gore (1992) proposes that the critical pedagogical concept of teachers as agents of empowerment is problematic because it attributes extraordinary abilities to the teacher and may ignore the context of the teacher's work within patriarchal institutions. Exercising agency and disturbing the status quo is not easy, transparent, or risk-free. The context in which student teachers have been successful tends to represent a particular type of literacy, what Cook-Gumperz (1986) refers to as 'schooled literacy'. The students are keen that we simply tell them what to do and how to do it, as Hooks explains:

> Most of us were taught in classrooms where styles of teaching reflected the notion of a single norm of thought and experience, which we were encouraged to believe was universal. (Hooks, 1994: 35)

The result of this educative experience, according to Dozier, Johnston and Rogers is:

- A technical, hierarchical, monological view of literacy, including a systemic view of conventions over meaning and personal involvement.
- Separation of in-school and out-of-school literacies.
- Unproductive representations of pupils coached in a language of deficit, standards and normative frameworks that force attention to difficulties rather than assets.
- A goal of avoiding the display of incompetence. (Dozier, Johnston and Rogers, 2006: 10):

Provisions may not be made in much so-called critical pedagogy to problematise issues the teacher and the learner might bring to the classroom. Shor (1999: 18) gives the example of trying to question Nike's use of sweatshop labour with students who are 'Nike'd from head to toe' or in the case of my students, Primark'd from head to toe. Behrman concludes, 'translating critical literacy theory into practice presents a difficult challenge demanding innovative and local solutions' (2017: 491). One suggestion is to develop student teachers' knowledge and complex critical thinking skills using an action research approach designed to carefully scaffold and guide students' technical, practical and emancipatory skills so that they gain the confidence to know how to apply those skills. In other words they should be treated with the same pedagogical approach that critical literacy demands of their pupils.

The Communication Vernacular Principle

Principle three is the communication vernacular principle. Student teachers need to acquire critical literacy skills and perspectives themselves (Apple, 2015). As part of a positive pedagogical model this entails learning in a dialogic environment in which

students interact, pose problems, interrogate and challenge actions, viewpoints and assumptions as they grapple critically to better understand the world. Accordingly an essential part of their knowledge development therefore will be to understand the principles of dialogue, that it is not debate or everyday conversation, and that not 'exist in a political vacuum' (Shor and Freire, 1987: 102). Rather dialogue harnesses the power of talk in 'purposeful interactions focused on the development of critical consciousness or transformative social action' (Darder, 2017: 93). At its heart is the larger project of 'conscientisation'(Friere, 1998), which is an attempt to understand and becoming conscious of our relationship to the world and its impact on our lives. This includes the teacher learner relationship. The oft-cited construct of student voice assumes that students are participating in a relationship of equal power. Yet, the power and authority inherent within teaching could contradict dialogue. Individuals who are members of disadvantaged or subordinated social, racial, ethnic, or gender groups may lack the communicative and/or critical-analysis skills and experiences necessary to participate and therefore not be afforded equal opportunity to speak or to be heard. The problem is that certain funds of knowledge and ways of being, including communication, are privileged over others, reflecting Bourdieu's (1973) opus that those who have the most at home continue to benefit the most in the class-biased nature of education.

There are a number of points to make here. Neophytes and Valiandes are clear that:

> The vernacular is not only a pre-requisite for emancipating the poor ... it is essential for those who are at the top of the hierarchical structure in organisations. (2013: 423)

What Neophytes and Valiandes are saying is that language should transcend barriers because inaccessible language ostracises the disadvantaged and reinforces power relations. Fundamental to dialogic pedagogy is the ability to translate and communicate complex concepts and ideas using plain, every day, accessible language. Secondly, Freire (1970: 53) was adamant that 'teachers do not empower their students'. They are, however, in a:

> Position to support the process of empowerment by creating dialogic conditions, activities and opportunities that cultivate and nourish a developing process of decolonisation. (Darder, 2017: 97)

Creating these conditions necessitates teacher direction. This is a natural role and consequence of the authority of the teacher, but Freire (1993) cautions against direction turning into authoritarianism. The latter is linked directly to privileged funds of knowledge that can lead to blind acceptance and reproduction of content and ideas without question. Moreover, classroom practices as well as classroom structures should reflect the principles of critical literacy, meaning that student tutor relationships should be based on modes of authority that are directive but not imperious (Giroux, 2004; Behrman, 2006). In the dialogic classroom both teacher and student are learners together with the teacher open to being questioned by and to learning from the learner (Shor and Freire, 1987). In dialogue there should be no

coercion or pressure to speak, 'one has the right to be silent' (Darder, 2017: 103). There is a tension to be negotiated here between the exercise of freedom and authority. The transformative teacher needs to be aware of the conditions of inequality, of how teacher power and authority are implicated, and to purposefully motivate all students to democratically participate.

Neophytes and Valiande's (2013) three guiding principles were pivotal in the design and development of this research project. They impacted on what was taught, what was left out, and most significantly on how course was taught. In essence, my aim was to disrupt taken for granted routines and assumptions. For example, from the outset, the pedagogical interaction focused on engaging the students' understandings and subjectivities in workshop tasks such as, a Thought Museum (detailed in Chapter Five) and a Pause and Ponder activity in which students considered the problem of representation in texts, and reflected on how texts work to construct our view of the world. The objective was to build the students' literacy capital in order to construct their habitus, so that they ultimately could take up new positions and dispositions within the field. These Bourdieusian concepts are discussed in detail in Chapter Three. But before moving on to the next chapter I reflect on the key issues discussed thus far.

Reflection and Conclusion

Marginalised pupils 'continue to experience opportunity gaps in our schools' (Zion, et al, 2015: 913). The challenge for educators to address this inequity is particularly salient given that teachers are a largely homogenous group occupying positions of privilege. Thereby they are implicated in the structural imposition of discrimination that reproduces this inequity (Chubbuck, 2010). Part of the issue, McLaren argues is that there are 'several myths that currently parade as silver bullets in many schools of education' (2015: 217). Among these myths are meritocracy, individualism and cultural deprivation (McLaren, 2015). One of the key factors supporting this worldview is that ruling class ideology historically defines schooling. The result is transmission pedagogy with an emphasis on receptive, passive reproduction of knowledge (Luke, 2012), what Freire (1993) termed the 'banking model'. For McLaren, a central antagonism of 'banking' pedagogy is that it forms the basis of class discrimination and reproduction of inequity (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Integral to this view is social class as a 'generative matrix that helps structure and shape the particularities of the other antagonisms' (McLaren, 2015: 217). In other words, class relationship is a lever for and exacerbates other forms of oppression and domination. This is not to say that class holds the greatest significance in every relation of domination or subjugation, and neither is it to say that all unfair relations can be reduced to class. However, it is a pivotal cause of societal injustice.

Specifically, critical literacy grounded in Freire's broader theory of conscientisation (1970, 2007), stems from the belief that schools can be sites of transformation directed towards social justice. In critical literacy the intent is to 'challenge cultural and structural power relations through an analysis of these systems of power' (Zion, et al. 2015: 916). Through curriculum, dialogue, and as agents of social change, critical

educators focus on the liberation of students from oppressive structures within society. This is explained by Zion, et al:

> They take what they have learned about themselves, society, and inequities, and use that knowledge, along with developed skills and abilities that allow them to take action against oppression. (2015: 917)

Teachers do this by seeking to empower students by affirming their race, class, and gender positions. They encourage students to reject any and all forms of oppression, injustice, and inequality and teach them to use their voice. Apple describes this approach to literacy teaching as:

> A politics of understanding and action, an act of knowing that attempts to situate everyday life in a larger geopolitical context, with the goal of fostering equity. (2015: 10)

In the context of everyday life, learning is student centred and begins from the learners' worldviews and historicities (Freire, 1970). The expectation is that through dialogic engagement students pose problems to question class, race and gender representations and create counter narratives. Binary relations of teacher and student shift so that teachers become learners in a democratic dialogic environment. The educational challenges are significant, not least because there is no blueprint, no correct or universal model, no method for critical literacy. This would go against its very philosophy, yet at the same time critical literacy cannot be a pick-and-mix approach (Apple, 2015). It is a kaleidoscopic pedagogy that is fluid and recursive. It constitutes several pedagogic imperatives that draw on the guiding principles discerned by the theoretical tendencies and sensibilities that constitute the critical literacy discourse. Pivotal to this is that, 'all educators perpetuate political values, beliefs, myths and meanings about the world that have real social and material consequences' (Darder, 2017: 21). The goal of critical literacy is to illuminate these affective dispositions by developing educators as critically literate themselves. Developing a critical perspective will harness an understanding of students' cultural contexts (Dozier, Johnston, and Rogers, 2006). Contexts mattered to Freire (1970) who was adamant that recognizing and beginning with the particular historicities confronting individual students should be the starting point for work in critical literacy. Instead of a traditional pedagogical emphasis, Freire believed that transformative pedagogy begins with a humility grounded in courage, respect for others, and dispositions of hope (1996) and lovingness (1998). Humility, he believed 'is the quality that allows us to listen to others beyond our differences' (Freire cited by Darder, 2017: 50), and as McLaren says, 'we need ... to fight for each other's differences and not just our own' (2000: 169).

This expansive view of literacy explores the always-present connections of information and power and emphasises the essential role that literacy can play in social justice education (Garcia, Seglem and Share, 2013). Enhancing equity, democracy and social justice through critical literacy offers hope for transformation.

Fundamental to the transformative potential of literacy education are the indispensable qualities of progressive teachers, self-determination, individual autonomy and social agency. Critical literacy has become a social imperative, and it should surely, therefore, be a key element of teacher preparation (Mora, 2014). Further, 'we must train teachers to infuse their teaching with a solid ethical dimension that promotes equitable learning' (Mora, 2014: 18). Cochran-Smith et al ask whether this is 'just good teaching' (2009: 348). They conclude that teaching critical literacy for social justice is not an option but a crucial and fundamental part of 'good and just teaching' (2009: 348) that leads to an understanding and sensitivity, to what Hawkins (2014: 735) describes as the 'bigger picture of human suffering' and that contributes to the welfare and betterment for all (Mc Arthur, 2010). Pierre Bourdieu's theory of reproduction helps us to understand the extent of this suffering and is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter Three:
The Problematique: Relation to the World

Introduction

In the previous Chapter I discussed how the various tendencies and sensibilities of critical literacy identify a way of thinking about the 'word and the world' (Freire, 1970) that leads to an understanding and sensitivity to the 'bigger picture of human suffering' (Hawkins, 2014: 735). This paradigm of thinking has significant implications for addressing issues of inequity in our schools. The challenge however, is that the social world is hidden from us because, among other things, the privileged positions we occupy obscure the nature of reality creating prejudice and stereotypical beliefs about others who are different from us. Marsh (2006) suggests that a close study of Bourdieu's work can help unveil reality by providing a more nuanced account of the dynamic between the individual and social structure. My aim in this chapter is to explore how Pierre Bourdieu's key concepts can add to an analysis of, and develop an understanding of, critical literacy.

Bourdieu's work has not been used extensively to inform analysis of the field of literacy education (Collins, 2000; Marsh, 2006). When Bourdieu's conceptual tools have been used the emphasis has been on habitus and cultural capital as separate entities rather than as an exploration of the relationship between habitus, capital and field (Marsh, 2006). This study seeks to address this and in this Chapter I focus on the dynamic between these concepts as a prelude to an exploration of student teachers' beliefs about the social constructedness of literacy. This is important because as discussed in chapter one, the dispositions towards the disadvantaged held by student teachers raises some concerns. This is consonant with Bourdieu's view that students:

> Even the most disadvantaged, tend to perceive the world as natural and to find it much more acceptable than one might imagine, especially when one looks at the situation of the dominated through the social eyes of the dominant. (1990:130–131)

This view is borne out by research undertaken by Allard and Santoro (2006) in Australia. Allard and Santoro conclude that their teacher education students rarely understand how their own privileged class status locates them securely in mainstream discourses of schooling. They conclude that their student teachers' view from within the hegemonic culture often leaves them unable to see how those outside the dominant discourses may be marginalised through curricula, pedagogies and assessment practices that do not take into account different kinds of knowledge, different approaches to learning, or different values and beliefs. If we do not recognise the power relationships within the curriculum and, indeed, if we reconstruct them as taken-for-granted normative practices that go unchallenged, the implication is that we are to some extent responsible for the status quo. Bourdieu's work has potential to

help illuminate the macro societal factors that contribute to the reproduction of societal disadvantage that may be perpetuated through literacy teaching and learning. Mills (2013) argues that issues of social justice and diversity become central components of pre-service teacher education if we use Bourdieu's central concepts.

I, too, believe that Bourdieu's concepts are worthwhile because, as tools of thought, they offer teachers explanations for the causes of social differences in accessing education which can motivate us towards agency in the pursuit of social justice. Similarly, Mills (2008:79) suggests that Bourdieu's theories hold possibilities for teachers at all levels to improve the educational outcomes of marginalised students. This is because Bourdieu's ideas can help student teachers develop meta-literacies, such as complex critical thinking (Kincheloe and Weil, 2004) that will assist in negotiating their positions and encourage commitment to the sensibilities and dispositions of critical literacy for social justice. A Bourdieusian stance can enable a powerful critical analysis of literacy education that could help student teachers to recognise the arbitrariness of the dominant culture, the impact it has on the disadvantaged, how they as literacy teachers may be implicated in reproducing this inequity, and importantly, how they can mobilise their agency in opposition to the status quo.

Following a brief introduction to Pierre Bourdieu, the remainder of this chapter is structured in two parts. Part one provides an exposition of Bourdieu's key conceptual tools of habitus, capital and field, examining how these concepts are put to work within his theory of reproduction of social inequality in and through education. This is followed in part two by a discussion of how consciously adopting a Bourdieusian perspective could move critical literacy forward.

Pierre Bourdieu[5]: Architect of Social Theory

Pierre Bourdieu was born in 1930 in Denguin, a small village in south western France to a family of modest income. He showed early academic ability and graduated from the prestigious École Normale Supérieure with a degree in philosophy. Following military service in Algeria he spent time teaching at the Algerian university returning to Paris in 1960 to take up a post at the University of Lille. Initially his work and prolific writing focused mainly on theories relating to education, art and culture, and methodology but after the 1970s he wrote on an increasingly diverse range of topics. He simultaneously developed a prominent public profile with his involvement in state politics motivated by the social suffering brought about by a neoliberal public agenda. As a French sociologist, and renowned public intellectual Bourdieu's theories gained increasing recognition internationally. He continued to refine his theory of practice in some thirty books and more than three hundred articles until his sudden death in 2002. He has left an extraordinary legacy and, according to Calhoun and Wacquant

[5] See Grenfell (2008:11-24) for a succinct biography of Bourdieu that sets out empirical details of his life, the socio-historical background in which he lived and worked, and an account of the intellectual climate that surrounded him. Grenfell is careful to explain why Bourdieu's concepts need to be apprehended against his co-terminus background. Wacquant (2006) also provides a comprehensive overview of Bourdieu's life and work.

(2002), at the time of his death Bourdieu was perhaps the most prominent sociologist in the world.

Reay et al (2004: 411-413) describe Bourdieu's scholarship as 'a synthesis of philosophy, social anthropology and sociology underpinned by a passionate commitment to social justice'. Social class was a fundamental analytic category in much of Bourdieu's research and notably in his theory of reproduction (Weinger, 2005). Bourdieu's interest in social inequity and the ways in which it is masked and perpetuated became an enduring preoccupation that influenced all his writings (Reay et al, 2004: 411-413). For Bourdieu, Grenfell writes, 'education was experienced as a mechanism for consolidating social exclusion' (2008:28), and he wanted 'education to be an instrument for social integration' (2008:32). It was in the 1960s that he and Passeron developed many of his fundamental concepts, namely habitus, capital and field. His work first came to be known to many educationalists in 1977 with the translated publication of Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture (Weinger, 2005). Yet, as Mills points out, although Bourdieu has made significant contributions to understanding the role that schools and teachers play in reproducing social and cultural inequalities:

> His work is still widely misunderstood and attracts fierce criticism for apparently mechanistic notions of power and domination, an overly determined view of human agency, and the oversimplification of class cultures and their relationships to each other. (2008:79)

According to critics such as Sullivan (2002) and McRobbie (2002), Bourdieu's theory of reproduction leaves no room for notions such as resistance or transformation. It is a world Jenkins says, 'in which things happen to people, rather than a world in which they can intervene in their individual and collective destinies' (2002: 91). Yet Bourdieu's work is fundamentally a 'theory of practice' in contrast to 'theory and practice' (Grenfell, 2008: 36) that simultaneously illuminates and invokes agency. In Bourdieu's own words, 'I have always talked quite simply, of practice' (1994: 22). This understated declaration belies the profound and esteemed legacy of Bourdieu's work. His death in 2002 'means the loss of an architect of a great and consistent synthesis of social theory' (Fowler, 2002: np). In the next section I will attempt to do at least some justice to Bourdieu's work as I outline his key concepts and why his work is my choice of a theoretical lens in this study.

Habitus

The habitus is the central concept in Bourdieu's sociology. The word habitus is closely related to the word 'habit'. It is important however not to mistake the two terms. 'Habit' simply means regular or routine practice. Habitus on the other hand was chosen specifically by Bourdieu to emphasise the following:

> The habitus, as the word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions. (1993: 86)

What we can take from Bourdieu's explanation is that habitus is much more than habit and it is also much more than our practices or acts. Habitus refers to the permanent dispositions we tend towards 'in accordance with the schemes engendered by history' (Bourdieu, 1984: 82). So at the core of Bourdieu's habitus lies the tendency to always act the same way in similar situations. Krais explains it as the:

> Ensemble of schemata of perception, thinking, feeling, evaluating, speaking and acting that structures all expressive, verbal, and practical manifestations and utterances of a person. (1993: 169)

Krais' definition reflects Bourdieu's opus (above) that habitus 'becomes durably incorporated in the body' (Bourdieu, 1993: 86). Mayrhofer et al (2007) echo Bourdieu when they make the point that the habitus is durable, evolving and continually adjusted to context whilst being reinforced by further experience. It is reinforcing and reinforced; structuring and structured. Habitus is a complex concept but it encourages us to think about relations 'between' phenomena with an emphasis on understanding the underlying social structures of practices or actions (Maton, 2014). The following section explores the key features of habitus in more detail.

Habitus as Structured and Structuring

Bourdieu described habitus as:

> A socialised body. A structured body, a body which has incorporated the immanent structures of a world or of a particular sector of that world - a field -and which structures the perception of that world as well as action in that world. (1998: 81)

For Bourdieu, habitus functions simultaneously as a structured or generative force and as a structuring force (Mills, 2008: 81). By 'socialised body, a structured body' Bourdieu means that habitus is something that is internalised or tacit. He explains it as 'society written into the body' (1990: 63). It operates below the level of consciousness so is second nature to us. It is not a set of consciously held beliefs or values but operates below the level of calculation in every aspect of our daily lives. It drives us to act and respond, 'without consciously obeying rules explicitly posed as such' (Bourdieu, 1990: 76). That is, the habitus predisposes and orientates our actions and inclinations, without strictly determining them. The subtlety of habitus is that it is 'a self-perpetuating system that needs no external reinforcement' (Marsh, 2006: 164). This is because the dispositions that constitute the habitus are acquired through a process of inculcation that emanates from social position or class (Mills, 2008). These structures are the 'material conditions of existence…that generate practices, beliefs, perceptions, feelings…in accordance with its own structure' (Grenfell, 2008: 50). The material conditions Grenfell is referring to are the structural elements in society, such as the family or school. As a result of their socialisation, members of a social group come to acquire a set of dispositions that reflect the structural elements of their social class, and they go on to behave in ways that reproduce those structural elements. The dispositions produced by the habitus can be said therefore to be 'structured' in the sense that:

> They unavoidably reflect the social conditions within which they were acquired. An individual from a working-class background, for instance, will have acquired dispositions which are different in certain respects from those acquired by individuals who were brought up in a middle-class milieu. (Thompson 1991: 13)

Thompson's explanation of the structured nature of habitus is echoed by Marsh who says, 'we absorb the ideologies and practices that are a part of our everyday lives and these become habitual' (2006: 164). Similarly, Power (1999) makes the point that the regularities of our behaviour reflect not only our social class but also our gender and ethnicity. It is this conditioning associated with a particular existence that Mills argues generates the disposition to act in line with 'recurring patterns of outlook' embodied in our beliefs, values, conduct, speech, dress and manners (2008: 80).

As a structuring force, habitus 'structures the perception of that world as well as action in that world' (Bourdieu, 1998: 81). Moore explains this as follows 'individuals are shaped by the perception of objective probabilities, and are predisposed to practices that realise those probabilities' (2004: 250). So the experiences of our early life's journey shape us to such an extent that we are disposed to some options and foreclosed to others. We reject some experiences and opportunities as unthinkable and a limited range of practices are perceived as possible. As Bourdieu explains in the above quote, this manifests not only in our perception of the world, but also in how we act, that is, the decisions and the choices we make, or indeed do not make, on a daily basis. In this way Nash explains, we carry our history with us and in doing so 'underlying social structures are reproduced and given effect' (1999: 177). The effects can be seen everywhere yet to the untrained eye they are often invisible (Maton, 2014).

The Significance of Habitus

What we can take from the above is that habitus reflects a close dynamic between the subjective and the objective. As Bourdieu puts it, habitus 'is the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality' (1977: 72). The repercussions of this are significant, as Bourdieu and Wacquant explain:

> Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside social agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted. (1992: 127)

The metaphor 'like a fish out of water' is used by Bourdieu to describe those who find themselves in social situations where they feel ill at ease, in other words when the habitus does not match the social context (Bourdieu and Waquant 1992: 127). Being 'like a fish in water' is when the habitus s is homologous to the social context and the actor is attuned to the game. Either way, we 'put into action the incorporated principles of a generative [or structured] habitus' and achieve 'subjective expectations of objective possibilities' (Bourdieu, 1990: 10; Bourdieu 1990: 59). The positions we

occupy in our society in other words, such as our social class, generate and structure experiences that give us a particular point of view based on our position. Bourdieu uses the metaphor of a game that Maton describes as a 'field of struggles in which actors strategically improvise in their quest to maximise their positions' (2014: 53). The social game is bound by rules and some actors have more practical mastery over the rules and how to play the game than others (Bourdieu, 1990: 64).

This 'feel for the game' is generated from an individual's primary habitus, inculcated in childhood. It tends to be more durable than a secondary habitus that may be acquired later, as for example, one takes on a profession or trade. The dispositions acquired in childhood 'literally mould the body and become second nature...operating in a way that is pre-conscious and hence not readily amenable to conscious reflection and modification' (Thompson, 1991: 12-13). Despite the rich complexity of the concept of habitus, it has been criticised for being much more reproductive than transformative. Some, for example Jenkins (2002) suggest that Bourdieu does not give sufficient credit to agency and the potential of agents to intervene in their own destinies. Mills (2008: 81) agrees with Jenkins that Bourdieu's conception of agency is somewhat restrained, but interestingly she regards this as a strength, reflecting its relationship with an equally restrained conception of structure. In support of Bourdieu Schirato and Webb's view on this point is that:

> There is no such thing as pure agency; but a kind of (limited) agency can be identified ... subjects are able to negotiate the rules, regulations, influences and imperatives that inform all cultural practice, and delimit thought and action, precisely because fields dispose them to do so. (2003: 540)

This would suggest that the implications of habitus for education are significant. Habitus shapes and generates our vision. It is what we and do not believe is probable and possible for us and by implication, for others, and what is not. As individuals gravitate to their expected, assumed place in the social world, the status quo is reproduced time and again and agency cannot be fully exercised if we are all 'fish in water'. Bourdieu's aim was to illuminate this process by encouraging 'a new gaze, a sociological eye' that is underpinned by a relational way of thinking (Bourdieu and Waquant, 1992: 251). As Bernstein says, 'habitus is something good to think with, or about' (1996: 136). Bernstein's conception is that understanding the concept of habitus gives us a new way of seeing relationships that alerts us to new possibilities and the potential for different forms of agency, aimed at redressing or obstructing reproduction.

Bernstein's contention is an optimistic one. He is not alone in seeing the potential for agency. Reay's view (2014) is that habitus is permeable, has potential for new creative responses, and the capacity to be restructured as individuals encounter the social world. Bourdieu himself said that schooling in particular acts to cultivate a disposition that he calls 'a cultured habitus' (1967: 344). Habitus is not therefore fixed or permanent, and we are not necessarily captives of it (Grenfell and James, 2004). Despite the critics, each of these conceptions of habitus sees it as the grounds for

agency, as having transformative potential brought about by subsequent experiences and as an escape from structural determinism (Nash, 1999: 176). What Nash and others suggest is that habitus shapes but does not determine our choices. The implications of this for student teachers is that it is not unrealistic to expect that they might recognise the reproductive nature of social conditions and may develop the capacity and tendency towards generating opportunities for action in the social field. This would require changing or disrupting their habitus or learned behaviours and attitudes they have acquired that uphold dominant discourses. There are notable challenges in doing this. Firstly, the habitus of privileged students will closely resemble the values, habits, behaviours and attitudes that the school seeks to transmit and to legitimate (Mills, 2008: 82). The habitus tends to generate practices that coincide with the social conditions that produced it. Since these are the very dispositions that directly helped them succeed in the system, students can be reluctant or impervious to change. Secondly, the habitus of marginalised students may make them feel constrained and largely incapable of 'perceiving social reality, in all of its arbitrariness, as anything other than the way things are' (Jenkins, 2002: 13). The challenge is that habitus 'sets the boundaries within which agents are free to adopt strategic practices' (Harker and May, 1993: 174).

Habitus is however only one aspect of Bourdieu's theoretical tools. For Bourdieu it is the interaction of habitus, field and capital that generates his theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1990). As Grenfell and James argue, 'if habitus brings into focus the subjective end of the equation, field focuses on the objective' (1998: 15). Golsorkhi and Huault (2006) hold that Bourdieu's concept of field represents the entry point for his other concepts and Walther (2014) similarly describes field as the macro concept that structures Bourdieu's opus. This next section will explore Bourdieu's field theory and consider how fields operate, namely through social class.

Field Theory

For Bourdieu field is a 'structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and who are dominated' (1998: 40-41). This definition invokes three metaphors. Firstly is the 'structured social space' which he likens to a game of football and secondly, is 'a field of forces' which is akin to a science–fiction force field, as in Star Trek, for example. Thirdly, field operates as a 'a force field' as in the science of physics. Contained in all three metaphors is a relation-concept meaning that in social reality field is fundamentally conceived as relational (Hilgers and Mangez, 2015). To understand this concept and the metaphors more precisely, each will now be considered in turn.

Field as a Structured Social Space

In Bourdieusian terms a 'field is a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions' (Bourdieu and Waquant, 1992:7). Bourdieu uses the metaphor of a football field to illuminate his idea. Just like the game of football, fields have their own internal logic and set of discourses and rules that become internalised by players. In the case of education, teachers operate within the field adopting a recognised set of practices, values and attitudes specific to that field and learners follow (or not) the

rules of play (Marsh, 2006: 164). Failure to comply with the rules can result in sanctions and possibly relegation, exclusion from school for example. Basically what this means is that fields are occupied by agents who interact relationally as players on teams, in accordance with the rules for that specific field (Bourdieu, 1997).

Importantly, as a structured social space Bourdieu (1998) argued that fields operate interdependently with habitus and capital. The latter (the capital concept) is discussed only briefly in this section but is addressed in more detail later in this chapter. O'Donohue (2013) makes the point that agents do not enter the field of education neutrally or homogeneously, rather individuals encounter and engage the field variably. This is because the extent to which agents comprehend and are able to negotiate a field is also dependent in some degree on their habitus (Schirato and Webb, 2002). Habitus can provide agents with field-specific literacy that allows them to feel as previously discussed, 'like a fish in water' (Bourdieu and Waquant, 1992: 127). Hilgers and Mangez (2015: 7) refer to this as 'field specific conditions of membership' which takes the form of practical mastery of the rules, discourses, values, contexts, and so on. that are recognised and consecrated within a field. In other words the, 'practical possibilities of school are first learned at home, with subsequent experiences in the school often confirming that knowledge' (Walther, 2014: 9). So on the basis of fit between the habitus and the field, some children will for example, anticipate failure while others will assume success as a natural consequence in the field of education (O'Donohue, 2013). Bourdieu explains this as:

> The product of a long slow process of autonomation and is therefore, so to speak, games 'in themselves' and not 'for themselves', one does not embark on the game by conscious act one is born into the game, with the game. (Bourdieu, 1990: 67)

This is why the concept of field is said to represent the more structural part of Bourdieu's theory. To achieve in the field, one must not only be able to play the game, but also understand the game. In the course of the socialisation process, the agent internalises the objective rules that govern the social world. The closer the correspondence is between the habitus and the rules of the field, the more the agents are at ease and the greater the potential of a favourable relation to the game. Conversely, the less congruence there is, the less agents will manage to 'fall into line with rules that are made against them' (Bourdieu 1980: 185; Bourdieu 1990: 298). Another important factor to consider here is that the social field is not a level playing ground (Schirato and Webb, 2002). Because 'schools do not operate in vacuums; they reflect the wider dynamics of power' (O'Donohue, 2013: 191).

Fields are therefore places of power relations in which 'individuals bring to the game all the relative power at their disposal' (Walther, 2014: 9).

Relative power here refers to another of Bourdieu's concepts, capital. Thompson (2014) describes the way in which accumulations of capital can take four forms: economic (money and assets), cultural (forms of knowledge, taste, cultural preferences, voice), social (affiliations and social networks) and symbolic (things which represent and can be exchanged for other forms of capital, such as, credentials).

Individuals bring to the field varying accumulations of capital that give them advantages over others. This equates to what social scientists call the Matthew Effect[6]. Coined by sociologist Robert Merton in 1968, the Matthew Effect derives its name from a verse in the New Testament (Matthew 25: 29) which reads:

> For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

This roughly translates to:

> Those who are successful are most likely to be given the special opportunities that lead to further success, and those who aren't successful are most likely to be deprived of them. (Hilgers and Mangez, 2015: 6).

Field, habitus or capital are interrelated concepts that conspire to produce accumulated advantage. Objective relations to the field or to the rules of the game through habitus and objective relation to capital give some learners advantages that predispose them to potentially more successful outcomes. This structure maintains the social order by reproducing the dominant and subordinate spaces occupied by agents. This takes me to the second of Bourdieu's metaphors: field as a science-fiction force.

Field as Science-Fiction Force

Fields are human constructions with their own set of tacit rules that operate at the level of unconsciousness (Wacquant, 2011). Grenfell describes the concept as 'spatial, albeit notional; an abstract space, with often veiled consequences, linked to how that space is occupied' (2008: 68). As in a science-fiction force fields, fields are 'self-contained worlds…that operate semi-autonomously' (Thompson, 2014: 68). There are numerous fields in the social world, for example, the economic field, the field of education, television, the arts, politics and so on. Each field has its own rules, what Bourdieu calls its own 'logic of practice' (1990). In Bourdieu's words, 'constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside the space… actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field' (1998: 40-41). Bourdieu suggests that agents, some of whom dominate and some who are dominated operate in a way that is patterned and predictable.

Thinking about social spaces in this way enables us to consider how societal structures, such as schools reproduce privilege and relationships of inequality (O'Donohue, 2013: 191). O'Donohue uses the analogy of a 'conductorless orchestration of power relations' (2013: 201). In her study, working-class women in

[6] For an outline of Stanovich's conceptual framework commonly referred to as the Matthew Effect see, Stanovich, K. E. (2009) Matthew Effects in reading: some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy, *The Journal of Education*, Vol. 189, No. 1-2, pp. 23 – 55.

Ireland articulated this invisible power dynamic from their first-hand experience of visiting schools. The women showed practical awareness of their place in the system. They viewed themselves as 'occupying the borderlands, the peripheral places' (2013: 201). The interviewees articulated a 'them' and 'us' binary with 'us' being the working class and the disadvantaged. The women talked about:

> Lack of insight on the part of the school, in terms of the wider realities at home, the easy and stereotypical linking of a lack of money to a lack of concern, care, or discipline, and the consequent moral high ground that can be occupied by school personnel. (2013: 201)

What the women communicate here is the profound way in which they experience the hierarchised nature of the field of the school. Their participation in education is characterised by a powerful sense of alienation. This is the reality of being born outside the game, of being positioned against those whose habitus and capital guarantee a 'monopoly of some possibilities although they are officially guaranteed to all,' the right to education for example (Bourdieu, 1997: 225). As Bourdieu explains, 'we take the positions which we are predisposed to take on the basis of our position in a certain field' (1993: 154). These positions are predisposed by our habitus and our relative accumulation of capital, thus holding us to the things that are for 'the likes of us' (Bourdieu, 1984: 471).

Participation in education is never straightforward, with the dominant agents and institutions having considerable power to determine the outcomes of the dominated (Thomson, 2014). The reality of being born outside the game is characterised by slow often inevitable trajectories of failure, positioned against those whose habitus and capital guarantee them a head start. Bourdieu (1977) argues that we all have a practical knowledge of how we are placed in fields. That place is occupied first and foremost in terms of rank and is expressed in terms of emotion, 'the unease of someone who is out of place, or the ease that comes from being in one's place' (Bourdieu, 1997: 183–184). The field of schooling is a social space in which classification, ranking and streaming exists as the norm (Grenfell, 2008). Hilgers and Mangez explain how these symbolic structures categorise learners 'according to the objective resources, positions and trajectories of individuals and groups' (2015: 11). An individual's habitus and accumulation of capital in other words makes it possible for some individuals to secure a higher, more dominant position of legitimacy in the field. Dominant agents who are established in the field, tend to have an interest in maintaining the established order of domination. This creates what Bourdieu called a 'locus of struggles' (1975: 19) or battles between agents who define dominant and dominated positions and that determine what agents can and cannot do (Bourdieu, 1997). In addition, those occupying homologous positions in one field are likely to be sympathetic to and find solidarity with those who occupy a homologous position in another field (Thomson, 2014). This 'homology of positions...encourages a practical recognition of interests' (Bourdieu 1988: 110), which ensures that the relationship between the dominant and the dominated is reproduced in and across fields (Bourdieu 1984). This leads me to now consider the third metaphor of field as a force

field.

Field as a Force Field

The metaphor of a force field 'illustrates the forces exerted by one object upon another' (Thompson, 2014: 69). Bourdieu posited that forces in each field are subject to two opposing principles of hierarchisation, that is, cultural and economic capital. This relationship Bourdieu suggests can be expressed as two intersecting axes (Bourdieu, 1988: 270). Due to the domination of the economic field over the educational field, the economic axis is located horizontally (Hilgers and Mangez, 2015). The field of power is thus structured by the opposition between dominating economic capital where the focus is on prosperity and competitiveness, and dominated cultural capital with its concern for cultural matters (Hilgers and Mangez, 2015). The forces at work here are expressed as 'relations of force between agents or between institutions having in common the possession of the capital necessary to occupy dominant positions' (Bourdieu 1996: 215). In education for example, well off parents can provide their children with physical space, time, resources (such as books, desks and computers), additional curricular (for example, music lessons), and extra-curricular learning experiences, (for example, travel and cultural visits). This additional cultural capital accrued by economic capital 'operates to misrecognise its contribution to the overall field of power and to the reproduction of social inequalities' (Thompson, 2014: 71).

Bourdieu's work on education places the field of education as a powerful contributor to the maintenance and reproduction of social inequality. In his theoretical framework the field of education exists as 'a force that mediates and reproduces, fundamental principles of social classification' (Naidoo, 2004: 457-458). The field of education thus acts as a 'relay' in that it reproduces the principles of social class and other forms of domination under the cloak of academic neutrality (Bourdieu, 1996: 36). It also acts as a screen that permits the realisation of social classification to be accomplished invisibly. In this way, educational institutions contribute to the naturalisation of structures of domination. It does this for example, through selection processes, admissions' policies, academic achievement measures, specific capital valued in the field, and it 'codifies the appropriate capital required for entry' (Naidoo, 2004: 467). In teacher training in South Africa, Naidoo argues this entry tends to be by the elite, who are white and from a dominant class. Homogenous students, in terms of background and disposition become part of the institutional discourse contributing to and legitimating a system that in turn contributes to social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1996).

Although Bourdieu has written extensively on education he has never addressed teacher education *per se*. However, in reference to the concept of 'profession' he warns:

> The notion of profession is dangerous because it has all the appearance of false neutrality in its favour. Profession is a folk concept which has been uncritically smuggled into scientific language and which imports with it a whole social unconscious. It is

> the product of a historical work of construction and representation of a group which has slipped into the very science of this group. This is why this concept works so well, or too well: the category of profession refers to realities that are, in a sense, 'too real' to be true, since it grasps at once a mental category and a social category, socially produced only by superseding or obliterating all kinds of differences and contradictions. (Bourdieu, 1989: 37-38)

Bourdieu's appeal here is to rethink and reconceptualise 'profession' and specifically to think about it as a field and in this way to think relationally and 'in so doing break with the notion...and re-integrate it within a model of the full reality it pretends to capture' (Bourdieu, 1989: 38). This has significant implications specifically for the field of teacher education, which constitutes '…a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field'. In this space student teachers are not:

> Conscious and knowing subjects, acting with full knowledge of the facts…they are active and knowing agents endowed with a practical sense that is an acquired system of preferences, of principles, of vision. (Bourdieu, 1988: 25)

Grenfell explains that here Bourdieu argues that education is a field which reproduces itself due to ignorance, a lack of full knowledge of the facts and also because 'agents who occupied dominant positions were deeply imbued with its practices and discourses' (2012: 74). Bourdieu was adamant however that people are not automatons (Thompson, 2014), and that what is needed is for agents to be taught to understand how objective relations and positions between individuals in a specific social field are 'gained, maintained and reproduced independently from consciousness and individual will' that reinforces class (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 72). Bourdieu's analysis of the social world places a strong focus on social class, and it to this that I now turn.

How Fields Operate: The Corrosive Effects of Class-Based Experiences

Bourdieu's perception of class is based around the concepts of capital and habitus or position and disposition (Crossley, 2015). The value the social world places on capital imbues it with power and status that results in a dominant position. Every individual is in possession of capital both economic and cultural that can be mapped on to a graph or axis, and on to the field according to 'economically or temporally dominant and culturally dominant positions' relative to the total volume of capital an individual possesses (Bourdieu, 1988: 270). Following Bourdieu, this mapping of social space is what allows us to attribute a class to an individual. Social class has concrete implications for lifestyle and habitus. In Bourdieusian terms, objective locations in social space are attached to objective living conditions that are marked by 'distance from necessity' (Crossley, 2015: 91). The closer an agent is to necessity, the closer s/he is to poverty. This material and social disadvantage has huge potential to generate vulnerability as people worry about the basics of survival (Crossley, 2015) and this is the cornerstone to Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory of reproduction.

Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) reproduction theory analyses how dominant groups are able to use their accumulation of cultural capital to secure educational advantage in order to maintain their status and economic position from generation to generation. Culturally well off children inherit the embodied dispositions sanctioned by the educational system, for example, in relation to language (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). High levels of cultural resources that privileged parents possess and pass on to their children account significantly for the educational differences among learners from different socioeconomic origins. For example, poor home literacy environments of low socioeconomic families can lead to problematic learning experiences and act as an important mechanism contributing to educational disadvantage. In other words, the expertise, or relation to language gained from the socialisation process is instrumental to an individual's degree of success or failure within the system:

> The influence of linguistic capital, particularly manifest in the first years of schooling when the understanding and use of language are the major points of leverage for teachers' assessments, never ceases to be felt…at every level of the educational system. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1997:73)

As schooling is fundamentally a communication system, Bourdieu and Passeron contend that the 'educational mortality rate can only increase as one moves towards the classes most distant from the scholarly language' (1977: 73). The education system therefore confers legitimacy and 'fulfils its social function of conservation and its ideological function of legitimation' through its technical function of communication (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977:102). This enables middle-class children to achieve success and attain qualifications that in turn help them to mobilise other resources (Crossely, 2015). It also accounts for the 'educational mortality rate amongst the classes most distant from the scholarly language' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 73). Basically what is happening in this dynamic is that agents are reproducing their advantage in the field. Bernstein describes the process as 'a cultural relay: a uniquely human device for both the reproduction and the production of culture' (2003: 196). He describes the relationship as one of subordination and super-ordination in which 'power is masked or hidden by devices of communication' (2003: 199).

In line with Bourdieusian theory, for Bernstein these class assumptions carry consequences for those children who are not able to exploit the possibilities of the pedagogic system. This helps to explain how in Bourdieu and Passeron's reproduction theory, different social actors get positioned differentially in a system in which literacy education is considered as a neutral field rather than as a site for social selection masked by symbolic domination (Heller, 2008). In Bourdieu's analytical framework, for those people living at the sharp end of society, there is no concept of a future as a broad field of innumerable possibilities (Wolfreys, 2000). Rather, the future is something to which one submits resignedly as an aspect of the subjective expectations attached to one's class. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1997) conviction is that the working classes by virtue of their relationship to language and culture either

eliminate themselves from the outset or condemn themselves to eventual elimination. Their subjective expectation is linked to the objective probability or expectation of success which Bourdieu and Passeron argue accounts for 'the educational mortality of the working classes and the survival of a fraction of those classes' (1997: 156). Thereby the theory of reproduction reinforces an acceptance of exclusion, a view that 'this is not for the likes of us' (1997:157), and it accounts for:

> The variance in the attitudes from the different social classes towards work or success, depending on the degree of probability and improbability of their continuing into a given stage of education. (1997:157)

This internalisation of objective possibility as subjective expectation is conceptualised by Bourdieu in the concept of habitus. Moore explains that it is within each distinctive class habitus, that individuals acquire the dispositions that determine the manner and extent of their involvement in education (2004). Cieslik and Simpson, in documenting the corrosive effects of poor literacy skills on those living with social disadvantage emphasise the importance of developing language competence:

> Skills matter as our ability to communicate and interact are at the heart of how we represent ourselves to others. Judgments we make about our own worth and how others judge us are inextricably bound up with language use and differing displays of literacy competency. (2015: np)

Their data from three biographical research projects carried out in disadvantaged areas in England, shows that school is a challenging time for those with poor literacy. The expectation from teachers was that children should have mastered the basic aspects of reading and writing in primary school yet their interviewees made slow progress so that by secondary school they repeatedly failed literacy tests and struggled with routine classroom activities. Without the additional literacy support they needed the interviewees became very emotional about their learning, they were confused, frustrated and angry about their inability to be like other children who could read and write fluently. At the very time they wished to be treated as emerging adults they found their poor literacy led them to being infantilised because of their inability to perform everyday tasks. Over the years the interviewees' negative learning identities were repeatedly reaffirmed rather than challenged at school. Even though their respondents wished to succeed they spoke of becoming demotivated and disillusioned with school not least because they were often perceived as 'less able'. Cieslik and Simpson's study concludes that the specific learning needs of their interviewees went unmet because they were hidden by the class based 'sifting and sorting processes' that operated in the schooling system (2015: np). The class-based experiences at school were further compounded in the home as few had adequate support to help them overcome their problems with their learning.

On this issue Delpit (1997) argues that the unequal distribution of capital to working-class and minority pupils reflects their exclusion from the culture of power operating in schools. Unlike middle-class pupils who have other sites of acquisition and

opportunity for reinforcement of dominant cultural capital, for example, in the home, through family members, the community, the church. Children from disadvantaged groups find themselves doubly disadvantaged (Bernstein 1990). In fact:

> To penalise the underprivileged and favour the most privileged, the school has only to neglect, in its teaching methods and techniques and its criteria when making academic judgments, to take into account the cultural inequalities between children of different social classes. (Bourdieu, 1974: 37)

Bourdieu's appeal is clear, change needs to happen and here he argues that to enact this change we need to focus on the tensions, conflicts and forces inherent in the field of education. The reason for this is exemplified in Cieslik and Simpson's research (described above) that provides an insight into the hidden injuries and stigma of classed experiences of schooling. Cieslik and Simpson's work echoes research undertaken by Bernstein (1971) who famously documented the link between educational under-achievement and the vocabulary and expression of school children. Bernstein demonstrated the relationships between restricted and elaborated codes of communication exhibited by working and middle class children and their educational attainment. Similarly, for Bourdieu (1977) modes of expression are an important feature of a person's habitus. Thompson (1991) suggests that language use can reflect the different class experiences of individuals and hence act as symbolic markers of an individual's place in an unequal social structure. The powerful employ a vocabulary and accent that confer authority and a right to be heard. This is one way in which those with economic and cultural resources convert these capitals into other embodied practices and dispositions that can aid their social advancement. In contrast, the language use of the working classes, Bourdieu suggests, can often make them vulnerable to derision and exclusion, thus compounding their other material and social disadvantages, such as misrecognition and symbolic violence which I now discuss (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977).

Capital Concept, Misrecognition and Symbolic Violence

In Bourdieusian terms the concept of capital is viewed as 'a generalised resource' (Anheier, 1995: 862). The word 'generalised' is key here as Bourdieu (1986) distinguishes between four different types of resources namely economic, social, cultural and symbolic. He also speaks more specifically of linguistic capital (1977). Capital exists and is expressed in three forms: in the 'embodied state' in the form of long-lasting predispositions, physical features, body language, poise, lifestyle choices, in the 'objectified state' in which it is materially represented as valued cultural artefacts such as books, musical instruments, fine art; and in the 'institutionalised state' as socially sanctioned educational qualifications and titles. (Bourdieu, 1983). The embodied and objectified expressions of capital are manifested in the habitus which, as noted is formed domestically within the family but importantly is conditioned institutionally by the system of education. Each of these varying types of capital can be broadly categorised as either economic or symbolic. Understanding the difference between them is vital to understanding Bourdieu's thinking about class

relations and his theory of reproduction. In Bourdieu's thesis, power relations are systematically disguised and reproduced by the arbitrary value attached to capital that involves what he terms 'misrecognition' (1977: 31), and which results Moore (2004) claims in injustice. The purpose of the following section is to consider the forms of capital that Bourdieu uses and provide an explanation of how the concept operates with particular reference to the field of education. These forms of capital are: economic, social, cultural, linguistic and symbolic.

Economic Capital

Economic capital refers to material assets that are 'immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights' (Bourdieu 1986: 242). Economic capital is related to monetary income, wealth and material goods. It is the most liquid, most readily convertible form of capital. Individuals with access to economic capital can access the best schools, resources such as musical instruments, experiences of the world through travel, to membership of clubs and societies, and so on.

Social Capital

Bourdieu (1982) describes social capital as 'useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits'. In elaboration, Walther explains the social capital concept as 'the potential resources a person can access and mobilise from their network of social relations' (2014: 10). In addition to a beneficial network of connections, social capital also includes, for example, access to information and knowledge. In educational terms it includes family members who are able to help with homework, university applications and interviews, and professional connections to work experience opportunities and so on.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital includes not only access to high cultural resources, but qualities of the self-reflected in aspects such as speech, demeanour and dress that privilege individuals in the micro-politics of everyday life (Moore, 2004). Bourdieu explained how cultural capital can exist in three states, in the embodied state, as dispositions of the body and mind, acquired through family background and sociocultural experience; in the objectified state, in the form of high cultural goods and resources; and in the institutionalised state, as qualifications and endorsements from educational institutions. The work that cultural capital does, Moore (2004) says, is mainly within and through education. Henry et al explain how:

> The expected behaviours, expected language competencies, the explicit and implicit values, knowledge, attitudes to and relationship with academic culture required for success in school are all competencies which one class brings with them to school. (Henry et al. 1988: 233 cited in Mills, 2008: 83)

A school in other words tends to assume middle-class culture, attitudes and values in all its pupils. So only middle-class cultural capital, values, dispositions, knowledge are

regarded as worthy and therefore legitimate by the education system. Those whose cultural capital is perceived as incompatible and therefore, to use Bourdieu's word, illegitimate, are faced with significant barriers within the system (Nash, 2002).

Linguistic Capital

For Bourdieu language is much more than a communication system, it is about power and domination, and the influence of linguistic capital is a point of leverage he says, at every level of the education system (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This is because schooling centres around what he terms 'pedagogic communication' (1977: 6-7). The purpose of pedagogic communication is to maintain the relationship between education and the dominant group in order 'to guarantee that group's success in education and to maintain the reproduction of its distinctive habitus through education' (Moore, 2004: 451). These issues are developed further in the analysis of data in Chapters Five and Six.

Symbolic Capital

Depending on the rules of a field, varying accumulations of capital whether economic, social or cultural are converted into what Bourdieu calls 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1972). He defines symbolic capital as, 'the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate' (1989: 17). Symbolic capital is not therefore an independent form of capital itself, rather its value rests in the acknowledgment of capital valued by agents competing in a specific field (Bourdieu, 1986), in its potential to be converted in other words, in order to reproduce the habitus (Bourdieu, 1986).

Capital as Privilege and Exchange

Each of these capitals has 'energy' (Moore, 2004: 102). One of the features of different types of capital is its convertibility (Power, 1999). For example, economic wellbeing is easily converted into the other forms of capital and can provide access to cultural and social capital (Anheirer et al, 1995). Postone et al (1993) use the example of buying a book, a transaction in which economic exchange is converted into objectified cultural capital. Capital's liquidity is referred to as 'transubstantiation' by Moore (2004) as a process whereby agents who have accumulations of capital engage in a 'system of exchange' to generate advantages to help them progress in a social fields (2015: 99). This exchange of capitals is intrinsically connected with social inequality and relations of power (Moore, 2004: 446). Grenfell and James explain further:

> We do not enter fields with equal amounts, or identical configurations, of capital. Some have inherited wealth, cultural distinctions from up-bringing and family connections. Some individuals, therefore, already possess quantities of relevant capital...which makes them better players than others in certain field games. Conversely, some are disadvantaged. (1998: 21)

This field - capital relationship is particularly crucial in understanding Bourdieu's

sociology. For Bourdieu those who rank highest in possession of legitimate culture are those highest in educational capital (1984: 16-17).

Arbitrary Recognition and Misrecognition

Capital is in essence about recognition (Walther, 2014). Different fields rate different resources as worthy (Bourdieu, 1977). What we can take from this is that capitals are not valued equally (Moore, 2004) and in a completely arbitrary manner some social groups' life-styles, values, interests, for example, will exhibit what Bourdieu (1980) terms a 'well-formed habitus'. Their capital will be more valued by the dominant group. What is valued by the field and its agents, value, confers recognition on certain types of capital above others (Doherty and Dickmann, 2009). This recognition is not underpinned by any guiding principles but is as Moore (2004) suggests, based solely on the interests of the dominant group to maintain dominance and is hence arbitrary and therefore symbolic violence. The problem with this as Wacquant points out, is that:

> Allowing certain people to succeed, based not upon merit but upon the cultural experiences, the social ties and the economic resources they have access to, often remains unacknowledged in the broader society. (1998: 216)

Bourdieu (1977) labels the process Wacquant describes 'misrecognition'. What this means from a Bourdieusian perspective is that social difference is converted through educational action so that it appears naturally occurring and thoroughly explicable via reference to individual differences in motivation and intelligence. Symbolic capital therefore reflects the assumptions about the worth of capital according to the rules of dominance in a social field. It is the form that the other types of capital assume when they are not seen for what they are, when their discriminatory and arbitrary power is misrecognised (Moore, 2004; Power, 1999). This is what Bourdieu and Passeron term symbolic violence (1977).

Symbolic Violence

The imposition of the power of symbolic capital results in what Bourdieu and Passeron call symbolic violence (1977: 5). It is 'symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power' (1977: 5). Explaining Bourdieu's intention, Moore suggests that, 'symbolic violence associated with cultural capital is the misrecognition of the actual arbitrariness of values in symbolic fields' (2004: 105). What Moore is telling us is that for Bourdieu the arbitrary power exerted on other groups by the dominant class whose authority and status have not been achieved through merit or achievement and is hence misrecognised. This constitutes a form of violence on the dominated groups. Social hierarchies, social inequality and the suffering they cause are direct consequence of symbolic violence (Schubert, 2012). This is not violence in the everyday sense of the word, that is, as physical force to bring about injury, abuse or damage. Rather the violence in this context is enacted by the social function of elimination, a major role in which is performed by the education system. Elimination occurs by two means, by failure to meet the demands of the

system and by self-elimination. Working class pupils are at most risk as explained by Bourdieu and Passeron:

> In the particular case of the relationship between the school and the social class harmony appears to be perfect, this is because the objective structures produce habitus and in particular the dispositions and predispositions which, in generating practices adapted to these structures, enable the structures to function perpetuated: for example, the disposition to make use of the school and predispositions to succeed in it depend, as we have seen, on the objective chances of using it and succeeding in it that are attached to the different social classes, these dispositions and predispositions in turn constituting one of the most important factors in the perpetuation of the structure of educational chances as an objectively graspable manifestation of the relationship between the educational system and the structure of class relations. Even the negative dispositions and predispositions leading to self-elimination, such as, for example, self-deprecation, devalorisation of the school and its sanctions, or resigned expectation of failure may be understood as unconscious anticipation of the sanctions the School objectively has in store for the dominant classes. (1977: 204-5)

In this citation, lies, to use Bourdieu's native French, the problematique, which is relation to the world. What Bourdieu and Passeron posit is that unlike other forms of violence the execution of symbolic violence requires no force. The violence is exercised and achieved indirectly with the complicity of agents. Both the dominant and the dominated adhere to the rules of the game so that the system is reproduced and its reproduction is viewed as legitimate and goes unquestioned. In a game in which the rules are determined by the dominant class, 'everyone plays but not everyone is equal' (Mills, 2008: 87). As Bourdieu and Passeron (1977: 204-5) assert, the objective chances of success or elimination in the education system are 'attached to the different social classes'. The habitus, meaning the dispositions and predispositions individuals have acquired position them to either succeed or to fail. Failure stems from not having what the system demands, that is, the capital associated with middle-classness and thus results in symbolic violence.

This is compounded by another act of symbolic violence, namely self-elimination. Bourdieu and Passeron refer to this as, 'the unconscious anticipation of the sanctions of the school' (1977: 16). The dispositions held by the working class mean that they view some possibilities as suitable for their social group and exclude 'certain aspirations as unthinkable' (Mills, 2008: 82). They accept the ideas and structures that subordinate them and resign themselves to the inevitable and in doing so reproduce their own subordination (Connolly and Healy, 2004). Webb, Schirato and Danaher suggest such complicity occurs 'because there does not seem to be any alternative' (2002: 92). Mills (2008) suggests that the problem is even more critical. She asks how, if the disadvantaged do not understand the rules of the game of

schooling, which are tacit and only ever partially articulated, they can know what is needed to compete and to succeed (2008: 85). This raises a complication, the issue of intra-group variation which explains why some working class pupils succeed in schooling and some middle-class pupils fail to achieve what is expected of them (Moore, 2004). Moore says that accounting for intra-group variation in a way that is consistent with inter-group difference is problematic. It is here that Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) model of reproduction encounters ambiguity and criticism which I will now discuss.

The Illusion of Meritocracy

From Bourdieu's perspective, the education system is an illusion of neutrality and meritocracy (Wacquant, 1998; Power, 1999), and one of Bourdieu's intentions was to expose this illusion (Mills, 2008:83). Meritocracy is the fallacy of individuals possessing natural intelligence and ability in line with the culture of the dominant group who control the economic, social and political resources (Bourdieu, 1973, 1974). In other words, some groups are perceived to have natural superiority (Schubert, 2014). Educational differences are thus frequently misrecognised as giftedness rather than arising from class-based advantage. This misrecognition ignores the fact that the abilities measured by scholastic criteria often stem not from attributes associated with habitus but from:

> The greater or lesser affinity between class cultural habits and the demands of the educational system or the criteria which define success within it. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979: 22)

A further issue Mills (2008) highlights is that those involved in reproducing the social order, here teachers, do so unknowingly. Teachers' authority is 'delegated' and it is because of their authoritative pedagogic action that symbolic violence is able to impose itself (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). They do not see and often do not intend the social sorting that schooling imparts on students. If teachers do not recognise the power relationships within the curriculum and, indeed, if they reconstruct them as taken-for-granted habitual practices that go unchallenged, then teachers are responsible to some extent for the status quo. As Moore explains 'the more autonomous a field appears, the more effectively it performs its role of consecration and reproduces the relations of power' (Moore, 2004: 449) and Bourdieu and Passeron explain this in their thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted Bourdieu's key conceptual tools with reference to the role played by the field of education in reproducing social and cultural inequality. Bourdieu (1998) views the school system as an institution for the reproduction of legitimate culture through the hidden linkages between scholastic aptitude and cultural heritage (Mills, 2008: 83). He contends that despite discourses of equal opportunity and meritocracy, these discourses are illusory and educational systems work counter to what they are expected to do. The system 'reproduces the legitimate culture as it stands and produces agents capable of manipulating it legitimately'

(Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 59–60). Adopting a Bourdieusian informed critical perspective I argue, might help student teachers see the world as it is (Moore, 2004: 447), and perhaps ultimately engender a commitment to transform or resist the symbolic violence exerted by the system through literacy teaching and learning (Hesmondhalagh, 2006). To explore this argument, in the following chapter, I outline the methodological approach underpinning this research.

Chapter Four:
Methodology

Introduction

Having established the conceptual and theoretical background underpinning this study in Chapters One to Three, this chapter now turns to the methodology of the research. I begin with an explanation of the research foundations, that is, the ontological and epistemological perspectives that underpinned the methodological choices that guided this research project. Following a restatement of the research questions, I then outline and justify the data collection methods employed, my approach to participant recruitment, and how I analysed and made sense of the data. Finally, I consider the limitations of the design, ethical issues, and measures of goodness associated with this study. Guba and Lincoln (1994) advise that questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm and so, I turn my attention first to the founding principles that guided this work.

Research Foundations

The methodology for this research is positioned within an interpretivist paradigm. Guba and Lincoln define paradigm as a:

> Basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontology and epistemology in fundamental ways. (1994:105)

What we can take from this definition is that a paradigm represents the values that the researcher holds and the ideological perspectives that guide him/her. Values exert a powerful influence on thinking and, subsequently, the choices we make and actions we take (Brown and Tandon, 1983). The paradigm within which this dissertation is located is interpretivism.
Interpretivism is based on the premise that reality is multiple and relative (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). People explore and make sense of the world differently depending on where they are located in fields (Bourdieu, 1977). With echoes of Bourdieu, Mack states that:

> The ontological assumptions of interpretivism are that social reality is seen by multiple people and these multiple people interpret events differently leaving multiple perspectives of an incident. (2010: 8)

What Mack is saying, is that interpretivists accept that people make sense and construct their own meanings of the world based on their lived experiences. So, for example, in the case of this study, Anne, one of the participants, positioned herself

differently from her peers with respect to the concept of teaching for social justice and her different stance had the potential to impact significantly on her uptake of critical literacy as discussed in Chapter Five. The goal of interpretivist research therefore is to understand subjective experiences (Hudson and Oxanne, 1988). Whilst interpretivist researchers may enter the field with some prior knowledge, they operate under the assumption that this is insufficient (Hudson and Oxanne, 1988). The role of the researcher is, then, to remain open and receptive to developing new knowledge with the help and insights of research participants, such as, Anne for example.

Importantly, an interpretivist researcher adopts a subjectivist approach to social reality accepting that social reality is 'constructed by each of us in a different way' (Thomas, 2013: 108). The main principle of the interpretivist paradigm is that research has to be observed through what people experience, resulting in the interpretivist researcher aiming to 'understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants' (Cohen et al, 2007: 19). Interpretivists avoid rigid structural frameworks and adopt flexible methods that favour qualitative methodologies. An important distinction that Denzin and Lincoln (1998) make between qualitative and quantitative research is that in qualitative research the researcher is the instrument. Qualitative studies rely on the researcher to identify and describe the interdependence, relationships and influences that connect things together (Becker, 1996). The emphasis is therefore on the personal, whereas in quantitative studies the researcher tends to use an experimental paradigm focusing on numerical quantitative data and analysis, the exact nature of which the researcher knows she will elicit (Becker, 1996).

For the reasons outlined above, an interpretivist paradigm was deemed most appropriate for this study, and this leads me to make a final distinction in regard to qualitative and quantitative research. The two approaches differ epistemologically in regard to the questions they ask and seek to answer at the level of data (Becker, 1996). While the focus in quantitative research is to generate number-based data, qualitative research focuses on textual, non-numerical data, as can be seen in the research questions guiding this study that are outlined below.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the sub-field of critical literacy in teacher education from a specifically Bourdieusian perspective. The following research questions were posed in order to achieve this purpose:

1. Do student teachers have capacity to develop a critical literacy perspective?
2. How might a Bourdieusian reflexive sociology help student teachers better understand reproduction and transformation in literacy teaching and learning?
3. What are the implications of this investigation for my work in preparing pre-service teachers to teach critical literacy in the interest of social justice?

In order to address these questions the following data collection methods were employed.

Methods

Action Research: A Model for Teacher Inquiry

This study was structured using an action research approach. I begin this section by explaining the reason for this, briefly outlining arguments and justifying why action research was deemed appropriate for this project. I then describe how the critical literacy intervention was structured using a spiral cycle that consists of four phases: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Milisted et al, 2019). Each of these phases is explained in detail below but it is probably useful to note that this approach is not linear, and that reflection occurs throughout the cycle (see Chapters Five and Six). As Harrison and Callon (2013) explain, the hallmark of action research is that change does not happen at the end of the research project but throughout it.

The objective of the action research elements of this study was to render pre-service teachers' preparation to teach literacy more effective by developing their knowledge and understanding of critical literacy while at the same time developing their own critical literacy tendencies and sensibilities (Bal and Mete, 2019). There were several benefits to using an action research approach as Acosta et al (2019) outline. Firstly, it bridges the theory to practice gap. Secondly, it is collaborative and suits small and large-scale inquiries. Thirdly, action research sustains transformative learning via the progressive, iterative process of reflecting on actions, past outcomes, and future steps. Additionally, Irizarry and Welton (2013) claim, action research is ideal for increasing cultural as well as social skill competence in two areas, namely critical awareness and social justice.

Action research shares similar values and employs common methods to participatory research and for purposes of clarity I will distinguish between the two (Brown and Tandon, 1983). In both types of research, the recurring value themes emphasise developing useful knowledge and bringing about developmental change. Both approaches 'seek to make social systems more efficient and effective, to promote the fulfilment and empowerment of individuals or institutions' (Brown and Tandon, 1983: 281). They do this by promoting transformation that has potential to impact directly on social systems. Ideologically however, the two methodologies differ in regard to how these values might be attained. For example, action researchers believe in common interests and promote reform through problem solving and developing knowledge within an accepted social consensus (Rapoport, 1970). Participatory researchers assume conflicting interests and promote reform through empowerment of oppressed groups (Brown and Tandon, 1983). I parted company with the idea of participatory research on these ideological grounds. My participant cohort was a group of relatively privileged teacher education students, there were no apparent issues of conflicting interests with others, or of oppression. Having decided upon an action research approach, the next stage was to plan the teaching intervention, which I will now describe.

Figure 2. Course Comparisons

Week	The Pre-existing BEd3 Literacy Course Content	The Revised BEd3 Literacy Course Content
1	Welcome and Introduction Reflections on the Northern Ireland Literacy Curriculum	Welcome and Introduction Privilege and Positioning in Literacy Teaching and Learning
2	Creating Confident Capable Readers	Literacy Changes Lives
3	Phonological Awareness	Teaching with Texts and Contexts
4	The Role of Phonics in Learning to Read	Problematising Texts
5	Phonics Principles and Practices	The Problematics of a Broad, Balanced Reading Curriculum
6	Texts and Contexts	Teaching Verses Testing Comprehension: An Introduction to Reciprocal Comprehension
7	Learning and Teaching with Jolly Phonics (1)	Critical Literacy: A New Basic
8	Learning and Teaching with Jolly Phonics (2)	Critical Literacy: A Pedagogy Powered by Love
9	Teaching Verses Testing Comprehension: An Introduction to Reciprocal Comprehension	Becoming an Effective Teacher of Literacy: Towards Good and Just Teaching
10	Reciprocal Comprehension Workshop	Accelerating Literacy with Culturally Conscious Teaching
11	Read Like a Writer, Write like a Reader	From Difference to Disadvantage: Talking to Children Matters
12	Teaching Talking and Listening	Opening Spaces for Critical Literacy: Towards a Dialogic Classroom

Planning

The design objective of this action research intervention was to use critical literacy to enhance the capital of a group of student teachers, and in doing so, to reshape their

habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). This involved developing a pre-existing BEd3 literacy module, the focus of which had previously tended towards developing technical and practical knowledge in line with curriculum, policy and current research. As discussed in Chapter Two, Habermas (1972) argues that pre-service teachers also need to develop emancipatory knowledge, as in critical literacy for example. Redesign of the course was achieved by reordering the content, adding specific taught sessions titled Critical Literacy: A New Basic and Critical Literacy: A Pedagogy Powered by Love and by reframing the content. For example, a pre-study session that was titled Teaching Talking and Listening was reframed as, From Difference to Disadvantage: Talking to Children Matters. These changes were intended to assimilate the concepts and experiences needed to develop the tendencies and sensibilities (detailed in Chapter Two) that are associated with a critical literacy perspective. Throughout the course and for example, in line with the principles of critical literacy, issues of practice and authority were influential in the pedagogical choices I made and the resources I chose to use. Figure 2 below provides an overview of the revised literacy course that was developed for this action research study. A detailed overview of the latter can be found in Appendix 1.

Acting

The action phase consisted of weekly-taught sessions, each of one-hour duration over a twelve-week semester (see Appendix 1.). The aim was not to transmit the quick and easy answers that student teachers often desire as noted earlier. Rather, and in Bourdieusian terms, the aim of the wider project was to explore and enhance student teachers' capital in literacy by supporting them in developing a critical literacy perspective. Class time was divided into tasks that explored the field of critical literacy in a way that might develop the students' critical literacy skills, and their commitment to its philosophical principles (outlined in Chapter Two). The teaching sessions focused on developing the students' technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge (Habermas, 1972). For example, students were taught explicit strategies for critical literacy teaching with the aim that they would learn to see critical literacy as a politically and ethically informed pedagogy (Albright, 2002). Given the short time available, activities took the form of short, challenging tasks aimed to gradually build up relevant concepts and understandings (Morgan, 1997), and to research those understandings by exploring relevant literature.

It was important to create an equitable and dialogic classroom environment conducive to the principles of critical literacy (discussed in Chapter Two), so at the outset I shared more information about me than I had done in previous years, speaking about, for example, my working class background. This was important for me to do because as the weeks progressed, it became clear that the students were unused to, and therefore a little uncomfortable talking about social class. Sharing my own story helped foster an environment in which everyone, regardless of social class felt safe, respected and valued. It also supported a culture in which issues such as classism, racism, and sexism, could be more openly discussed. This issue is discussed further later in this chapter under the sub-heading, Positionality.

Observing and Reflecting

Observation occurred during the taught sessions and annotations were recorded afterwards in the form of field notes. This helped me to make decisions about teaching and learning from week to week. For example, I found early on that using graphic organisers in groups provided focus and scaffolding that enhanced the students' contributions to discussions. It also generated data in the form students' responses to teaching and learning experiences. This data was analysed and discussed as part of the entire data set in Chapters Five and Six. In this way, the use of field notes enriched the study by providing a number of documented affordances for subjective meaning making. Being in the field, as instrument (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998), also meant that there was the opportunity to continually add ideas to the course as it evolved (Becker, 1996: 57). Classroom observations in the form of field notes are naturalistic methods that like most qualitative research are experienced subjectively. These methods of data collection should capture something of 'the real inner drama' of the research (Newbury, 2001: 2).

As a novice researcher one of challenges was how to do this. The guidance is vague and as Newbury (2001) advises, there are no rules on how research field notes should be compiled. What Newbury suggests is that each researcher through trial and error discovers a format and style that is efficient, effective and fits the needs of the study. The needs of this study were twofold. Firstly, there was a requirement to answer the research questions, and to produce data that would go towards meeting the criteria of a professional Doctorate. Secondly, there was a need to ensure that the action research process was thorough, meaningful, and turned experience into purposeful learning (Kemmis, 2005). Though vague, the literature did provide some practical advice. Burgess for example, emphasises the importance of recording observations from the very beginning of the research, and advises the researcher to devise 'recording tactics that will provide an ongoing, developmental dialogue' (1981: 94). This leads naturally to the issue of quality of data gathered, which Burgess (1981) claims is intimately related to the quality of relationships the researcher is able to establish with agents in the field. He offers no concrete guidance however on how to establish and maintain written observations in pursuit of quality data. The approach I decided upon was to record observational notes in the form of free writing that focused on the students' responses as soon as possible after a teaching session to ensure that material was not lost to memory. Broadly, I used a flexible framework that included date, title, impact of resources and learning materials, impact and response to the pedagogic approach, verbatim student comments, self-reflective commentary (which included my emotions and responses to the students), and spontaneous thoughts such as tentative links to literature and ideas for the next teaching session. In essence I was evaluating the students' learning, the impact of my teaching, and my own professional learning. An extract from my field notebook can be seen in Appendix 6. In addition to this, discreet notes in the form of words or phrases were made on Post-its while the class was in progress and the students busy with activities. These notes acted as an aide memoir, especially when I had to teach a class or attend a meeting directly afterwards.

Interviews

The data reported in this study was also gathered using two sets of interviews, a group interview in the form of a guided group conversation, which took place prior to the commencement of the course, and individual semi-structured interviews at the end of the course. All of the interviews were audio recorded, took place in my teaching room which, despite being a classroom, is an attractive and relaxed environment familiar to the students, and therefore somewhere they expect to meet with me and in which they feel reasonably comfortable interacting with me. I sought to create an informal atmosphere for each interview. For example, each interview began with an introduction, in which firstly, thanked the student(s) for their participation, explained the purpose of my research, and how the insights and understandings gained from their contribution were invaluable in achieving the research aims. The group interview lasted approximately one hour and the individual interviews lasted from between thirty five to fifty minutes depending on the level of each student's talkativeness. Please see Appendix 8 for a list of interview questions.

Guided Group Conversation

In terms of the guided group conversation, or group interview, there were several perceived benefits. Whilst being inexpensive and data rich, group discussions are a common feature of student teachers' professional learning and are therefore a familiar and comfortable forum for reflecting on pedagogical issues. Methodological literature also widely recognises that this approach provides opportunity for interaction amongst participants and 'results in issues and opinions being raised that may not have been accessible in a one-to-one interview' (King and Ross, 2004: 56). Group interviews can therefore promote polyvocality, facilitating and extending an exchange of ideas and viewpoints as participants are stimulated by others' responses (Marsh, 2006). Primarily, I believed that conducting a group interview would provide an opportunity for the students to share and build on their relevant experience and, before our work in critical literacy began. Conducting a group interview helped me to establish prior knowledge, beliefs and attitudes in regard to concepts of privilege, critical literacy and social justice, allowing me to gain an insight into the scale of the task ahead. For example, I was able to ascertain the extent to which the students were able to engage in dialogic conversation, which is one of the features of learning in critical literacy (see Chapter Two).

There are reported disadvantages to the use of group interviews. It was important for me to be aware of these and to be prepared to adjust proceedings if necessary. Drawbacks include, for example, the group being dominated by one or more individuals, who may influence or suppress others. The nature of polyvocality (Marsh, 2006) means that in analysing the data it is difficult to identify and attribute specific responses to individuals, or to hear all contributions clearly if participants talk over one another. To avoid this issue, and in keeping with the principles of dialogic talk, each student received a set of ground rules along with the consent form and Plain English Statement (discussed later in this chapter). As I knew the students I was aware that none of them was disadvantaged in terms of linguistic capital. They were

all confident communicators and this is reflected by the fact that they volunteered to participate in this study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

As mentioned above, data collection also involved individual semi-structured interviews. These took place at the end of the course. Semi-structured interviews are the most widely used interviewing format for qualitative research (Di Cicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Their popularity is perhaps due, perhaps, to the fact that they offer an approach that enables the interviewer to delve deeply into relevant matters. In each of the interviews I adopted the same internal structure that moved from being open-ended to becoming more focused, more detailed and specific, and closing (Dick, 2012). The structure consisted of an introduction to build rapport, opening questions and responses, probing questions and responses, summary, and close (Dick, 2012). It was important from the outset to encourage the interviewees to converse openly and naturally. As I knew the students, this was not a particular problem though I was aware of the students' desire to please me with their responses. To encourage openness, I used affirming gestures such as nodding and smiling. At the planning stage I ensured the first question was broad, open ended, and that it was non-threatening. Care was taken to ensure questions did not lead or prompt interviewees as this could have resulted in misleading answers (Di Cicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

However, despite its ubiquity 'interviewing is not an easy option to gathering information in the pursuit of understanding the world and how it works' (Fontana and Frey, 1998: 315). The challenges I encountered in using interviews were numerous. They included the hugely time consuming process involved in transcribing the interviews; gaining some sense of control over the quantity of data they generated; interpreting the data reflexively; making sense of it; attributing codes, taking account of contradictory or problematic data, and doing justice to the voice of each individual participant. A particular issue noted by Bennett (1993), concerns the crucial role of the interviewer and the way in which, as the research instrument, s/he is bound up in the production of the data. Issues of transcription and analysis are considered later in this chapter, but at this point, I want to consider positionality.

Positionality and Reflexivity

In recent years there has been a growing expectation that social researchers, particularly those applying qualitative methods, should reflexively acknowledge their personal positioning because, as a result of such subjectivity, 'a different researcher, or the same researcher in a different frame of mind, might write a different report from the same data' (Brown, 2010: 238). Bennett (1993) refers to this as 'researcher effect'. Basically what this means is that two researchers, with different, or even similar, personal and social characteristics, such as age, gender, ethnic origin, social class, might interpret the same data and position individuals relative to others in very different ways (Burnham et al, 2004). A person's identity and role will inevitably influence interactions with participants in the process of collecting data (Madge,

1993). The solution, Denscombe (1995) suggests, is to minimise the influence of 'researcher effect'. This requires the need for self-awareness during the research process (Bennett, 1993) or as Williams (1993) stresses, putting the 'self' into the research, in the form of a biography. A number of steps were taken to minimise the influence of 'researcher effect' in this study. Firstly, on Bennett's (1993) recommendation, I introduced myself and asked the students to do likewise at the beginning of the group interview. Bennett explains that this approach signals that the interview is a social process involving interaction between people.

Secondly, I tried to remain self-aware and conscious throughout of 'moments in the researcher's own thinking' (Alverson and Sköldberg, 2000: 270). For example, in my role as teacher educator and advocate for critical literacy, I was conscious that I wanted the outcomes to be positive and for the students to show good knowledge and understanding. There have been many moments in the analysis of data when I asked myself, 'Did I teach the students well enough?' 'Was my own knowledge and understanding of critical literacy sufficient?' 'Did I ask the right interview questions?'. I was also conscious that I was writing a Dissertation that I wanted readers to find interesting and that this raised questions about the selection of data for discussion. Care was taken to ensure that when I analysed the data I did not look for justification that would reflect positively on my role as teacher or that would make sensational reading. To this end, I found reassurance in companion pieces of research such as O'Donohue's study (2013), set also in Ireland, which echoed my findings.

Thirdly, in undertaking thematic analysis of the data (discussed in detail below) the difference between my primary interpretations (those that occurred during the taught sessions and the interviews), and secondary interpretations (those that occurred later, during the transcription and coding processes), were 'pulled apart' in what I considered to be a careful and thorough process (Dean et al, 2018: 277). I was determined from the outset to be ethically and morally just, not least because I had an active role within the field and had to ensure distance and impartiality (Adler and Adler, 1987). This was in many ways accounted for by adopting Bourdieu's reflexive approach. In terms of analytic synthesis, this small-scale qualitative study has served to confirm Law's (2004: 6) assertion that events 'necessarily exceed our capacity to know them'. What Law is saying is that methodological desire for certainty is not realistic (Brown, 2010). Hence the need for reflexivity which May (1999) describes as being all about the limitations. In the following section, I introduce the research participants and explain the recruitment process, but firstly, in brief, I outline the research context.

Context, Participants and Recruitment

Context

This study took place in a small College, in Belfast, Northern Ireland that specialises in teacher education. Academically integrated with a Russell Group university, the College demands high-level entry grades. The institution has a prestigious history of providing much sought after graduate teachers. As a small institution it could be said to function in ways perceived to be like an extension of the post-primary school. It has

a warm, friendly atmosphere and because of the nature of the small groups for teaching and learning, tutors get to know their students well and tend to enjoy a good rapport with them.

Recruitment

The process of recruitment in qualitative studies is important for controlling bias and ensuring that the sample is representative (Arcury and Quandt, 1999), although I shall not claim representativeness for my participant group. Reflecting the purpose and goals of the study, recruitment was limited to a group of thirty BEd3 (Bachelor of Education, year three) student teachers that I was timetabled to teach. Having completed two years of undergraduate study and two teaching placements, BEd3 students were chosen because of their knowledge and experience and because, unlike BEd4 they did not have the pressures of final year assessments such as Dissertations. An email invitation to participate was sent to all thirty students in the group. Aware that students (and others) often skim read emails, being concise and to the point was important. So in order that the students gave informed responses, the email was carefully constructed to both adequately explain the study and the specific role of the participants. An end date was included for expressions of interest.

Concerned about participant retention, I decided that anyone who volunteered would be welcome to participate but I hoped that there would be at least eight volunteers, who would stay the course of the research. The email yielded good results: eight students out of a cohort of thirty self-selected to participate in the study. Had an adequate number of students not come forward, I would have had to rethink the research methods. However, all eight remained committed to the end of the project and participated in the final semi-structured interviews. Prior to commencing the research I met with the group once to explain what the project was about, to outline the role of participants, to complete two consent forms - one for the group interview and one for the individual interview, and to give each student a copy of the Plain English Statement, and ground rules for dialogic discussion. It was also an opportunity for the student volunteers to ask me questions. This meeting took place during induction week before classes started. We met in my teaching room, tea, coffee and biscuits were provided, and the meeting lasted thirty-five minutes. The participants are introduced in the following section.

Participants

The study involved a group of eight self-selecting BEd3 student teachers. Mirroring national trends, the student participants were a largely homogenous group. Participant biographies for each student can be found in Chapter Five, but briefly, the students were of a similar age, were white, female, monolingual English speakers, from a Catholic background. All eight students had ambitions to be primary school teachers. All but three viewed themselves as middle class. Of the three who said they were working class, two had parents who went to university as mature students so could be said to be borderline middle class. The third student, Anne, came from an area where there is a high level of social deprivation. Growing up in Northern Ireland meant that they had little exposure to racial, linguistic, or religious diversity.

Reflecting their institutional or pedagogic habitus, the students were involved in the wider life of the College in varying ways. One, a music student, regularly participated in College cultural events; another played on the netball team; two were actively involved in the Students' Union; three had participated in the College's Volunteer Reading Tutor Programme and one was a member of the College dramatic society while two students were involved in an end-of-year Art exhibition and helped create scenery for dramatic productions. The next section in this chapter outlines the approach I took to analyse the data.

Making Meaning from the Data: Thematic Analysis

The nature of qualitative writing is that it emphasises words rather than numbers and it has to be read rather than scanned. There is an onus on a qualitative researcher to 'create texts that are vital' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 347). Qualitative researchers therefore, aim to provide description of data that is dense and detailed, what Geertz (1973) refers to as, thick descriptions. Methodological rigour is crucial as critics such as Becker (1996) view qualitative research as elusive, as a 'will-o'-the-wisp'. He does go on to say however that 'extensive description is epistemologically more satisfying than the alternative, which would be inadequate, insufficient and could result in invention' (1996: 64). The general advice is that in thematic analysis it is wise to collect a larger and more diverse corpus of data than will ultimately be used to support the analysis (Lemke, 2012) although this does raise ethical issues to do with ignoring data that participants have provided expecting their views to be considered seriously. Better still, Becker (1996) says, are breadth and quality, which can only be achieved by rigorously mining the data. One of the challenges in doing this and in creating order from complex data is that all analysis is reductive (Lemke, 2012). Becker (1996) suggests that it is helpful for qualitative researchers to ask themselves the following: Is the data accurate? Is it precise? And is analysis full and broad?

Roth and Hsu (2012) note that one of the most difficult aspects of doing qualitative research is to learn how to analyse data in ways that are persuasive and convincing. They advise:

> Working with, through, and right at the text…not to impose high-level, abstract concepts such as power but rather to engage in the work of showing how. (2012: 1460)

Roth and Hsu offer good advice on the process and in this section I describe the approach I undertook to ensure that the data in this research study was accurate and precise, and that the analysis was full and broad. Data analysis took the form of a multistep process adapted from Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage procedure and outlined below.

Stage One: Becoming Familiar with the Data

Prior to transcribing the data, I made the decision in line with Och's (1979: 44) advice that 'a more useful transcript is a more selective one'. The point here is that

extraneous information can make a transcript difficult to read (Davidson, 2009). The approach taken therefore was to 'literise' the transcription process by which Davidson (2009) means, to include the conventions of written language such as punctuation but not to include utterances such as pauses and other 'idiosyncratic elements of speech' (Oliver et al, 2005: 1273-1274). Framed within an interpretivist paradigm, transcripts were viewed as 'theoretical constructions' (Lapadat, 2000: 207). By this I mean that 'interviews were transcribed verbatim and the analysis did not make assumptions but allowed the data to narrate the story' (Pulla and Carter, 2018: 12). This allowed me to gain an understanding of the perspectives of the participants. A crucial first step in the process involved becoming familiar with the data through careful, repeated listenings to the recorded interviews before, during and after transcription. The latter, final stage of the process was a proofreading exercise to ensure accuracy. Sample transcripts can be viewed in Appendix 4. Descriptions of the transcription process often give the impression that transcribing is a straightforward technical task (Bailey, 2008). This is not the case. Transcription is a lengthy, time-consuming part of the data analysis process, importantly it is a crucial, analytical, and interpretive act in itself (Braun and Clarke, 2006). So though time consuming, the transcription process meant that I was able to study, analyse and code the data in detail (Bailey, 2008). The next phase involved a process of critical reflection to identify initial codes.

Stage Two: Generating Initial Codes

The transition from data to text is a complex process in which code identification is a fundamental and reflexive task that involves immersion in the data (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). The objective of code generation is to reduce the raw data to that which is relevant to the research questions (Vaismoradi et al, 2016). The process involves identification of related information by arranging the data into groups using relevant words or phrases, as shown in Figure 4 below (Thomas, 2013). At this stage the researcher acts as a kind of theme filter (Ryan and Bernard, 2003) highlighting key phrases, all the while aware that 'they made some as yet inchoate sense' (Sandelowski, 1995: 373). Relevant data and codes were transferred to a codebook as they emerged. As the data reported in the codebooks was verbatim it was therefore italicised. The codebook developed over several phases. The final version can be seen in Appendix 5.

Figure 4. Identifying Initial Codes

Transcriptions and Memos	**Initial Codes**
• *I have never thought about it.* • *A father comes in there, a shop at home. It's the same thing. He just hands you the shopping list at the start. He's a bit funny himself and you never really think that much of it but I think it is down to illiteracy. If he does have to do it on his own, he struggles a lot and always misses a few things.*	Level of awareness of illiteracy

• *There are more things in place to stop that from happening. The code of practice for best education, needs and things like that, anybody before that, they wouldn't have been recognised as having dyslexia or any sort of inability to connect with the literature or the literacy curriculum.* • *The school that I was working in, they had already set up interventions for the children who weren't achieving.* • *I came from free school meals, but look at me, I'm coming in to be a teacher.* • *We have such a flexible curriculum. You can make your own decisions about individualised interventions and strategies for the struggling readers.*	Belief in the Education system
• *Get children ready for the world. Turn them to thinkers.* • *Empower them. Independence is a big thing.* • *To help them contribute to society. In the world of work, the world of---What else is there?* • *Prepare them for life, living and relationships.* • *I think it's also meant to inspire them, just tell them that they can be what they want to be and give them every chance to get there.*	Purpose of the Education system

Stage Three: Searching for Emerging Themes

The next stage of the process was to create order out of complexity by attributing themes. This involved returning to the codebook to see if the initial codes and interpretations made sense (Patton, 1980: 339). Once I was happy with the initial coding, I then set about grouping the codes into emerging themes. This involved 'reviewing the data reiteratively and systematically in the pursuit of topics that occur and reoccur' (Bogdan and Taylor 1975: 83) or which were 'recurring regularities' (Guba, 1978: 53). The more the same concept occurred in the text, the more likely it was to be a theme (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). I was careful to ensure that code and theme titles were easily understood, as in Figure 4 for example, and gave sense to the developing ideas and concepts, whilst taking cognisance of how well they fitted with the research questions (Vaismoradi et al, 2016).

Figure 4. Codebook Headings

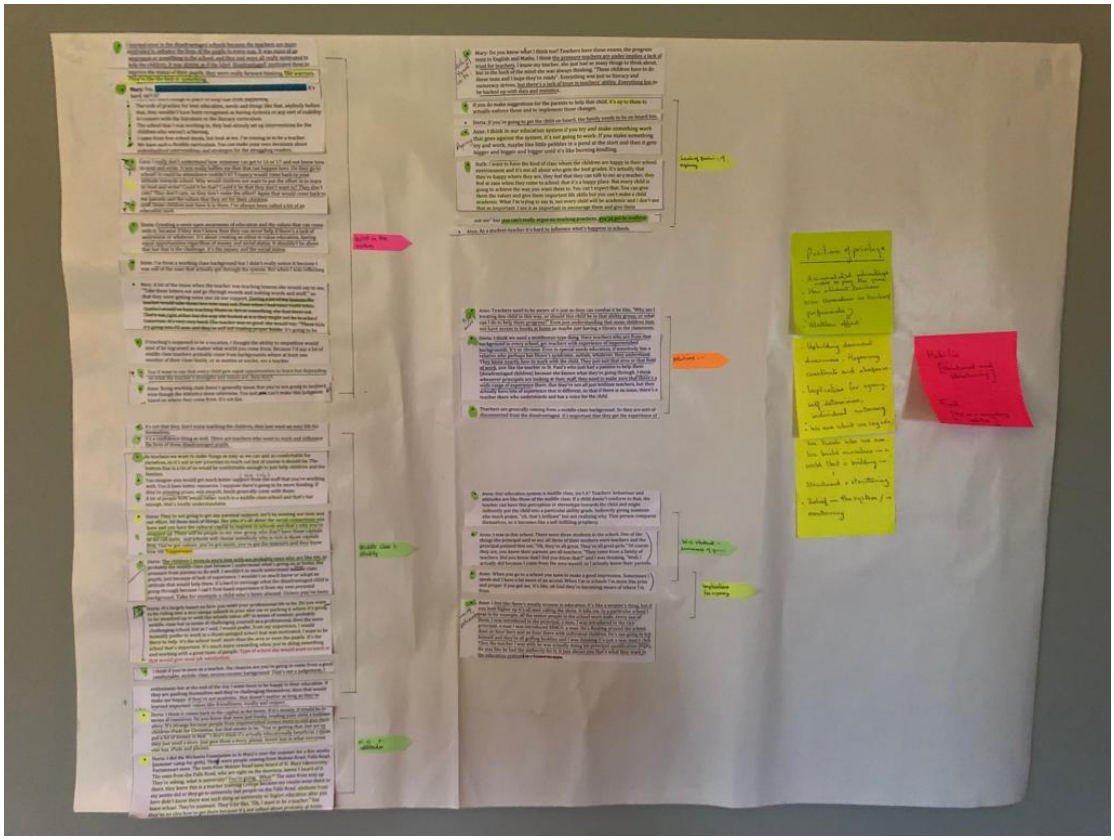
Transcriptions and Memos	**Initial Codes**	**Emerging Themes**
• *If a parent is more involved then the teacher would work harder for the child.* • *I'm coming into this class, 95% of them are on free school meals. You might think, they're not going to be paying attention and this is going to be a terrible year. Then you find out they're all really motivated learners and make a breakthrough.*	Relationships	Prejudicial stereotyping of others

• *People in whose care they're in. That teacher, or the parent, or whoever it was who was there when they [the child] were at the point when they should have been getting it all. Children are natural learners, so for someone to fall behind when they're ready to learn, it's literally just help and support, so whoever's not giving that I think is to blame.* • *I blame them [the children] and the parents and the teachers.* • *I don't think it's fair to blame the teacher in a class of thirty two for one child who can't read or write and the rest are like level two and level three. I don't think you can blame that teacher because one kid can't make progress because they've their hands full with thirty one others, and they're not even trying to read and write.*		

Stage Four: Reviewing Themes

In this phase Braun and Clarke (2006) advise checking the data within each of the initial themes identified in the previous stage. To review themes, I engaged in a process of continued reappraisal, sorting and categorising the data to create four matrices that focused on the four meta themes emerging from the data and fifteen sub-themes (see Figure 4 below for an example and Appendix 7 for all four matrices). Though the themes had been allowed to develop naturally, the theoretical knowledge and framework associated with this research enabled me to make inferences from the data. Revisiting the literature and research questions created an analytical tension that helped me to develop the subsequent narrative. There were three reasons for adapting this approach. Firstly, this iterative process of data collection and analysis is a form of verification, which Vaismoradi et al argue 'is a process of checking and confirming, that ensures a relative certainty about developed themes' (2016: 106). Secondly, this phase of the process was one of making the interpretation reliable by arriving at a final analysis that 'ascertains a relation between the outcome of analysis and the nature of the phenomenon' (Roth and Hsu, 2012: 1460). Thirdly, as themes emerged, it was clear that not all of the themes were equally important, so decisions had to be made about which themes were most salient, and how themes related to each other (Ryan and Bernard, 2003).

Figure 5. Thematic Coding Example



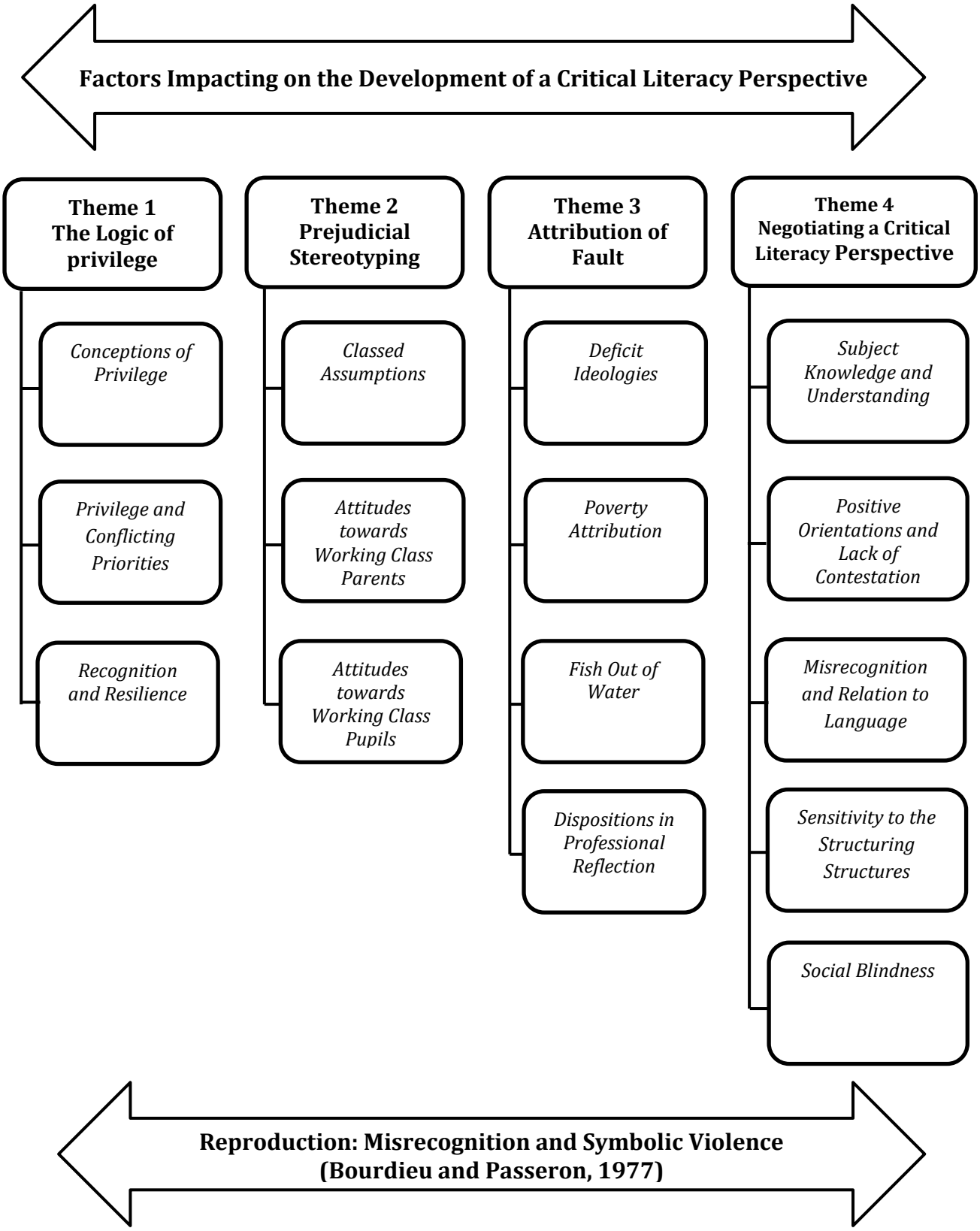
Stage Five: Defining and Naming the Themes

Stage Five involved ensuring that I had captured the essence of each theme by considering how it contributed to the overall narrative constructed from the entire data set. This was a final opportunity to relate the themes to the research questions and to the established literature discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Drawing Bourdieu's theory of reproduction and the principles of critical literacy, each meta-theme and its inherent sub-themes were analysed for their individual narrative, and the names of themes were confirmed. After continuous revision the final thematic map was developed and is shown in Figure 6. The next stage was to select and order the themes to produce an account of the data (Vaismoradi et al, 2016).

Stage Six: Producing the Report

Once the final themes were identified, the next phase involved describing the data relevant to each theme. When writing about the results it was necessary to ensure that the themes were clearly demonstrated, so supporting evidence in the form of verbatim quotes from the participants was used to underpin the discussion and tell the story in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) advise that this stage should involve providing an analysis of the data. Discussion of the data was analysed using Bourdieu's reproduction theory, namely the concepts of habitus, capital and field, and the critical literacy concepts discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

Figure 6. Final Thematic Map



Ethical Considerations

Interpretive researchers interpret the world around them by engaging in the research field with 'responsible agency' to socially construct knowledge (Edwards, 2002: 157). This emphasises the 'moral purpose of research to respect the being of people and to be responsible for long term societal well-being' (Edwards, 2002: 159). There is a general consensus however, that qualitative researchers need also to demonstrate that their studies are credible. More importantly if a study involves human beings 'extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them' (Fontana and Frey, 1998:70). Di Cicco-Bloom and Crabtree identify six ethical issues related to the research process. These are: reducing the risk of unanticipated harm; protecting the interviewees' information; effectively informing interviewees about the nature of the study; ensuring adequate communication of the intent of the investigation; reducing the risk of exploitation and not exploiting clients for personal gain (2006: 3189). The following steps were taken to address these issues.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

To address issues of confidentiality, recorded data were carefully stored on a password protected computer to which only I had access. Field notes were kept in a locked filing cabinet in my office for which I held the only key. Pseudonyms were used in all reporting and documentation. To preserve anonymity, every care was taken to ensure that the participants could not be identified. Whilst the year group knew I was undertaking this research, and probably knew who was taking part, it is possible that a determined reader could try to identify the speaker. Whilst I acknowledge this possibility, the data is not critical of others or practices. To preserve privacy, I collected private data (name, for example) only for the purposes of consent, or to assist with the analysis of the data (age, sex, and class, for example). This data too will be destroyed in accordance with GDPR and the University of Glasgow ethical regulations (2018) at the appropriate time.

Consent

Prior to gaining consent the eight participating student teachers were carefully and truthfully informed about the research. Participants completed two consent forms, one for the group interview that included a clause that confidentiality could not be guaranteed due to the nature of a group interview and a second for the individual interviews (see Appendix 2 for copies of both consent forms). Consent to take part in the research was also communicated in writing by each student in response to an initial email inviting volunteers.

Disclosure

Each participant was given a Plain English Statement outlining the research details, giving assurance that confidentiality would be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm was uncovered. It was made clear that in such cases I was obliged to contact the College's Student Services Coordinator (please see Appendix 3). In addition to these ethical considerations I also strove to make sure that

the entire process from start to finish was a safe and affirming experience for the students.

Measures of goodness (Guba, 1981), that is, how I ensured quality and reduced the effects of researcher bias are discussed in Chapter Seven along with methodological limitations and tensions in this study.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the research foundations for this thesis and shown how the research design was developed, executed, and the data analysed in order to critically examine the research questions. As a meaning-making methodology, using an interpretive paradigm helped me to gain insight and obtain in-depth information, and brought about new understandings of student teachers' capacity to develop a critical literacy perspective. In Chapter Five, I present the findings of the action research, drawing on Bourdieu's conceptual framework discussed in the previous chapter, and consider the three themes, The Logic of Privilege, Prejudicial Stereotyping, and Attribution of Fault. In Chapter Six, I reflect on the final theme, Negotiating a Critical Literacy Perspective.

Chapter Five:
Privilege Begets Privilege

Introduction

As noted in Chapter One, this research was guided by two primary aims. Firstly, I wanted to ascertain the extent to which student teachers are critically literate. Aligned to this, the second aim was to identify the extent to which they have capacity to develop a critical literacy perspective and commitment to teaching critical literacy in the interests of social justice. Underpinning this, the wider project was to get the students question the idea that literacy is ideologically neutral and to demonstrate that literacy matters when addressing issues of social inequality. To achieve this, I infused a pre-existing BEd3 student teacher literacy programme with critical literacy pedagogy over the course of one semester. Given the short time available, tasks were designed to gradually build up relevant concepts and understandings through a range of individual and group learning experiences (Morgan, 1997). My pedagogical objective was not to transmit the quick and easy answers that student teachers often desire, but, rather, in Bourdieusian terms (1977), to construct and enhance the students' capital in literacy by supporting them in developing a critical literacy perspective. I focus here on the research aspect of the programme with findings indicating, perhaps not surprisingly, that to varying degrees the students were all negotiating a critical literacy perspective. In keeping with Petrone and Borsheim's study (2015), data showed that a minority of students demonstrated pre-existing critical literacy tendencies and sensibilities. Some dem onstrated emergent critical literacy. Others appeared to be constrained in their thinking. A repeating pattern in the data revealed that the majority of students were constrained by their positions of privilege. This revealed itself as a limited understanding of social justice issues reflected in, for example, the oversimplification of factors contributing to disadvantage in education.

Discussion in this chapter is organised into three sections reflecting three of the themes that emerged from the analysis of data (as detailed in Chapter Four. The final theme is discussed in Chapter Six). The first section focuses on the concept of privilege and how it can lead to unquestioning acceptance of the ideologies of domination. In sections two and three, attention turns to two issues inhibiting the development of a critical literacy perspective. These are prejudicial stereotyping and attribution of fault. In the final section, I reflect on the extent to which the students were successful in negotiating a critical consciousness. For the purpose of cohesion and context, each section begins and ends with a short introduction and conclusion and refers back to the constructs and issues raised in previous chapters. Data extracts have been coded to reflect the point of collection, as follows: (FG) focus group, (I) individual interview, or by the relevant week of the semester long course, for example, Week 6.

The Logic of Privilege

Introduction

Privilege is generally understood as the power afforded by unearned benefits aligned with specific identities relating to race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, language and religion. Understood in these ways the concept of privilege is understood to be relatively static. For example, McIntosh refers to privilege as 'unearned circumstances and conditions' (1988: 96). Case defines it as 'automatic unearned benefits bestowed upon perceived members of dominant groups based on social identity (2013: 2). Mullaly meanwhile defines privilege as 'something given to us by society' (2010: 287). However, this concept of privilege as unearned circumstances and benefits bestowed arbitrarily on one group or individual over another as a special right or immunity limits our understanding of the social world. Minarik (2017) provides an arguably more effective, elaborated understanding of privilege than those presented above and this echoes Bourdieu's reproduction theory. He describes privilege as a process that is 'continually enacted' (2017: 55). Within this active view, privilege is framed as 'a process performed between people, and thus seen as continuously socially constructed' (2017: 55). What Minarik means by this is that in everyday events and relationships people make decisions that advantage some over others so that 'privilege begets privilege' (2017: 55) and hence the title of this chapter. Privilege is a difficult concept to grasp because it attaches itself to hegemonic discourses, to what appear to be the norm. In the following section I reflect on the extent to which the student teachers were able to conceptualise the concept of privilege. Firstly, the following brief biographies provide an introduction to each of the participants, highlighting relevant characteristics of each member the group.

Participant Sketches

Ailish

Ailish had a charismatic personality and was hugely enthusiastic and keen to learn. Despite this, she was actually quite shy and less forthcoming when it came to the individual interview. She appeared anxious about saying the wrong thing. She had self-identified as middle class background, her main subject was English.

Anne

Anne's main subject was Art. She communicated confidently, a quality that she put down to having to hold her own with a number of older brothers. Anne was confident in both whole class and group settings. Yet she expressed feeling at a disadvantage because she was the only one of her College peers not to have gone to a grammar school. She was however proud of the fact that of her pre-College peers she was the only one to go on to take a professional degree. Her peers, she said, without exception followed vocational courses. Anne grew up in an area with one of the highest levels of socioeconomic disadvantage in inner city Belfast.

Anne-Marie

Anne-Marie was a Music student and was involved in the cultural life of the College, playing and singing as part of the folk group at College masses and celebratory events such as commencement ceremonies. She was very charming, poised and communicated with a quiet confidence. Anne-Marie had one sister who was a recent graduate teacher. Both sisters were high achieving. Anne-Marie had grown up in a large detached home situated in the countryside, twenty-five miles from Belfast.

Denise

Denise had an exuberant, effervescent personality. She was an Art student and like Anne, she was very much involved in the cultural life of the College, for example, showing her work in the end of year Art exhibition and creating scenery for College dramatic productions. She had self-identified as middle class and grew up in a large family home in the countryside on the outskirts of Belfast.

Kerry was a Religious Studies student. She was the quietest of the group. I had the feeling she was persuaded to volunteer by her close friend Louise. Kerry participated in the College's Volunteer Reading Tutor Programme and was involved on the periphery of the Students' Union. She grew up in inner city West Belfast and though she described herself as working class, one of her parents worked in the Civil Service and one studied for a degree as a mature student. Kerry could be considered middle class or borderline middle class.

Louise

Louise was a Religious Studies student. She was confident, a little bit feisty and ambitious for herself. She was very much a contributor and team player. She was an active member on the Students' Union Council and in the College's dramatic society. Louise went on an Erasmus (study abroad) placement in BEd2, participated in the Volunteer Reading Programme (a programme to encourage student teachers to work with low progress readers for an hour per week), and by her own admission, 'never missed an opportunity'. Like Kerry, Louise grew up in an area in inner city West Belfast and although she described herself as working class, her mother studied for a degree as a mature student, so Louise could be considered middle-class/borderline middle class.

Orla

Orla was an English student. Her mother was a teacher and she lived in a suburb outside of the city. She participated in the College's Volunteer Reading Tutor Programme, and was a member of the dramatic society. She also described herself as an avid reader and as middle class.

Ruth

Ruth was a Physical Education (PE) student. She played an active role in the Students' Union, was a member of the College's netball team, and her highlight of the previous year was the PE ski trip. Ruth described herself as middle class. Her father was a

businessman, her mum a nurse. She lived with her family in a town thirty miles from the city.

Conceptions of Privilege

By virtue of their membership of majority groups in society, the students occupy relatively privileged positions in the social world: for example, they are white, mostly self-identifying as middle class or borderline middle-class, and they are well educated. A fundamental element of being critically literate is the ability to recognise one's own privilege. In the first teaching session with the students I aimed to explore their understanding of the concepts of privilege and disadvantage and to determine the extent to which they were aware of their own privilege. The teaching session took the form of a workshop termed, 'A Thought Museum'. This involved the students visiting various stations around the room where I had posted questions, quotations and images designed to provoke reflection and discussion on the issue. Responses to these artefacts revealed narrow conceptions of privilege and disadvantage. For example, the general consensus was that privilege related to financial comfort and belonging to a certain class that they termed *the elite, the upper classes, royalty, first class citizens* and *well off people with disposable income*. Following discussion, this view was extended to include, *having early advantage or a good start life in life*, *those with more support and guidance from parents*, *the better educated* and *being in good health*. One student said it was *something you worked for'* Largely, privilege was regarded as static and understood as having an advantage in regards to wealth and/or family support. The concept of privilege did not seem to be well understood with respect to the definition in use here, that privilege is 'a process performed between people, and thus seen as continuously socially constructed' (Minarik, 2017: 55). In addition, the students did not initially recognise the privilege in their own lives. Jackson (2008) says that this is not surprising as the lives the students live are relatively secure and largely insulated from disadvantage. She likens it to 'living behind a membrane' (2008: 397). A lack of ethnicity diversity in the students' lives is reflected in a comment made by Orla:

> In my primary school class, there was one black boy and that was it. He was the only one in the whole school. It was like a big deal that he was there.

Such limited experience has functioned as a barrier to structure and limit the students' interpretation of the world. This was reflected in their struggle to articulate disadvantage. Ailish for example said, *I think it's hard to define…but* [it applies to] *poor people and black people*. This extended to oversimplified solutions, such as the role of extracurricular activities in mediating disadvantage, as Louise explains *not everybody is going to get the same opportunities but you've got your after-school clubs and things like that.* As important as after-school clubs are in giving children access to a breadth of experience, they are unlikely to ameliorate the structural imposition of inequity that exists in the schooling system. Statements such as this therefore reflect underlying assumptions that endorse inequity as the norm.

In the next teaching session, in an effort to unpack and illustrate the dynamics of privilege we viewed and discussed McIntosh's (1988) Privilege Walk an exercise that requires participants to confront the ways in which society privileges some individuals over others. After viewing the Privilege Walk, the students in varying ways asserted that the abstract concept of privilege had been made more concrete. Responses showed the beginning of a shift in mindset. To illustrate, Anne-Marie spoke about her emerging awareness:

> *I hadn't realised how privileged I was in school. My family background gave me a head start. We take this for granted.* (Week 1.)

The sentiment expressed in this comment was echoed and asserted variously by all of the students. In line with the literature (Minarik, 2017; Gorski, 2018) the privileged status of the group had acted as a limiting factor in their conception and understanding of privilege and disadvantage so much so that they did not recognise their own privilege. Not recognising one's own privilege can be said to be a form of privilege in and of itself. What I mean by this is that being privileged does not mean not having to work hard or that life is easy. It means that life is more difficult for those who do not have systemic privilege. As discussed in Chapter Three this is because of what Bourdieu (1977) terms misrecognition, a concept that refers to the general relationship of educational success to social advantage. Those who occupy privileged positions are arbitrarily attributed with natural ability because of their linguistic capital, social ties, cultural experiences and economic resources. In the remainder of this section I will unravel how the student teachers' positions of privilege may have contributed to the construction of their beliefs, values and attitudes to create a conflicted logic about who they are and who they want to be as a teacher.

Privilege and Conflicting Priorities

The thematic heading 'Privilege and Conflicting Priorities' captures the complexity in student teachers' beliefs, values and attitudes towards their professional identity. Reflecting the homogeneity of the group their sociocultural construction of a teacher can be summed up in a comment Kerry made during the introductory focus group:

> *I think if you're seen as a teacher then the chances are that you going to come from a good, comfortable, middle-class socioeconomic background.* (FG)

The word that stands out for me in this comment is *good*. This view of the middle-classes as good extended to how the student teachers positioned teachers differentially to learners who are different from them. This issue is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Reflecting the literature (Chubbuck, 2010; Petrone and Borsheim, 2015; Minarik, 2017; Gorski, 2018) the data shows that the students have developed a strong attachment to a privileged teacher identity. Not surprisingly then, comments revealed a strong desire to teach in middle-class schools. Speaking on behalf of the group, Orla said:

> *A lot of people here would rather teach in a middle class school and that's fair enough, that's totally understandable.* (FG)

No one in the group contradicted this statement and a number of students went on to express similar desires offering explanations that ranged from wanting an easy life, to best fit, personal security and a better working environment. For example, Kerry and Orla:

> Kerry: *As teachers we want to make things as easy as we can and comfortable for ourselves, so it's not in our priorities to reach out but of course it should be.* (FG)

> Orla: *It's not that they don't enjoy teaching the* [disadvantaged] *children, they just want an easy life for themselves.* (FG)

In these comments we hear some of the students' embedded beliefs and attitudes, not only about how they wish their professional lives to play out, but also about the middle and working classes. This manifests in stereotyping and fear of difference. The above reflections signal a class relationship that has the potential to marginalise disadvantaged pupils. What is striking is that there is some recognition that these views are incompatible with a social justice orientation, for example *it's not in our priorities to reach out but of course it should be*. Yet the students' overriding responses reflect a deeply embedded logic of privilege that appears to naturalise and justify their dispositions. Disadvantage aroused uncertainty, lack of confidence, and fear of not being able to teach *them*, as Denise explained (also during the initial group discussion):

> *The children I seem to work best with are probably ones who are like me, so probably the middle class just because I understand what's going on at home, the pressure from parents to do well. I wouldn't so much understand working class pupils, just because of lack of experience. I wouldn't so much know or adopt an attitude that would help them. It's hard to envisage what the disadvantaged child is going through because I can't first-hand experience it because of my own background.* (FG)

Denise went on to say, *given the choice I'd rather teach in a nice middle-class school*. Becoming aware of Kerry, Orla and Denise's perceptions, confirmed for me that the students envisage a professional life that is comfortable, pleasant and unfettered by anything too challenging.

There was also a stereotyped belief expressed by participants in a gulf in the life experience between the two groups with the working class seen to be leading traumatic lives, being given to vandalism, living in crime filled areas, as having less supportive parents, and schools that are not as highly performing. Stereotype here is understood as a 'widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing' (The Oxford English Dictionary (2019) defines). For example,

as expressed in the following statements made during the group interview:

> Denise: *It's largely based on how you want your professional life to be. Do you want to be riding into a nice sleepy suburb in your nice car, or parking it where it's going to be smashed up or the wheels taken off?* (FG)

> Kerry: *You imagine you would get much better support from the staff that you're working with. You'd have better resources. I suppose there's going to be more funding if they're winning prizes, winning awards. Funds generally come with those.* (FG)

Explicitly linked to the level of support and cooperation a teacher could expect from working class parents, Denise expressed her middle class habitus in even stronger terms, *they're* [teachers] *not going to get any parental support, we'll be wasting our efforts.* Such deeply rooted negativity reflects naïve and unconscious beliefs and attitudes towards the working class as discussed in Chapter Two Allard and Santaro (2006) believe such views stem from an inability to see life from the margins. Only one student, Denise, said that she would prefer to work in a disadvantaged school:

> *In terms of, probably middle class but in terms of challenging yourself as a professional, then the more challenging school…I would honestly prefer to work in a disadvantaged school that was motivated. I want to be there to help. It's the school itself, more than the area or even the pupils. It's the school that's important. It's much more rewarding when you're doing something and working with a great team of people.* (FG)

Denise's primary concern however is in working with like-minded, motivated colleagues rather than with disadvantaged children, their families and communities. So what seems like a different stance actually echoes the middle-class teacher identity of working in a successful school *it's the school itself, more than the area or even the pupils.* This carries the suggestion that the pupils are secondary to a well-functioning school with teachers who are *a great team of people who work well together*. McArthur (2010:1) makes the point that 'education and society are intrinsically interrelated and that the fundamental purpose of education is to improve social justice'. The students' comments above show that they are not clear about the fundamental transformative purpose of education and the crucial role a teacher plays in this.

In a subsequent teaching session in week nine, the students were asked to reflect on inequity in the education system. Reflections proved to be incongruent and at variance to the responses mentioned previously. The comments below for instance highlight an immediate and more profound thinking about non-dominant cultures and the experience of power and privilege in schooling.

> Ruth: *Teachers are generally coming from a middle-class background so they are sort of disconnected from the disadvantaged. It's important that they get the experience of disadvantage.* (Week 9)
>
> Anne: *Our education system is middle class, isn't it? Teachers' behaviour and attitudes are like those of the middle class. If a child doesn't conform to that, the teacher can have this perception or stereotype towards the child and might indirectly put the child into a particular ability grade, indirectly giving someone else much praise, 'oh, that's brilliant' but not realising why. That person compares himself to others and it becomes like a self-fulfilling prophecy.* (Week 9)
>
> Anne: *Teachers need to be aware of it so they can it and ask why am I treating this child in this way? Should this child be in that ability group? What can I do to help them progress? Even just understanding that some children may not have access to books at home is important.* (Week 9)

What is different here is that the comments express an emerging, or in Anne's case a pre-existing awareness of some of the ways in which the education system harms learners, particularly with regard to the class-based dissonance between teachers and their pupils. It resonates with Cumming-Potvin's (2009:94) suggestion that teachers reflect on how they might be contributing to the underachievement of pupils who are different to them. What is reassuring, is that all three students question and problematise the education system, teacher identity and class difference. Reflecting one of the core principles of critical literacy, which is to problem-pose and problem-solve (Freire, 1970), there is a form of agency here. Agency can be described as a 'personal narrative in which the self is a protagonist who confronts and solves problems, with associated motive and effect' (Dozier, et al, 2006:12). This tentative link to systems of oppression was encouraging. It gives rise to optimism that in the right conditions the habitus has the potential to evolve and to transform the field. It also points to a need for such awareness raising opportunities to continue and perhaps be infused in all Initial Teacher Education.

Another interesting insight was the admiration expressed for teachers who work in disadvantaged schools who were perceived as in some way different from the average teacher. This is captured in the following observation made by Orla:

> *I learned most in the disadvantaged schools because the teachers are more motivated to enhance the lives of the pupils in every way. It was more of an awareness or something in the school. They just were all really motivated to help the children. It was almost as if the label 'disadvantage' motivated them to improve the status of their pupils. They were really forward thinking, like warriors. They're like the best or something.* (Week 9)

Use of the metaphor warrior is powerful in this context. It suggests that Orla may perceive teachers who work on behalf of the disadvantaged as having a particular ability, of being effective and ethically minded, that they are the best and are motivated to enhance the status of the pupils. They were not viewed as average teachers. In this statement we see some recognition of societal inequity and a belief that conditions for the oppressed or disadvantaged can be improved by good teaching. The primary issue here is that the students' beliefs, attitudes and dispositions are not consistently interrogated in any robust way in their professional training. In Bourdiesian terms, the student teachers' beliefs and attitudes about teachers and teaching have been shaped by the dynamics of habitus, their learned way of being, and the field of teacher training in a mutually constitutive way, that is habitus and field, are simultaneously structured and structuring (Bourdieu, 1983), resulting in subjectivities that go unexamined. This, at least partly, explains the contradictory positions above. For example, Twiselton (2004) points out that all student teachers' own experience of teachers as learners are a powerful basis on which identity is forged. The strength of these prior beliefs forms the habitus into a closed and bounded conception of teacher identity that is reinforced in the field of teacher education.

A further complicating factor is that arrangements for school placements operate on a self-nominating system and it is possible for students to complete their four-year degree programme without the experience of teaching in a disadvantaged school. Changing this could be a hugely important learning opportunity. Sheltered experience combined with living a life of privilege can leave students lacking confidence. As Ruth explains, *It's a confidence thing…there are teachers who want to work and influence the lives of disadvantaged pupils*. This perhaps suggests that lack of teacher confidence and experience may be a factor contributing to inequity. To compound the issue further, students will often experience schools not very different from the one they attended as a learner, that is, schools that lack diversity, and in some cases, challenge. In this way privilege can endorse a perception that continues to shape and influence teacher identity unproductively. This was not the case for all of the students however. Anne's experience, which is discussed in the following section, was quite different from that of her peers.

Recognition and Resilience

In this section, I consider some of Anne's responses specifically. As described in Chapter Four, Anne comes from an area of high socioeconomic deprivation. She was the only one of the group to have attended a non-grammar school. In the following comment she describes her first-hand experience of bias and prejudice in and through the education system.

> *I was in this school. There were three students in the school. One of the things the principal said to me was all three of their mothers were teachers and the principal pointed this out; 'Oh, they're all great. They're all good girls.' Of course they are. 'You know their parents are all teachers. They come from a family of teachers. Did you know that?'* (I)

In the first of Anne's anecdotes the principal of her host school is heard promoting middle class norms and values and in doing so, makes a distinction between Anne and her peers who have a parent as a teacher. The principal misrecognised the middle class values she shared with the students with their capability. Her perception and institutional power in the field then ensured that these students benefitted from having symbolic capital. The subtext of this interchange positions Anne as not one of the *great girls* or *good girls* and therefore at a disadvantage to her peers. Anne recognised that conditions were less favourable for her and was aware that she needed to employ certain strategies to help her negotiate the field successfully. For example:

> *When you go to a school you have to make a good impression. Sometimes I speak and I have a bit more of an accent. When I'm in schools I'm more like prim and proper if you get me? It's like, oh God! They're becoming aware of where I'm from.* (I)

The conflict for Anne is that she is overtly conscious of her historicity and the fact that her working class habitus is less attuned to the discourses operating within this particular field. In the above anecdotes she articulates the feeling that she lacks linguistic, cultural and social capital as a consequence of her habitus and social class. Anne understands that she has to compete for the stakes, by speaking in a particular accent, and behaving in what she perceives to be a desirable way. She is aware that her working class identity does not fit naturally into the middle class context of the school and feels the need *to make a good impression*. To do this she tries to mask her background by communicating in what are perceived to be legitimate ways of speaking and acting.

Anne is acutely aware of class privilege but her understanding extended beyond the issue of social class to gender inequity. In the following reflection she considers female identity as she describes male privilege in the field of education. She was passionate in her utterances *it kills me*. She expressed cynicism, *he's floating around the school, does an hour here, and an hour there with individual children. He's not going to kill himself*. She identifies innate male privilege; *he was, like he had the authority for it. It's just a wee man's club.* She recognises the reproductive nature and impact of this privilege; *what message does that keep perpetuating?,* and concludes passionately declaring that she wants to be a school Principal one day.

> *I feel like there's mostly women in education. It's like a women's thing. But if you look higher up it's all men calling the shots. It kills me. In a particular school I was in for example, all the senior people in the school were male, every one of them; I was introduced to the principal, a man; I was introduced to the vice principal, a man; I was introduced SENCO, a man. He's floating around the school, does an hour here and an hour there with individual children. He's not going to kill himself and they're all golfing buddies and I was thinking 'it's just a wee man's club'. Then the teacher I was with he was actually doing his Principal Qualification [PQH]. He was like he had the*

> *authority for it. It just shows you that's what they want in the education system. Even for wee girls going through the school system, if you see that the principal and the vice principal are men, the IT coordinator is a man, the SENCO is a man, all the people that have any kind of authority in the school who make the decisions ultimately are male. What message does that keep perpetuating? It's all men at the top. I want to be taken seriously. I want to go all the way to be a principal one day.* (I)

Here Anne questions the system, identifying the limiting conditions of gender bias in the field. By challenging the structure of patriarchy and male dominance, she is contesting a dominant discourse and habitus. This awareness prompts Anne to challenge established practices. Not only does she show an awareness of the extent to which gender bias exists, but her response also articulates a positive alternative, I want to go all the way to be a principal one day. Anne wants to alter the status quo and as a working class woman, to become a Principal so that:

> *Wee girls going through the school system can have different role models and so that all the people that have any kind of authority in the school who make the decisions are not male.* (I)

What Anne is saying here is that in becoming a principal she would be challenging the cultural and structural power relations, the *wee man's club*, that she sees existing and reproduced in schools. In contrast to her peers, whose identity was conflicted, Anne is acutely aware of her disadvantage within the system. She did not just grapple with reproduction as a cognitive concept, she also experiences it and this has given her insights that help her to understand it more acutely than her peers. This is important. Becoming aware of 'how power operates can contribute to the cognitive dissonance necessary for the improvisation of habitus' (Marsh, 206:172). This is reflected in the capacity Anne has developed to reflect critically on her experiences in a way that her peers sometimes seem less able to do. Despite the obstacles and limitations she encountered in the field, Anne navigates her path with self-determination and a sense of agency. The subtext to her anecdotes is that she is resilient and will ultimately be capable of surmounting the power relations inherent in the system by becoming a school principal to make a good difference for others, *for wee girls*. Anne's enthusiasm and commitment to the issue of social class inequity was sustained beyond her BEd3 year. In her final year at College she chose to focus on social justice as the topic for her final dissertation. The challenge for me was how to generate this level of cognitive dissonance and effect change for all of my students.

Conclusion

The data discussed in this section revealed that most of the participants' professional identity is conflicted. On the one hand there is an awareness that a teacher's priority should be to reach out to the disadvantaged who they know they would *enjoy teaching* but that this would not be conducive to a primary need for a *comfortable and easy life*, working with nice colleagues, in a nice school that you drive to in *a nice car* that will be

safe in the car park. The data also points to the effect that habitus exerts on pre-service teachers' beliefs, values and attitudes about teachers and about education. Several of the students interpreted the concept of teacher identity narrowly absorbing the dominant middle class discourse. This was reflected in their desire to teach in middle class schools or schools with like-minded, motivated colleagues, who were doers, contributors, participators, as the students perceived them. In other words, to work alongside teachers who understood the game and played the game to their full potential, accumulating capital and adding to their habitus. There was little variation in responses with the exception of Anne who was acutely aware that within the system she was operating at a disadvantage to her peers. Generally however, comments suggest that the student teachers readily accept the dominant discourse and do not question the legitimacy of the system (Marsh, 2006). With the exception again of Anne, it also demonstrates that the students have an inability to see outside their structurally imposed privilege. This is compounded by the fact that they have not often been asked to recognise their own privilege, or to recognise the ways they have been and continue to be shaped and constructed by societal forces. As a result of these inherited and unquestioned positions of privilege, they tend, as the data above shows, to subscribe to the majority view, and this results in prejudicial stereotyping of others, specifically pupils and their parents, who are located differently in the social world, as outlined below.

Prejudicial Stereotyping

Introduction

In the previous section I discussed how the dispositions most of the student teachers brought with them as a result of positions of privilege, that is, their habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), created a lack of awareness and limited understanding of the concepts of privilege and disadvantage. Another common thread running through the previous section of data implies that this logic of privilege has created beliefs and attitudes about teachers and about education that are conflicted. Like Stahl's students who unquestioningly accepted 'the ideologies of domination around them' (2015: 24) the student teachers, with the exception perhaps of Anne, tended not to question the dominant discourse. In other words they demonstrated socially unconscious dispositions, dispositions that tend to privilege those already privileged in society, and those who are at home in the classroom (Mayher, 2015: ii).

In the following analysis of data these socially unconscious dispositions manifest as a fundamental trust in the education system, and an acquired system of beliefs and attitudes about parents and children that tends towards classed assumptions. These classed assumptions take the form of prejudicial stereotyping and 'othering' of working-class parents and pupils. Echoing Shor's (1999) views, discussed in chapter two, the problem Cole and Knowles (2000:188) say, is that 'we teach, research, and otherwise practice what we know and feel. In short, we teach who we are'. If the student teachers do not recognise their own privilege, if they think of themselves as prejudice free and lack awareness of institutional prejudice, then this has the potential to impact on their ability to treat all learners fairly and equitably (Chubbuck, 2010). In order to begin to address some of these issues I planned a teaching session in week two of the programme that involved watching a documentary film titled *Can't Read: Can't Write* (Lovett, 2008).

Classed Assumptions

Can't Read: Can't Write (Lovett, 2008) is a highly evocative documentary that follows a group of adults on their journey in learning to read. Informed by Chubbuck (2010) my aim was to engage the students in a perspective taking exercise designed to help them see outside the blinkers of their own educational experience to identify how discrimination through structurally imposed privilege affects lives. By providing hard evidence of what it is like to lack the privilege of a successful education, I had hoped that the film would facilitate insight into how educational failure impacts on the learner. Such insights tend to be out of the reach of the majority of the students. I say 'majority' here because one student in the year group confided that she found the film *extremely moving because it reminds me of my father. My mummy taught him to read when he was in his twenties.* What is significant about this comment is that as homogenous as the students are as a group in some respects, it was important for me to be conscious that there are of course profound differences in their individual life experiences.

Without exception the students all found the film emotional to watch, as the following comments demonstrate:

> Kerry: *It saddened me to see how the people in the film struggled with life.* (Week 2)
>
> Ailish: *My heart was breaking for the people who couldn't read*. (Week 2)
>
> Ruth: *The film was a real eye opener…so emotional to watch.* (Week 2)
>
> Denise: *It evokes emotion witnessing an adult becoming so excited over being able to read the word ham.* (Week 2)
>
> Louise: *Such an emotional and powerful documentary.* (Week 2)

The film clearly, to use Chubbuck's phrase 'mobilised the students' emotions' (2016: 201). Responses across the group were consistent with the data extracts above. The comments give an insight into the extent to which the students are distanced from educational disadvantage and its effects. Highlighting this point, Anne said, *reading is something we take for granted*. This disconnect has limited the students' interpretation of literacy difficulties and the impact of illiteracy on people's lives. The following data set shows how the film raised the students' sense of responsibility as literacy teachers, particularly as teachers of reading. It left the group confronting issues that stimulated a range of emotions including worry and fear. It simultaneously generated a heightened sense of professional responsibility:

> Orla: *I never realised the impact not being able to read would have on a person. I feel responsible for making sure I prevent any child from living a life without words.* (Week 2)
>
> Denise: *Watching the film shocked me. It makes me worried, as I want to be able to teach all my pupils to read and write.* (Week 2)
>
> Louise: *I feel quite scared because of the responsibility. Not teaching a child properly could have such a negative impact on their life.* (Week 2)

What is interesting about these reflections is that the emphasis is on emotions, for example, *it makes me worried, I feel quite scared, the film shocked me, I feel responsible*. There were no explicit comments specifically relating to the emotional pain expressed by the adults in the film, who like Cieslik and Simpson's participants (2015), movingly described daily lives marked by discrimination and hardship. There was however significant empathy for them. Chubbuck's point raised in Chapter Two may be salient here.

> Even the emotions educators experience as individuals operate as constitutive, politicised entities that either support or transform inequitable structures of power and privilege. (2010:204)

The question is, are the student teachers' emotive responses likely to support or transform inequitable structures of power and privilege? Further comments signalled an orientation towards socially just thinking, potentially positioning the students to adopt transformative dispositions. This is reflected in a statement made by Anne who with echoes of Mc Arthur's (2010: 496) assessment that education should 'contribute to the welfare and betterment of all', said *education needs to work for all, to better everyone's chance in society* (I).

As encouraging as Anne's insight was however, other responses revealed the scale of the challenge teacher educators face in getting student teachers to adopt socially just dispositions. Orla for example showed incredulity that there are pupils today who leave school with inadequate literacy skills:

> *I really don't understand how someone can get to sixteen or seventeen and not know how to read and write. It just really baffles me that that can happen here. Do they go to school? It could be attendance couldn't it? Truancy would come back to your attitude towards school. Why would children not want to put the effort in to learn to read and write? Could it be that? Could it be that they don't want to? They don't care? They don't care, so they don't make the effort? Again that would come back to the parents and the values that they set for their children*. (I)

The two questions that stand out here are, *could it be that they don't want to? and they don't care?* This was surprising as the adult learners in the film spoke painfully of their experiences at school showing how much they wanted to be able to read and how much they cared. For example, in the film Teresa tearfully said:

> I was made to feel stupid. They told my mum I was lazy, but I wanted to read, I wanted to be like the others. I just gave up trying, and I left school unable to read. (Lovett, 2008: np)

Teresa desperately wanted to be able to read as a child and there was no physiological or neurological reason for her not to have been successful. In fact, amongst the adult learner group Teresa was the one who succeeded in learning to read most quickly. Yet Orla's response powerfully reaffirms negative learner identities. Educational failure is taken to be a personal choice, and consequently the system goes unchallenged. Orla implies that there are two sets of values, the core or desirable values include attendance, good work ethic and a positive disposition towards learning. Also included are values in the affective domain such as those listed by Ruth:

> *If they're* [working class children] *not academic that doesn't matter as long as they've learned important values like friendliness, loyalty, and respect.* (I)

These examples demonstrate how effort and compliance are seen as the means for achievement, though not everyone is expected to achieve academically and casualties are to be expected, *if they're not academic that doesn't matter*. The question is for whom does it not matter? Reading between the lines, I suspect that Ruth is referring to those learners who do not demonstrate the core values, in other words, those lacking middle class dispositions or what Bourdieu (1977) terms, a pedagogic habitus. For those individuals success is measured not in achievement but in the extent to which they accrue middle class dispositions such as loyalty and respect. The assumption here is that the working classes do not have these values. There was no awareness that the system is demanding of all learners that which they do not have (Bourdieu, 1977). The core values of the field were viewed as natural and uncontested, alternatives were not considered. There was no recognition of the arbitrary nature of the field or how injustice is perpetuated systemically. Despite seeing how Teresa and other adults eventually gave up and resigned themselves painfully to failure, there was no understanding of the root causes of self-elimination.

In addition to this, all of the students voiced a belief in meritocracy. Meritocracy means believing that ability and hard work are the main determinants of success (Son Hing et al., 2011). Kerry for example said *I came from free school meals, but look at me, I'm going to be a teacher*. Meritocratic success can act as a constraining influence, as Kerry's comment demonstrates. Anne shared a similar trajectory and progression through the system as Kerry:

> *I'm from a working class background but I didn't really notice it because I was one of the ones that actually got through the system.* (I)

While Anne shows awareness that her success in the field has had a constraining influence, *I didn't really notice*, Ruth on the other hand held strong to meritocratic beliefs to the point of disbelieving statistical evidence.

> *Being working class doesn't generally mean that you're not going to succeed, even though the statistics show otherwise.* (I)

Like Anne and Kerry, Ruth was strongly attached to a belief in meritocracy and a fundamental belief in the system. She completely missed the disconnect between attainment and social class, to the point of actually dismissing the evidence. Such system justification Darnon et al (2018: 251) suggest, 'is one of the legitimising myths through which a positive vision of the social system is maintained'. Meritocracy denies the privilege of class or race and leads people to attribute the disadvantages of dominated groups to internal causes such as those mentioned previously, truancy, undesirable attitude, not caring, not making the effort, and not having what are perceived as the right values (Godfrey and Wolf, 2016). With further echoes of Darnon et al (2018), these beliefs reflect a set of binaries that have a debilitating effect on the performance of low-status groups, as can be seen above, *if they're not academic that doesn't matter*. This binary disposition was also reflected in a comment made by Orla

that conveyed a belief that some types of schools are better than others and that some pupils deserve to be in better schools.

> *I went to a Grammar school but my sister went to a secondary school. I was like you're better than this. You deserve to be in a better school.* (I)

The consequence of these beliefs and attitudes as discussed in Chapter Two, is that ideologically the students are already implicated in the structural imposition of discrimination that reproduces inequity (Chubbuck, 2010). There were however some expressions of ambivalence in relation to this dominant discourse. These manifested implicitly during class discussions and tended to relate to how underachievement could be challenged. Denise, for example, offered the following solution:

> *I think we need a middleman type of thing. Have teachers who are from that background in every school, get teachers with experience of impoverished backgrounds. It's so obvious. Even in special needs education, if somebody has a relative who perhaps has Down's syndrome, autism, whatever, they understand. They know exactly how to work with the child. They just suit that area or that field of work, just like the teacher in St Paul's who just had a passion to help them* [disadvantaged children] *because she knows what they're going through. I think whenever principals are looking at their staff, they need to make sure that there's a wide range of experience there, that they're not all just brilliant teachers, but they actually have lots of experience that is different, so that if there is an issue, there's a teacher there who understands and has a voice for the child.* (Week 12)

Inherent in this suggestion, is a clear connection with habitus and Bourdieu's well known quote 'when the habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself as a fish in water' (1989:43). As noted previously, Bourdieu's argument is that people who inhabit similar social spaces will more effectively communicate meanings and understandings, feel more secure and tacitly empowered. This implies a sense of praxis (Freire, 1993), which Burridge describes as 'the intention to make a difference by exercising influence or power' (2014: 578). It also optimistically implied that negative aspects of the social world can be ameliorated. Denise's thinking aligns with a critical literacy perspective for a number of reasons. Echoing Banks' (2007) concept of equity pedagogy and Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy, inherent in this idea is recognition that the teaching profession should reflect the diversity of learners and that this is particularly salient for challenging schools. This signals an emerging awareness of some of the factors that exacerbate disadvantage, such as homogeneity in the teaching profession. Thinking about cultural practice in this way, Denise is operating at organisational rather than individual level. Critical literacy as a transformative pedagogy opposes individualisation where people retreat within hardened boundaries (Darder, 2017). In contrast critical literacy as a humanistic pedagogy harnesses the diverse identities of individuals and groups and should, to cite

Mc Arthur again 'contribute to the welfare and betterment of all' (2010: 496). Louise expressed a similar perspective to Denise:

> *I watched that Rita Pearson TED Talk[7]. She talks about every kid needing a champion, and I just think that's the most important message. The lowest ones are the ones you should really want to help because they're the ones who need it the most.* (Week 12)

Both students suggest that a teacher's role is to advocate, champion and be a voice for the disadvantaged. This echoes Orla's view discussed in the previous section of being like a warrior. At first glance, the thinking here appears to be a shift from the views discussed in section one where the emphasis was on individualism, on having an easy and comfortable life, to doing, that is, advocating and championing. Yet the two perspectives are possibly incongruent. While Denise talks about a teacher having an innate understanding and desire to improve a learner's experience, Louise's view implies acting out of an external sense of duty, the ones you should really want to help. What was in some ways reassuring however was that both Louise and Denise saw it as important to build relationships and foster dialogue. Taking up this point Anne-Marie said, *maybe try and change their perspective by building relationships. That's important.* Anne-Marie's emphasis however was placed on changing the perspective of the disadvantaged and not that of the teacher. This implies that there may be a deficit in the thinking of the disadvantaged that needs to be changed. In the commentary below Denise acknowledges this dissonance between middle and working class values, saying that dialogue and specifically listening would create better understanding:

> *I would really be interested in actually finding out what their* [working class] *perception is because I think that's the only way we can help them. What do you think of school? What do you think of education? I think there's a lot of listening that needs to be done. Teachers are people who are employed based on their capital and where they come from. Those are the people that are probably middle class and they don't understand.* (Week 12)

Resonating with a Freirian philosophy (1998) the positive potential of Denise's suggestion is that the emphasis is once again on *doing*. At its heart is a recognition that there is a need to attempt to understand and become conscious of our relationship to others and to the world in a bid to alert us to new possibilities (Young, 2014). This implies praxis and the potential for different forms of agency (Freire, 1993) and links to Shor's (1999) appeal for students to become active subjects in their own lives. In line with Janks' (2005) argument, that a single protagonist can make a huge difference in the direction of social justice, Denise advocates for dialogic interaction about controversial beliefs, values and attitudes and suggests stepping outside of herself and her social context and asking questions that problematise issues in relation to for example, the politics of poverty. Essentially, she suggests that harnessing the power of talk in 'purposeful interactions focused on the development of critical consciousness'

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[7] Pearson, R. (May 2013) *Every Kid Needs a Champion*, TED Talk, available at https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion?language=en.

(Darder, 2017:93). Yet as Giddens (1994) points out, dialogue can function ideologically to reproduce relations of power and domination. In a context in which Louise said, *teachers tend to judge parents*, Giddens' point is particularly salient. Nonetheless, Denise's self-awareness and desire to understand is heartening as it suggest that change is possible.

What was less encouraging however was that during the individual interviews that took place several weeks later, and with this learning experience behind them, the students revealed a deeper, more cognitive logic for learners' failings that conferred trust in the schooling system. For example Ailish said, *there are more things in place now to stop that [failure] from happening*. It became apparent that things meant policy and curricula. Ailish went on to give the example of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs Northern Ireland (2005), while Kerry conferred trust in the Northern Ireland Curriculum (2007):

> Ailish: *The Code of Practice for special educational needs and things like that…anybody before that, they wouldn't have been recognised as having dyslexia or any sort of inability to connect with the literature or the literacy curriculum.* (I)

> Kerry: *We have such a flexible curriculum. You can make your own decisions about individualised interventions and strategies for the struggling readers.* (I)

Both comments convey faith in the educational system to help prevent children from failing. The views expressed here, just as with Orla's question above, *do they go to school?,* signify thinking that is potentially incompatible with a socially just orientation. In Bourdieusian terms (1977) fundamental injustices were misrecognised. In this, the data aligns with Swalwell's study carried out in Kent, USA, in which students similarly 'mapped what they were learning about social justice onto a deeply embedded logic of privilege' that explained and justified disparity in pupil attainment (2013: 8). Orla for example, suggests educational failure is potentially due to poor attendance or truancy. Failure to recognise or acknowledge the workings of power and privilege disembodies the underprivileged learner. This disembodiment took the form of prejudicial stereotyping of working class parents and pupils who as the following data set shows, were generally viewed as a homogenous group. The data discussed in the next section reveals a naturalising of hierarchies and binary dispositions that pose a potential barrier to the pursuit of teaching literacy for social justice (Swalwell, 2013).

Attitudes Towards Working Class Parents

Conducted in Ireland, O'Donohue's (2013) study discussed in Chapter Two, showed that working class parents have a practical and, therefore, embodied awareness of their place in what is a hierarchical system. Parents in the study viewed themselves as 'occupying the borderlands, the peripheral places' (2013: 201). They talked about school personnel articulating a 'them' and 'us' binary, with 'us' being the working class and the disadvantaged. The women in O'Donohue's study said there was:

> Lack of insight on the part of the school, in terms of the wider realities at home, the easy and stereotypical linking of a lack of money to a lack of concern, care, or discipline, and the consequent moral high ground that can be occupied by school personnel. (2013: 201)

The student teachers' views about working class parents echoed these findings. They reflected a high level of stereotypical thinking and lack of insight. The data revealed it was not just some, but all of the student teachers who exhibited these views, including Anne. For example Louise and Ruth made the following comments:

> Louise: *Even though the parent wouldn't be on their case to do it, or the parent wouldn't necessarily care how their child is getting on, that would make the teacher work harder for that child because they think they're the only person that's looking out for him.* (I)

> Ruth: *I was thinking that teachers can do everything that their parents aren't able to do. The parents are ultimately undoing all that. There's not much progression then as much as teachers may try.* (I)

A distinction is made here between teachers' interests and investments in a child's progress and those of parents. Parental involvement is very much undermined. Teachers are positioned as more caring, *the only person that's looking out for him*, and as more capable and influential, *teachers can do everything that their parents aren't able to do*. The parents' influence is seen to be not only ineffective but also destructive, *the parents are ultimately undoing all that*, and it is suggested that, the parent wouldn't necessarily care how their child is getting on.

There were attempts to rationalise and account for different levels of parental involvement in education, as Anne-Marie and Denise explain:

> Anne-Marie: *The parent who will do everything they can values education more and perhaps is more educated and knows the importance of education. Whereas the other parent maybe just, well you don't know what's going on in their lives*. (I)

> Denise: *I think some of them* [parents] *are just unaware. I think they're maybe just a bit oblivious to further education, to what you can be or not by having something to aspire to.* (I)

Anne-Marie suggests that having a good education equates to being a supportive parent, while lack of education is associated with limited awareness of the benefits of schooling. Anne-Marie and Denise similarly imply that not being well educated means that parents are unaware, do not value or recognise the importance of education, and as a consequence, lack *anything to aspire to*. Orla went so far as to suggest that disadvantaged parents are harming their children, who she says have the potential, but are not supported in their learning:

> *I don't think it's fair for working class children because of the importance of parents in education. I've seen it on teaching practice.*

> *The teacher was saying to me that she has tried to emphasise the importance of this to the parents, but they don't get it. The children are coming in with no homework done. They have the potential but they just need support at home.* (I)

The views expressed above closely align with those articulated by the women in O'Donohue's study, in which school personnel were described as making 'easy and stereotypical linking of a lack of money to a lack of concern, care, or discipline' (2013: 201).

Another view expressed in O'Donohue's study is that there is 'a lack of insight on the part of the school, in terms of the wider realities at home' (2013: 201). Reflecting this, Anne-Marie made the comment, *you don't know what's going on in their lives*. In saying this, Anne-Marie acknowledged a lack of understanding of the wider realities in the home life of the disadvantaged, simultaneously revealing a level of self-awareness in her own limited understanding. This makes Denise's suggestion above all the more relevant:

> *I would really be interested in actually finding out what their* [working class] *perception is because I think that's the only way we can help them.* (I)

The dispositions towards working class parents expressed in the comments above, extended to views about how the students felt the parents viewed teachers. Teachers, Anne-Marie suggested are seen as intimidating *know-alls* who are to blame for a child's lack of progress.

> *A lot of parents will put the blame on teachers. They* [working-class parents] *feel intimidated by teachers, like they're kind of know-alls.* (I)

Anne-Marie shared a revealing anecdote in which she recounts and reflects on a conversation with a grandmother who had been told by the nursery school teacher that her grandson was poorly behaved. Anne-Marie describes the grandmother's attitude as *awful*. She is surprised that parents and grandparents might hold negative views about teachers because as she says, teachers are well thought of, middle-class and very educated.

> *Their idea is that they [teachers] have read a book and they think they know. I've actually heard that before. It was actually a parent that I worked with in my part-time job in the bakery. It was when her grandson started nursery. The nursery teacher had said this kid has bad behaviour and instead of letting him come every morning they said they were going to phase him in gradually. She's* [the grandmother of the child] *going off saying, 'Just because they've read a good book or two'. That's awful. I was surprised when she said that. She's uneducated and I suppose that was just her perception. I don't know. I think it's very interesting that there's a negative perception*

> *that parents might hold about teachers. Teachers by and large are well thought of and they're middle class and very educated and so when she says that, they fit you into a box. Certainly, in most people's minds, if you're far removed from that box, you're not middle class and you're not educated. It's very easy to have them and us.* (I)

Anne-Marie uses the idea of a metaphorical box to describe the social space and says you either fit inside the box or you do not. The further removed you are from the box the further down the social hierarchy you are and the less educated you are likely to be. In Anne-Marie's words, if you are *far removed from that box, you're not middle class and you're not educated*. As a consequence of these objective relations Anne-Marie conveys a powerful sense of distinction, which she sums up saying, *it is very easy to have them and us*. What Anne-Marie is saying is that if you are able to play the schooling game, that is, if you are middle class and educated then you *fit into a box*, if not, then you are outside of it. Interestingly, neither teachers nor the system are apparently responsible for this distinction. Rather it is parents, *because it is they who fit you into that box*. Anne-Marie believes that *most people* share this worldview and in many ways she is right, because Anne-Marie's explanation unknowingly alludes to several of the concepts in Bourdieu's (1977) theory of reproduction, namely habitus, capital and field.

As noted in Chapter Three, Bourdieu's field concept is the entry point for his reproduction thesis (Golsorkhi and Huault, 2006; Walther, 2014). Anne-Marie's box metaphor is synonymous with field in that it refers to a highly structured social space where natural superiority in the form of class-based advantage creates objective locations. Teachers, who occupy Anne-Marie's metaphorical box, have the advantage of habitus and symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). As Anne-Marie says, *they are well thought of* and *they're middle class* and *very educated*. Whereas, the disadvantaged, who are far removed from that box, are not middle class and not educated. Anne-Marie is unequivocal about the rigid boundaries of the field and the structural power relations operating within it. This view she says is the way things are in most people's minds. Here, Anne-Marie naturalises the structures of domination. She misreognises pupils' sources of difficulty, and her own privileged position. The result is symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This is in keeping with Bourdieu's (1977; 1998) thesis, that agents in the field are predisposed to operate in a way that is patterned and predictable and that we all have a practical knowledge of how we are placed in fields. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) explain this in terms of habitus and symbolic capital, concepts that generate ways of thinking and dispositions to life. In the following section, I turn my focus to the ways of thinking and dispositions the student teachers held towards working class pupils and consider the potential impact of these beliefs and attitudes.

Attitudes Towards Working Class Pupils

Not only did the student teachers' beliefs and attitudes potentially alienate and disembody working class parents they extended also, to working class pupils. For example, Louise said:

> *Those teachers* [in a working class school] *are under enormous strain. Then you look at like* [names a middle-class school] *where I went, teachers there seem to really love their work because they had children who wanted to learn, who were motivated. Obviously there were some troublemakers in the school, but for the most part it was people who wanted to learn.* (I)

There is a high degree of prejudicial stereotyping in Louise's comment. Louise expresses the view that children in working class schools do not want to learn and are to blame for teachers feeling *under enormous strain*. She implies that the children are *troublemakers*. In similar vein Ailish said, *people don't want to go to challenging schools they think that they're going to have classroom management issues*. This notion of working class children being poorly behaved was also taken up by Kerry who recognised that she stereotypes working class children:

> *It's probably a really bad stereotype, but children who are from a disadvantaged home mightn't get a lot of attention at home. Then they come to school and act out, and then they get more attention than the children who are sitting quiet and being well behaved. That's one thing I always think about.* (I)

Louise also showed a level of awareness of assumptions she might make in stereotyping children because of their social class:

> *I'm coming into this class, 95% of them are on free school meals. You might think they're not going to be paying attention and this is going to be a terrible year. Then you find out they're all really motivated learners.* (I)

Kerry and Louise articulated a level of self-awareness in how they perceive working class children, *it's probably a really bad stereotype and you might think…then you find out*. This data set is illustrative of the conflicted priorities articulated in the previous section titled The Logic of Privilege, in which the students expressed a desire for a *comfortable* and *easy life* teaching in a middle class school, *where teachers really love their work with motivated people who wanted to learn*. Twinned with this, as can be seen from the data above, was a preoccupation with behavioural issues. Kerry even went so far as to say, that *that's one thing I always think about*. In general, the overriding attitude towards working class pupils, as for their parents, was one of prejudicial stereotyping. Such attitudes tend to be delimiting and potentially corrosive as can be seen in the following comment by Ailish:

> *I think teachers want to do everything for them but that bottom group, they're not going to ever get up to the rest of the class. I'd say teachers still want to try and help everyone but maybe in some individual cases, when they know they're not getting the support at home, they accept they are fighting a losing battle*. (I)

What Ailish seems to be saying is that casualties and eliminations among the most vulnerable learners are to be expected. For a child who is struggling at school and who is not being supported by his or her parents, then teachers *accept they are fighting a*

losing battle. There is a strong sense of defeatism and resignation in Ailish's comment. By implication, it implies that failing to meet the demands of the system is likely to lead to the education system enacting its social function of elimination (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Ailish's reflection reveals how injustice is perpetuated systemically within the field (Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977). Coupled with a general lack of understanding of the root causes of elimination and the complicity of agents, that is teachers, this has potential to have a hugely debilitating effect on the performance of low-status groups (Darnon et al, 2018). Based on Chubbuck's (2010, 2016) analysis, the dispositions of fairness and a belief that all children can learn are fundamental to the concept of teaching for social justice. If teachers *accept they are fighting a losing battle*, then the consequence, as discussed in Chapter Three, is what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) term symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is when both the dominant and the dominated adhere to the rules of the game so that the system reproduces itself. No force is required. The violence is exercised and achieved indirectly with the complicity of agents and the working classes are most at risk. In a game in which the rules are determined by the dominant class, 'everyone plays but not everyone is equal' (Mills, 2008: 87).

Yet there were indications that the students were developing critical and socially just dispositions. For example, in one of Anne's recollections she displays acute consciousness of the danger of self-elimination resulting from a teacher's failure to believe that all children can learn:

> *She was working at a very low level and the teacher was like 'her brother was like that, and her other brother was like that'. I was like – it doesn't mean to say she's not going to do better. I think because people were saying you're stupid that you believed it and she just didn't try any more. She was just like I'm not good at things like this.* (I)

Anne is critical of the teacher for labelling a struggling learner on the basis of her experience of the child's two older male siblings. Anne was surprised at the teacher's attitude and recognised how the teacher appeared unreflexive and therefore foreclosed to the possibility of seeing otherwise (Schirato and Webb, 2003), *I was like – it doesn't mean to say she's not going to do better.* She noticed the impact the teacher's attitude had on the little girl who, due to low self-esteem, *just didn't try anymore* because she believed she was *not good at things like this*. Anne recognised the inherent injustice being enacted in this teacher-pupil relationship. As in the previous section, she demonstrates a practical and reflexive knowledge. In isolating and thinking about this exchange, Anne shows insight and an ability to read the game. This gives her a measure of control over outcomes in the field. Having symbolic violence as a concept with which to identify and name social phenomena would be hugely valuable to Anne. It would give her a much deeper understanding of the structural apparatus at work in the field, and the language and concepts with which to see and think about the social world.

Conclusion

In the section above I summarised data from asking if the student teachers in my study

could see outside the blinkers of their privileged experience to identify how structurally imposed privilege and discrimination affects lives. The data transcripts above offer examples of how the working classes may be subject to prejudicial stereotyping in education. As O'Donohue's study (2013) showed, this occurs because the working classes are not socially located in the dominant class and thus can be more easily marginalised. As Anne-Marie said, *it is very easy to have them and us*. The women in O'Donohue's study communicated the profound way in which they experienced the hierarchised nature of the field of the school. Their participation in education was characterised by a powerful sense of alienation that Anne-Marie described as being *outside of the box*. This is the reality of being born outside the game, of being positioned against those whose habitus and capital guarantee a 'monopoly of some possibilities although they are officially guaranteed to all,' the right to education for example (Bourdieu, 1997: 225). What is happening here is, as Bourdieu (1993:) explains the students are taking the positions they are predisposed to take on the basis of their position in the field. These positions are predisposed by habitus and relative accumulation of capital, thus holding us to the things that are for people like us (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The result is Bourdieu's binary model of class reproduction that dispels the myth of teacher neutrality. The problem is that if teaching literacy for social justice as argued by Chubbuck (2010), is reliant on two distinct decision-making processes; fairness, and a belief that all children can learn, then what impact do these alienating attitudes have on educational outcomes for the working class? If the student teachers in my study could see outside the blinkers of their privileged experience to identify how structurally imposed privilege and discrimination affects lives, it would hopefully encourage them to teach in the direction of social justice. The need for which is further demonstrated in the following section titled, Attribution of Fault.

Attribution of Fault

Introduction

Having a critical perspective means recognising the need to go beyond thinking about individuals to thinking about the unjust, complex network of social arrangements that control the field of education [Bourdieu, 1977]. For those who have succeeded in education it is a challenge to recognise how the system persistently disenfranchises the disadvantaged. In the previous discussion of the data we saw how the habitus of the student teachers and the dispositions they brought with them as a result of positions of privilege, created a lack of awareness and limited understanding of the concepts of privilege and disadvantage. The data also revealed the extent of the students' attachment to the concept of meritocracy, the classed assumptions they hold, and their acquired system of beliefs, values and attitudes that result in prejudicial stereotyping of parents and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Closely connected to this deficit perspective, the data discussed in this current section is themed 'attribution of fault'.

When handling qualitative data, Flynn (2015: 24) reports that 'it is difficult to capture a notion of weighting or significance'. This was indeed true for the data discussed thus far, but in contrast, the data analysed in this section captured a very clear weighting towards the attribution of fault for inequity in achievement among the working classes. Eighteen explicit comments from eight participants directly attributed fault to parents or caretakers, four implicated the child, and three attributed blame to teachers. No participant explicitly attributed fault to the education system. In essence, fault was attributed to individuals rather than structures. This suggests that the student teachers in this study have yet to understand the unjust, complex network of social arrangements that control the field of education. They are in other words operating from a deficit ideological perspective and this has significant implications for adopting socially just practice, as the following discussion shows.

Deficit Ideologies

Some students responded by attributing fault to a number of causes. Kerry for example, identified a range of factors for pupil failure that included a child lacking motivation, lack of support from home and busy classroom environments:

> *I would say it's a mixture of the child not being motivated, no help from home, and maybe the teacher has almost forgot about them. The teacher with all demands placed on her doesn't have the time to sit individually with that child. It could be that the teacher doesn't have support like a classroom assistant. It could be that the parent doesn't know where to go with it.* (I)

Even though Kerry started out by saying a child fails for *a mixture of reasons*, she is quick to defend teachers despite suggesting that it is possible for a teacher to almost forget about a child. Kerry's attitude conveyed empathy for the teacher who she explained, might be trying to meet numerous demands without the support of a classroom assistant and therefore, might not have enough time to work with an individual child. Ruth took a similar but more defensive position:

> *I don't think it's fair to blame the teacher in a class of thirty two for one child who can't read or write…I don't think you can blame that teacher because one kid can't make progress, because they've their hands are full with thirty one others and they're not even trying to read or write.* (I)

Not only is the teacher considered not to blame, but Ruth also misses the fundamental purpose of a primary school teacher's role, that is, to teach all children to read and write. There is also some confusion and little substantive understanding of the purpose of education in evidence here. Ruth goes on to place fault with the child, suggesting that *they're not even trying*. This resonates with Teresa's experience, one of the adult literacy learners in the film 'Can't Read, Can't Write' (Lovett, 2008, in Chapter Four). Teresa reminisced about the pain of being labelled as lazy by her teachers:

> I was made to feel stupid. They told my mum I was lazy, but I wanted to read, I wanted to be like the others. I just gave up trying, and I left school unable to read. (Lovett, 2008)

Kerry is in jeopardy of holding similarly negative beliefs and biases towards her future pupils, which will surely limit her ability to act in the interests of greater justice for the most vulnerable learners in her care.

Like Kerry (above), Ruth also suggested that there is a range of potential causes:

> *There's not one single cause. It could be because of class background. It could be the fact that their parents haven't supported them at home. It could be poor teaching. It could be because they have a special educational need that hasn't been recognised or was recognised but the parents didn't want their children statemented. Most of the time it comes down to the support they get at home. If the parents don't see literacy as something interesting, if they aren't educated themselves, then more than likely their children will grow up as sort of like in a circular cycle.* (I)

Even though Ruth says that there is not one single cause for educational failure and identifies several factors contributing to inequity, including social class, lack of parental support, poor teaching and issues around special educational needs, her emphasis is nonetheless on the failings of parents, *most of the time it comes down to the support they get at home*. This deficit view stereotypes the child's experience as a member of a particular social group in a way that is pathological:

> *If they* [parents] *aren't educated themselves, then more than likely their children will grow up as sort of like in a circular cycle.* (I)

As discussed previously, fundamental to the principles of teaching for social justice are dispositions of fairness and a belief that all children can learn (Chubbuck, 2010). Interpretation of Ruth's comment made in the final interview, suggests that she currently lacks these two dispositions. Ruth makes the assumption that parents who are not educated do not value literacy learning. Their children, she says, are more than

likely to inherit these dispositions, *like in a circular cycle.* Ruth does not yet have the vocabulary and conceptual knowledge to describe the processes of social reproduction to which she is alluding. This is limiting her reflective capacity and ability to think with a structural or sociological lens. Ailish's thinking was similarly constrained:

> *I think teachers want to do everything for them but that bottom group, they're not going to ever get up to the rest of the class. I'd say teachers still want to try and help everyone but maybe in some individual cases, when they know they're not getting the support at home they accept they are fighting a losing battle.* (I)

Ailish's logic implies that the child who is not being supported at home, the most vulnerable child in other words, potentially faces an insurmountable barrier, that is, their teacher having low expectations about their capabilities as she says, *they're not going to ever get up to the rest of the class*. As a consequence, the teachers give up on them and in this scenario, the teacher further disenfranchises the struggling child. Through lack of awareness and understanding, Ailish misinterprets the issues and this limits the solutions she is capable of imagining (Gorski, 2018). This phenomenon is what Bourdieu (1977) terms misrecognition, and it applies to the data above. Misrecognition occurs when social difference is converted through educational action so that it appears naturally occurring and thoroughly explicable via reference to individual differences (Waquant, 1998). In other words certain people are allowed to succeed on the basis of the symbolic currency of their cultural, social and economic capital, whereas others are 'groomed to fail' (McLaren, 2015: 114)

Poverty Attribution

The natural inclination among the students was to defend the education system, specifically teachers, and to attribute fault to parents or caretakers. For example Orla explicitly commented:

> *I think it's the parents' fault. It's so frustrating. A major influence is going to be the parents. I think the role of parents is so important.* (I)

Orla was categorical in her attribution of fault to working class parents as the root cause of their child's underachievement. The danger of seeing parents as the problem is that it reinforces the already inequitable learning space or field of education. The impact of these stereotypical beliefs is potentially corrosive. In the following exchange, Anne-Marie expresses a similar perspective to Orla but with a significantly more judgmental tone:

> *You have to be wicked not to want your child to do well at school. There are some very irresponsible parents. My teacher would've sent books home with this wee boy and a wee girl who were very weak. The teacher was trying her best to get them reading but the books weren't being taken out of the bag. Most times the child didn't even come to school with a school bag*. (I)

Anne-Marie implied that parents or caretakers of disadvantaged children can be very irresponsible, possibly even wicked. These views illuminate the lack of awareness and understanding of the social world that can arise from a privileged, middle class logic. The object of a school bag for example, is imbued with a symbolic significance and value that belongs to a middle class identity and relation to the field of school. The recognition conferred on having a school bag is interpreted arbitrarily. The parent whose child *didn't even come to school with a school bag* is judged as irresponsible and at odds with the middle class values of the field. Orla and Anne-Marie both frame working class parents negatively. Their 'bad parent' stereotype is as partisan and discriminatory as it is unfounded.

Discriminatory attitudes prevailed. Louise for example implied that some parents neglected their responsibility to support the work of teachers:

> *Parents have a lot going on, but parents cannot send their children off to school and think that's it, that's them learning, I don't have to do anything, it's all on the teacher. There only are four hours in the school day.* (I)

Though Louise was aware that there is a lot going on in parents' lives, she makes the assumption that some parents or caretakers abdicate responsibility for their child's learning in the belief that it is the sole duty of the teacher. This potential misperception labels parents experiencing poverty with a lack of interest and care. Kerry made this point explicitly when she said it could be just that the parent has no interest in helping in their child's education. Anecdotally, Anne-Marie also expressed criticism of parents:

> *There was a group of six in my class that were significantly less able than the rest of the children. Nearly every Friday you might only have had three out of the six in school. It's not the child's fault that he or she is not in school.* (I)

Indisputably attendance at school is crucial to a child's development and wellbeing but poor attendance does not necessarily equate with lack of care or concern. There are possible systemic explanations for absenteeism, such as health issues, challenges or conflict in the home, bullying, poor relationships with teachers, transportation difficulties, academic disengagement or lack of money for lunches or equipment for particular lessons. Anne-Marie did not recognise how the system might be disenfranchising disadvantaged children and their families. From a privileged position, she was unable to see the barriers that can make opportunities for families experiencing poverty less accessible.

The attribution of fault revealed in this data aligns with that in O'Donohue's study in which school personnel were described as making 'easy and stereotypical linking of a lack of money to a lack of concern, care, or discipline' (2013: 201). The students demonstrated what Gorski termed a 'mindset of poverty' (2018: 67) that rests on the shaky assumptions that parents experiencing poverty are disinterested, uncaring and disengaged. This can lead to harmful assumptions about pupils' capabilities and to low expectations (Parrett and Budge, 2012). This link between poverty and values is explored further in the following sections.

Fish Out of Water

The following three data extracts focus specifically on the importance of values in education.

> Denise: *As much as you want to motivate and inspire pupils, I think if it's not enough at home it's just not enough. I don't think the teacher will ever achieve it. They can make some impact, but I don't think they will really plant the seed for intrinsic motivation in that child.* (Week 12)

> Kerry: *Values are really hard to change. They're intrinsic. People's values are based on their experience. It is in the child, it's internal. An external influence that is contrasting in values from home, that's hard. That's really, really tough. It takes a very strong child to be won over by a teacher's influence.* (Week 12)

> Louise: *I think parents are a massive influence in whether children value education or not. If it's not valued at home, I don't know where it would come from.* (Week 12)

In discussing the importance of values, Denise, Kerry and Louise allude to Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus, albeit at an unconscious level. They understand that values towards education are developed in the primary habitus, the home. Consequently they are intrinsic and internal. Kerry for example said, *people's values are based on their experience*. *It is in the child, it's internal*. Kerry made the point that these *values are really hard to change* and was surely correct in her thinking. Values are hard to change because the dispositions that constitute the habitus are acquired through a process of inculcation that emanates from social position or class (Mills, 2008). Louise summed this up when she said *I think parents are a massive influence.* The habitus shapes and generates our vision. It is what we believe is probable and possible for us and by implication, for others, and what is not. The students' habitus has positioned them to uphold the dominant discourse and the dispositions reflected in the above data excerpts are in line with a privileged habitus (Power, 1999). As can be seen for example, in the delimiting sense of social reality as the way things are:

> Denise: *I think if it's not enough at home it's just not enough. I don't think the teacher will ever achieve it.* (Week 12)

> Kerry: *An external influence that is contrasting in values from home, that's hard. That's really, really tough.* (Week 12)

The repercussions of these views, as discussed in chapter three, are significant. Bourdieu and Wacquant explain:

> Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside social agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted. (1992: 127)

As ‘fish out of water’, disadvantaged pupils feel the ‘weight of the water’. They do not have a ‘feel for the game’ they are required to play (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The student teachers misrecognise these objective conditions and as in Cieslik and Simpson’s study (2015), their expectations affirm rather than challenge the system. In their minds, social reality, as Denise implies is fixed:

> [Teachers] *can make some impact, but I don't think they will really plant the seed for intrinsic motivation in that child.* (I)

The consensus was that habitus is more or less fixed and permanent and, as Denise said, *values are really hard to change*. The students’ reflections show that they do not fully understand the challenge disadvantaged children face. They also seem to have only a limited awareness of the transformative potential of the field of education. These delimiting beliefs condemn pupils to eventual elimination. They reaffirm the classed based experience of school that Cieslik and Simpson’s (2015) research participants endured as a consequence of teacher perception and systemic injustice. Even though the participants wanted to succeed at school, just like the adult learners in the film ‘Can’t Read: Can’t Write’, they became demotivated and disillusioned in their struggle for recognition. Rather than being a transformative experience, the class-based nature of schooling further compounded the circumstances of the home. The result was self-elimination.

Orla raised the issue of elimination, making the point that *self-esteem has a major impact* on pupils’ trajectory through the educational system:

> *I also feel that self-esteem has a major impact. If they're almost scared to do it, they're going to fall behind and they're not even going to concentrate. If they hear the word literacy, they're just going to go into this mindset that they're scared, that they can't do it. They're like, ‘I can't do it, what's the point in trying?*’ (Week 12)

Orla connects struggling with literacy to lack of self-esteem. This, she said, leads to pupils fearing literacy tasks to the point of giving up trying altogether. The *fear* of literacy Orla alludes to is very real. Schooling is fundamentally a communication system, and Bourdieu and Passeron contend that the ‘educational mortality rate can only increase as one moves towards the classes most distant from the scholarly language’ (1977: 73). It also accounts for the ‘educational mortality rate amongst the classes most distant from the scholarly language’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 73). Louise and Anne made similar points to Orla:

> Louise: *When a child's confidence is not good, they're not likely to be motivated to overcome it, especially if they're not given the support that they need. They're just left floundering and they're not going to want to pursue learning because they'll just think they're going to fail again.* (I)

> Anne: *It could be self-motivation. Do you know what I mean? They are just like this is boring, what's the point of doing it? If their*

> *mommies or daddies have a certain job and they're like, 'I'm just going to do that when I'm older'.* (I)

All three students linked subjective expectations embodied in self-esteem, confidence and motivation to the objective probability or expectation of success, *they'll just think they're going to fail again, or, I'm just going to do that when I'm older*. What the students describe are pupils who cannot conceive of a future as a broad field of innumerable possibilities (Wolfreys, 2000). Rather, the future is something to which some pupils submit resignedly. Bourdieu and Passeron's conviction is that the working classes by virtue of their relationship to language and culture either eliminate themselves from the outset or condemn themselves to eventual elimination by believing 'this is not for the likes of us' (1997:157). The point to note here is that the student teachers were unable to account for the educational inequalities between children from different social classes and did not understand the causes of elimination, that is, misrecognition and symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In contrast to the views considered above and in keeping with the emerging critical perspective she has demonstrated thus far, Anne offered a different perspective, placing responsibility with the teacher.

Dispositions in Professional Reflection

Anne posed academic disparity among various groups of pupils as a problem to be solved:

> *It can be the teacher as well I feel. You shouldn't be like, they are not progressing because they can't, they just don't get it.' You should be like why are they not doing it? Is it me? Put it on yourself. Is it the way I'm teaching? Is it the voice I'm using or is it that I'm not giving them enough attention? Are the worksheets not the best? Should we be doing it like this? Are the books interesting?* (I)

Anne's response parallels Chubbuck's (2010) thesis that a socially just teacher will engage in professional reflection and judgment to analyse a pupil's difficulties and determine the cause and solution through an individually orientated lens. For example, Anne suggested teachers reflect on pedagogy, *should we be doing it like this*, on resources, and on themselves, *is it me? Is it the way I'm teaching? Is it the voice I'm using?* These questions go beyond a rudimentary level of analysis, that is, the implications of asking these questions is not a simplistic approach. With echoes of Bernstein (1971) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), the solution and problem focus on deeper causes of academic disparity such as teachers' communication style. Based on this analysis Anne implies that the teacher can select different responses and solutions. Anne avoids taking a deficit or stereotypical view of the child; instead she acknowledges the learner as an authentic being, and the teacher as having responsibility, social agency and individual autonomy to engage with the child's struggles. In keeping with Fischman and McLaren's dictate that 'it is not enough to understand any given educational reality, there is a pedagogical mandate to transform it' (2005:425-6), Anne is alert to the transformative potential teachers have within their power. This analysis is grounded in dispositions of fairness and a belief that all children can learn (Chubbuck, 2010). It is what Chubbuck refers to as an,

'individualistic orientation in professional reflection' (2010: 199). This approach could lead to appropriate resources, pedagogical decisions and interactions to support successful learning. Yet once again, what is missing from Anne's solution is a structural orientation that would help her to widen the range of her solutions.

Ailish references the structural dynamic. However, she does not directly identify larger structural inequalities within the educational system as affecting ability to succeed:

> *I think teachers are looking at it from this big governmental perspective, like a universal perspective rather than the lens of the child in the classroom and their background. They are not seeing the disconnect between children and literacy. They're not thinking about what that child is going through at home. I think that if they are not practicing it at home that is a problem but it should still be the teacher's responsibility. We expect parents to help but it is not a parent's job to teach them how to read.* (I)

Ailish's analysis in the first instance is at a macrosocietal level. She is just beginning to bridge the gap in her understanding from an individual to a structural orientation. For example, she references factors such as government, universal perspective, pupils' social class or *their background*, and a disconnection between children and literacy that she views as disempowering. Aisish identifies lack of familial support as *a problem* but says, *we expect parents to help but it's not a parent's job to teach them how to read*. She recognises that not all parents are willing, able or effective helpers but does not presume them to be at fault. This contrasts with the often faulty generalising of her peers. However, even though Ailish's thinking is poised in the direction of teaching for social justice (Freire, 1993), she has yet to fully develop the ability to use a structural orientation in the reflective process. Harnessing the power of a structural view would enrich Ailish's understanding of the macrosocietal factors contributing to inequity, and would better equip and empower her to look more widely for causes and solutions and I return to this in the final chapter.

Conclusion

The data in this chapter was thick with references attributing disparities in educational outcome to individuals, namely parents or caregivers who were generally viewed as the source of the disparity. These findings revealed the deeply embedded nature and mindset of relatively privileged student teachers (Swalwell, 2013). They reveal a disconnect between student teachers' dispositions and the principles outlined by Chubbuck (2010) that underpin social justice education. These principles are fairness extending to a belief that all children can learn. In this regard the students demonstrated a number of deficit ideological perspectives, not least of which was a poverty mindset. That is, there was a tendency to conflate poverty with a litany of stereotypes: irresponsible parenting, not valuing education, and lack of interest or care about their child's education. These pathologising beliefs confirm a 'them' and 'us' dichotomy that as seen from some of the students' comments, exerts a powerful force. For example, it can lead to low expectations and harmful assumptions about pupils' capabilities. Complicating matters, Bourdieu (1977) explains, pupils who become

disenfranchised may eliminate themselves from the outset or commit to eventual self-elimination. The student teachers' inability to see outside the dominant, hegemonic discourse is not their fault. They too are products of a system that has structured and is structuring them (Bourdieu, 1998). This means that the beliefs, values and attitudes they hold operate below their level of consciousness. If the students are to avoid reproducing existing patterns of privilege and disadvantage, there is need for a more nuanced, specifically, a sociological or structural understanding of the root causes of inequity. Acquiring a structural orientation could have positive effects on student teachers' struggles to understand socially just teaching (Chubbuck, 2010). The bottom line is that if we want to address the root causes of inequity, we must attend to the ideological dimensions in student teachers' professional development (Gorski, 2018). It is the student teachers' professional development in relation to critical literacy that the following, final section of data analysis focuses on.

Chapter Six:
Negotiating a Critical Perspective

Negotiating a Critical Perspective

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Two there are several challenges in teaching critical literacy. Firstly, system oppression and banking pedagogy is consistent with the practices used in much teacher training (Freire, 1993). Secondly, the authoritative process used in much teacher education demands conformity. Thirdly, there is no one-way, no single formula to apply critical literacy, and neither, as discussed previously should or could there be. Finally, in a context in which critical literacy has been intensively researched and become widely known in academia, it has not yet taken root in classrooms and schools (Lee, 2011) suggesting that challenges, including but not only those noted above, pertain. The aims of this research were to explore the extent to which student teachers are critically literate, and aligned to this, the extent to which they have capacity to develop a critical literacy perspective in the interests of social justice. Discussion here is organised into three sub-themes: subject knowledge and understanding, attitudes and dispositions, and a critical literacy perspective. The details of how I arrived at these sub-theme was explained Chapter Four.

Subject Knowledge and Understanding

Reflecting their pedagogic habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), the students' response to the concept of critical literacy throughout their twelve-week literacy course demonstrated commitment, enthusiasm and interest. Data revealed a number of pre-existing and/or emergent critical literacy tendencies and sensibilities. With the goal of developing a foundational technical knowledge and understanding as the basis for commitment to a critical literacy ideology, this section focuses on the student teachers' technical knowledge. In other words, the focus is on whether or not the students had grasped and understood the underpinning principles of critical literacy. As a framework for discussion I draw on Shor's definition of critical literacy as discussed in Chapter Two and captured in the following quote:

> We are what we say and do. The ways we speak and are spoken to help shape us into the people we become. Through speech and other actions, we build ourselves in a world that is building us. We can remake ourselves, and society if we choose, through alternative words and dissident projects. This is where critical literacy begins - words that question a world not yet finished or humane. (1999: np)

There are four key elements to be extracted from Shor's thesis. Firstly, critical literacy is about beliefs, values and attitudes. It is dependent upon our everyday relations with ourselves and with others. For example, being aware of our own contradictions, inconsistencies, and biases allows us to understand how we, and others are 'positioned

with inferences, interpretations, and conclusions (Mulcahy, 2015:22). Secondly, being critically literate involves what Freire (1993) termed critical praxis, which he described as an alliance and reflection on theory and practice that is purposefully motivated and leads to transformative action. Thirdly, critical literacy is a problem-posing, problem-solving approach to education. Drawing on Freire (1993) again, this means that neither the word nor the world are neutral, both perpetuate systems of oppression and suppression that directly impact on people's lives (Lankshear and Knobel, 1998; Comber, 1999; Luke, 2000). Finally, critical thinking and critical literacy are not synonymous. In the traditional literacy classroom, critical thinking, often linked to critical reading, tends to focus on high-level comprehension skills (Spache, 1964; Cervetti et al. 2001; Mulcahy, 2015). By contrast, one of the fundamental goals of critical literacy requires us to question how words and concepts are commonly used to create worldviews and ideologies that lead us into hegemonic actions (Shor, 1999; Love, 2015:34). Kincheloe and Weil (2004) term this 'complex critical thinking' (2004:29).

The data both during and after the course showed that the students' understanding of the concept of critical literacy was variable. There were a number of gaps in perception that suggested the students were negotiating a continuum between critical thinking and critical literacy. For example, Kerry, Ailish and Anne-Marie described critical literacy as follows.

> Kerry: *It's not just reading the text but finding the meaning behind the text. Then that can be a basis for discussions as there'll be meanings that you didn't think of. It's just good to talk about it, so you can get more depth of understanding. Discussion will make the children think out of their comfort zone. It's trying to make them independent thinkers.* (I)
>
> Ailish: *You're questioning it…you're wondering and even questioning yourself, why are you reading it, and questioning why it has been written.* (I)
>
> Anne-Marie: *I think critical literacy helps you understand texts at a deeper level. It's about what the author of the text is trying to portray. It's a hierarchy of thinking skills. I think it's like moving up levels of complexity. It's analysing texts, evaluating them and developing thinking skills and personal capabilities. It's more than reading between the lines.* (I)

The notion of 'text' is interpreted narrowly in these three data excerpts with a focus on written texts. For example, *it's not just reading the text but finding the meaning behind the text; you're reading it and questioning why it's been written;* and *it's more than reading between the lines*. Emphasis was very much on meaning making using a range of skills that includes questioning, analysis and evaluation, which Anne-Marie describes as a taxonomy, as *a hierarchy of thinking skills*. Kerry, Ailish and Anne-Marie's understanding is in line with the concept of critical thinking, which Paul and Elder (2006) define as thinking that is analytic, evaluative and creative. Basically, critical thinking is the ability to analyse the ideas and arguments presented in texts and this is

very much reflected in the students' perceptions (Mulcahy, 2015: 26). The data reveals a number of gaps in knowledge and understanding of critical literacy. This is problematic because, as Perkins suggests, knowledge needs to be deep enough in order to be able to perceive the issues of debates to find a way through to a personal understanding (Perkins, 2013).

In contrast, several responses showed that students were grappling to understand the concept of critical literacy. This pointed towards an emerging knowledge and understanding. For example, Orla said:

> *It's about making sure that the children know what the purpose of a text is, what the writer's purpose is in writing it. It's about them making sure that there's no inequality in texts.* (I)

There are two points of note in Orla's explanation. The first is in relation to text production and author's purpose or agenda, what is she/he trying to achieve. This would allow us to understand how we, and others are 'positioned with inferences, interpretations, and conclusions (Mulcahy, 2015:22). Secondly, Orla makes reference to *inequality in texts*, suggesting a level of sociocultural understanding. Orla is aware that texts are not neutral (Freire, 1993), that they have potential to perpetuate systems of oppression and suppression that directly impact on people's lives.

Meanwhile, Anne responded saying, *you can be brainwashed if you're just looking at things. It's looking at behind what's happening that's important*. Anne refers to the power of texts to convey messages that have potential to brainwash us into actions. One of the fundamental goals of critical literacy requires us to question how words and concepts are commonly used to create worldviews and ideologies that lead us into hegemonic actions (Shor, 1999; Love, 2015:34). In some ways this could be synonymous with Anne's *brainwashing* idea. Anne goes on to make a distinction between *just looking at things*, and *looking at behind what's happening*. This suggests going beyond high-level comprehension skills or critical thinking and moving towards more 'complex critical thinking' (Kincheloe and Weil, 2004:29). Both Orla and Anne allude to the idea that there are unquestioned power relationships at work in texts, power relationships that can construct us, *brainwash* us, by presenting unequal representations. The aim of critical literacy is to search for the hidden agendas in texts (Mulcahy, 2015: 16).

Other evidence that students' thinking was moving towards a critical literacy perspective included recognition that texts are constructions that can be interpreted differently by different groups or individuals. For example, Louise and Ruth said:

> Louise: *It's about getting different viewpoints and looking at them from a critical perspective, which doesn't mean being negative but seeing it from different viewpoints.* (I)

> Ruth: *It taught me that it's important to show children that there isn't just one view in life; that they have to look at things from*

> *different viewpoints; to take a step back and say, right, what is this actually trying to say to me?* (I)

Louise and Ruth emphasise the importance of being able to see the world from multiple viewpoints, which is a key element of critical literacy. In critical literacy there is no pretence at being objective. Lewison et al argue the need for an agentive approach, to 'seek out the voices of those who have been silenced or marginalised' (2002: 383). Louise's idea that this *doesn't mean being negative* is an important one because, as Freire (1993) explains, critical literacy is a pedagogy of hope and lovingness. It is about fair-mindedness and that means being able to acknowledge the inconsistencies and contradictions within ourselves, and society. Being aware of our biases and prejudices enables us to see how we, and others, are being positioned with inferences, interpretations and conclusions.

Anne-Marie articulated this idea of critical literacy being a practical attitude when she said *It's a mindset. It's how you look at things*. Ruth elaborated on this idea:

> *You look at texts for things like bias, prejudice and stereotype. Prejudices that are being perpetuated through the media and through literature can actually damage people. It's important to look at how that affects people*. (I)

Ruth and Anne-Marie's comments describe a fundamental aspect of critical literacy, which is, that it is a mindset, a philosophy, a way of interacting with the word and the world (Freire, 1993). Anne-Marie's understanding also resonates with several aspects of Shor's thesis, that critical literacy is about beliefs, values and attitudes, that it is dependent on our everyday relations with ourselves and with others. She also understands that neither the word nor the world are neutral, rather they perpetuate systems of oppression and suppression that can actually damage people (Luke, 2000). Anne-Marie's insight and her views discussed previously, ideally position Ruth toward agency for social justice. The only student to make explicit reference to praxis was Anne-Marie, who said:

> *The purpose is that so you're in control, that you're not just being fed information, but that you've actually got control over what you take in.* (I)

Anne-Marie went on to give the following example:

> *Your literacy coordinator comes in on a Monday morning and says; 'We've got a great new development; we are going to develop reading by introducing ta-dah, whatever.' Everybody's going, 'Not another one! But they think, I have to do it because that's my job', and they go along with it. If you're critically literate, you would be saying, 'Okay, let's take a step back'. What's the philosophy behind it? What's different about it? What's the evidence to support it? What does the research say? And rather than jump on the bandwagon and introduce*

it, to say, 'no. Let's research it. Let's think about it. Let's debate it. Let's explore it, and so on'. (I)

Anne-Marie's extract shows she is reflecting on everyday critical praxis, which Freire (1993) describes as an alliance with and reflection on theory and practice that is purposefully motivated and leads to transformative action. Her hypothetical response challenges unquestioned power relationships within the field of school, in which she says teachers go along with current initiatives because they feel they have to, because that's my job. What is interesting is that she has moved beyond thinking of critical literacy as not only a pedagogic classroom tool to viewing it as a professional skill and therefore as a life skill. She identifies the need for teachers to be critically literate themselves. This a fundamental step towards the Freirean (1993) agenda, reflected in Shor's (1999) thesis, which speaks of teachers as cultural workers who bring their beliefs and values to the classroom, and who teach those values in all that they say and do.

An alternative interpretation of Anne-Marie's example, one that resonates with the previously discussed theme, prejudicial stereotyping, relates to the fact that Anne-Marie's focus is on teachers' working conditions, as opposed to vulnerable learners, their families or their communities. Previously Anne-Marie had made the comment, cited here again:

> *Teachers by and large are well thought of and they're middle class and very educated and so when she says that, they fit you into a box. Certainly, in most people's minds, if you're far removed from that box, you're not middle class and you're not educated. It's very easy to have them and us.* (I)

As a consequence of these objective relations Anne-Marie conveyed a powerful sense of group solidarity, of distinction, which she sums up in saying, it is very easy to have them and us. The example Anne-Marie gives above is interesting in this regard. Her conception is that teachers are hard pressed as she exclaims, *not another one!* [another new initiative] and they are compliant, obedient and dutiful in their professional role, *I have to do it because that's my job*, and they go along with it. What is missing here is any mention of those for whom teachers are responsible. So for example, when Anne-Marie says:

> *Rather than jump on the bandwagon and introduce it, to say, no. Let's research it. Let's think about it. Let's debate it. Let's explore it.* (I)

By implication, the beneficiaries of these dialectical deliberations would be the teachers, who would not be under pressure to yield to yet another new initiative that may not even endure. This interpretation might seem somewhat cynical, and Anne-Marie may have simply not spoken here about pupils, not talking of them does not imply she would not think them important here.
However, it makes me wonder if Anne-Marie sees critical literacy as adding to teachers' linguistic and cultural capital in a way that will help them solve their own professional

problems rather than to orientate them towards socially just practice. Nevertheless, what Anne-Marie suggests is a move from passivity to questioning the rules, decision-making structures and consequently, the arbitrariness of the construction of literacy pedagogy. In her thinking however we can also trace the workings of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). For a raft of external reasons, schools can normalise practices that may not be in the interests of all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable.

Having considered the students' knowledge and understanding of critical literacy, the following section reflects on their attitudes to it as a pedagogical model, and the dispositions they conveyed towards teaching it.

Positive Orientations and Lack of Contestation

The data in this section was harvested from across the data set in its entirety, but a number of comments were derived from contributions in a teaching session on oral language, titled 'From Difference to Disadvantage: Talking to Children Matters'. In addition to reflecting on current research, curriculum and pedagogy, teaching included an examination of two Belfast primary schools as case studies. One school was in an area of high social deprivation, the other was in an affluent middle class neighbourhood. This sociological framing was used to help the students better understand the social space in relation to the sociocultural, economic and political limitations impacting on work in schools. The ultimate aim was to enable the students to commit to doing schools, pedagogy, curriculum, and affiliated work differently, and hopefully better (Albright and Luke, 2008).

Fennimore (2000) suggests that the starting point must begin with committing to and embracing the philosophy and principles of critical literacy for social justice before its principles can be applied in practice. The focus in this section turns to the student teachers' attitudes and dispositions towards teaching critical literacy, and considers their potential commitment to being more just teachers. Data brings to light a range of responses that show positive orientations to the work needed to foster fair and equitable learning. At the same time, the data also identifies a number of perceived barriers and constraints.

In this first data extract, Kerry reveals the extent to which teaching critical literacy for social justice was a change of vision for the student teachers:

> *I would have a few reservations, but that wouldn't out-weigh the advantages of teaching for social justice. I think I will definitely do critical literacy. I definitely haven't thought about it until though.* (I)

For Kerry this new learning and enhanced awareness was a shift in ideological thinking, and others were in agreement. Orla also acknowledged that this was all new to her. Her attitude was similarly positive:

> *I didn't really know the need for it* [critical literacy] *up until now. You just think about 'what am I going to do in literacy? There's so much*

> *more that can be done…You can go into all these different things, like looking at different cultures and different social groups.* (I)

Kerry and Orla's comments capture the extent to which critical literacy was a new concept for these student teachers. What was great to see was that they enjoyed the work, found it interesting and purposeful. Responses were enthusiastic. For example Ailish observed:

> *It's just a really good way of looking at literacy rather than seeing it as just a battery of skills. Even if we are teaching the skills it's just of more everyday value. You know they are not getting judged and tested on it. It's just for their own personal worth in later life. I feel excited about it!* (I)

Kerry, Orla and Ailish's extracts point to changing perceptions of literacy from a skills based, technically orientated understanding to a phenomenon that has *everyday value*… and that impacts on *their own personal worth in later life*. Ailish was equally enthusiastic, *I love it* [critical literacy]. *I love the fact that we're actually teaching children those skills.* Ailish's enthusiasm focuses on the benefits for the learner. The idea that critical literacy is beneficial to learners, was also taken up by Kerry and Ruth.

> Kerry: *I think it's a great idea to get children to think outside their comfort zone. I really like the idea of developing independent, more divergent thinking rather than convergent thinking.* (I)

> Ruth: *It's important for them as they* [children] *get older to actually have a viewpoint on the world, and are not swayed by what the media says and by what people tell them. It teaches them a really valuable lesson, that they should see the world from different point of views*. (I)

Kerry and Ruth viewed critical literacy as a life enhancing skill, as a source of empowerment that arises from thinking skills, the ability to be objective, as having a viewpoint on the world that helps the individual see the world from different points of view. While Kerry holds that critically literate children are more independent in their thinking, Ruth infers that they are more resistant and autonomous, they are not swayed by what the media says and by what people tell them. This implies the kind of agency that the Freirean (1993) agenda values. What the comments above have in common is a notable absence of contestation and a positive disposition to the concept of critical literacy. The students appeared open and willing to commit to teaching critical literacy, to doing work in schools possibly differently, hopefully better (Albright and Luke, 2008). This outlook gives cause for optimism. However, during a teaching session, 'From Difference to Disadvantage: Talking to Children Matters', data revealed a more complex dynamic, highlighting some of the challenges in committing to social justice teaching as discussed below.

Misrecognition and Relation to Language

In a teaching session on oral language, one of the issues explored was Bernstein's (1991) concept of elaborated and restricted codes of communication. This work was contextualised with reference to two Belfast primary schools as case studies. One school was in an area of high social deprivation, the other was in an affluent middle class neighbourhood. Denise recognised that middle class children are advantaged by the education system because of their relation to language, that is, their elaborated code of communication (Bernstein, 1996).

> *Middle class children are perceived as being more able because of their language. Middle class children are surrounded by that language at home* [elaborated middle class code]. *Working class children are not, but it doesn't mean their language is inferior.* (I)

In contrast to findings discussed previously, Denise does not attribute deficiency to children whose communication style does not match the middle class elaborated code of the school; *it doesn't mean their language is inferior*. Since the role of the teacher is to ensure that *all* children develop the ability to communicate effectively and to do so without denigrating perceived language varieties (Gorski, 2018), Denise's positive attitude positions her favourably towards this goal. This is a first step, Gorski (2018) argues towards socially just teaching.

Ruth offered a somewhat nuanced perspective:

> *I would say that literacy is very, very important for social justice. Often you find children who come from middle class backgrounds who have come from a wealth of literature, their vocabulary, their reading, their literacy skills in general, are very, very good. Whereas if you compare them with a child who comes from a working class background, it's maybe that their parents haven't got the money to spend in the same way as middle class parents. It's not always the case, but you can see it in the classroom how that affects the child. Literacy, and the way it's taught can really help those children overcome the challenges of their social class backgrounds.* (I)

There are three points of note here. Firstly, Ruth emphasises the importance of literacy learning, *literacy is very, very important for social justice*. It is important that she recognises this. Secondly, Ruth's ability to enact socially just literacy pedagogy is perhaps compromised by her current attitude towards children's linguistic capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). A clear distinction is made between middle class children who are considered to *come from a wealth of literature, their vocabulary, their reading, their literacy skills in general, are very, very good,* while working class children are affected by a lack of linguistic skill. Schooling is expected to be socially just (Cumming-Potvin, 2009) but Ruth, unlike Denise, views children from working class backgrounds as linguistically deficient. This pathologises the language and culture of poor children into a superior/inferior dichotomy (Gorsky, 2018). In Bourdieu's (1977) thesis, language is about power and domination with the work of the education system centred around what he terms pedagogic communication, as already discussed. Capital,

including linguistic capital is in essence about recognition (Walther, 2014). Different fields rate different resources as worthy and in the field of education linguistic capital is an imperative (Bourdieu, 1977). What the field and its agents value confers recognition on certain types of capital above others (Doherty and Dickmann, 2009). I have already noted that Bourdieu (1977) labels this process misrecognition. Ruth misrecognises the arbitrary role played by linguistic capital. Thirdly, and finally, Ruth expresses belief in literacy to make a difference:

> *Literacy, and the way it is taught, can really help those children overcome the challenges of their social class backgrounds.* (I)

Here Ruth alludes to the power of teacher agency to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged children but as Gorski says, the single most important thing we can do as educators for social justice is to change attitudes towards families experiencing poverty (2018: 82). In other words, *literacy, and the way it is taught* is limited in the difference that can be made, unless of course, the way it is taught is socially just.

Like Ruth, we all make assumptions, as Ellsworth explains:

> No teacher is free of these learned and internalised oppressions. Critical pedagogues are always implicated in the very structures they are trying to change. (1989:307-308)

Being critically literate means that we are aware of our biases and prejudices and how they impact on others. This is a crucial step in 'bringing subjugated knowledges to light' in order that we might change the structures operating within the field (Ellsworth, 1989: 307-308) and break the cycle that makes difference a disadvantage. The following section reflects on how the positive attitudes the student teachers demonstrated towards the concept of critical literacy were challenged by feelings of subjugation that manifested as a series of barriers and constraints.

Sensitivity to the Structuring Structures

Constraint was implied frequently in the student teachers' responses suggesting 'sensitivity to the structuring structures' operating within the field (Marsh, 2006:169). In contrast to the positive attitudes discussed previously, critical literacy was viewed by the student teachers as risky, uncertain, and potentially fraught. Despite Rachel's positive assertion above the data revealed that most students saw themselves as in a relatively powerless position particularly as students on placement. In this first example, Kerry expresses concern and fear about teaching critical literacy:

> *My only concern would be you've no idea what the children will say back to you and it could be a sensitive issue. That would be my only fear about it, but I think once you're in the moment you'd know what to say and you'd know how to deal with the responses.* (I)

Kerry showed openness to teaching critical literacy but highlighted a lack of confidence in her ability to deal with sensitive issues that children might raise. Kerry's

apprehension is most likely a reflection of her traditional experience of schooling and teacher education, where learning will have been, and still is, largely teacher-led with the teacher always in control. If we want student teachers to be critically literate and to enact critical literacy in their practice, Kerry's response highlights a need for systemic change, including in my context.

While Kerry was open to teaching critical literacy but fearful of the unexpected in classroom interactions, Anne-Marie expressed a defeatist attitude:

> *Going back to the media thing, I guess it's so much more powerful than teachers. It's like you're fighting a losing battle. It can seem that way when you're trying to make an impact.* (I)

At one level Anne-Marie showed an awareness of teachers' power *to make an impact*. However, she saw the field of the media as all-powerful, *much more powerful than teachers*. Ruth held a similar view:

> *I'd say it's very difficult to do, especially, when they're growing up in a world where every single day so much is coming at them from the media. They're being brought up in a world where they just see everything in a certain way. Society indoctrinates and it's almost like you're going against the norms of society. It's finding a way to actually challenge thinking, which can be hard for a teacher to do.* (I)

Yet, this is precisely why teachers and children need critical literacy skills. Teachers' thinking needs to be challenged as much as pupils' thinking, and that extends of course to the thinking of teachers in training. What Anne-Marie and Ruth are missing is an understanding of the purpose of critical literacy, which Comber explains as follows.

> Critical literacies involve people using language to exercise power, to enhance everyday life…and to question practices of privilege and injustice. This sounds grand, but often, perhaps usually, it may be in the more mundane and ordinary aspects of daily life that critical literacies are negotiated. (2001:173)

Critical literacy is exercised individually and/or collectively, with all texts and contexts as we go about our daily lives. It gives learners the opportunity to read, write, and learn from a position of agency, to engage in a culture of questioning that demands far more than just the application of acquired skills (Freire, 1993). It is questioning that helps recognise and challenge 'injustices that contradict and undercut the most fundamental principles of freedom, equality and respect for all people' (Giroux, 2006:29). Ironically, some students' comments revealed attitudes that did not align with a critically literate perspective. Anne-Marie for example:

> *I think it can be hard to do. I think it's easier for more able children to do. I think you could maybe set a critical literacy extension task for your more able pupils. Definitely it's more for the more able children,*

because the less able children are definitely going to find it difficult. (I)

Emphasis on the word *definitely* suggests that Anne-Marie may be confident in thinking that because critical literacy *can be hard to do*, it is only for more able pupils. Anne-Marie's expectations for pupils who are struggling are low, and vice versa for more able learners. Using critical literacy tasks as extension activities for the more able, as suggested, would exacerbate the inequity that already exists. In Bourdieu's thesis (1977), power relations are systematically disguised and reproduced by the arbitrary value attached to capital that involves misrecognition. In Anne-Marie's scenario, those already endowed with capital, knowledge and the required pedagogic habitus would be rewarded for having what the system demands. Those lacking in capital and whose habitus is at variance with the system would be penalised in an act of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This occurs because Anne-Marie misrecognises the arbitrariness of values in the field and so her decision-making exerts arbitrary power on groups of children with different needs. Her middle-class authority and status as a teacher would give her the power to do this although likely she would be horrified to realise this.

The following reflections show particular 'sensitivity to the structuring structures' operating in the field of education (Marsh, 2006: 169). For example, Louise said, *you would need nearly all the teachers to be doing critical literacy for it to follow through.* Louise is suggesting that a whole school approach would be best. This would indeed be the case if all staff were committed to the principles of critical literacy. If it was enforced, however, that would be counterproductive. In the following data extracts Kerry and Anne-Marie express their reticence:

> Kerry: *I think on teaching practice I'd be hesitant though because it's not my class but as a teacher, I would maybe gradually bring it in. Obviously, I'd discuss it with the principal and staff, as well. I think that would be best.* (I)

> Anne-Marie: *I think it's definitely something that I would want to do. But as a newly qualified teacher, if I'm in a school and have a P4 class and there is another P4 teacher who doesn't do it, and you're saying, I think we should do this, well, I wouldn't have the confidence to do that because of my lack of experience. I think if you're in a school with supportive staff who do critical literacy, I definitely think I would do it then.* (I)

Both Kerry and Anne-Marie talk about seeking permission and/or the reassurance of collaboration from others. This is not surprising. The students' pedagogic habitus has conditioned them to play the game with compliance and obedience, meaning they follow the tacit rules of the field. Although all people have agency and the ability to act to change social structures, it does not mean they will act (Bailyn, 2002). Even though the students in general showed positive attitudes and dispositions towards the concept of critical literacy. Burridge says:

> To act contrary to a social group's beliefs requires a high level of ontological security and agency that many people may not have. (2014:580)

The students showed acute awareness of the power relations operating between habitus and field. This, reduced agency and unconscious acceptance of the status quo was masked by a number of reasoned excuses, and was expressed in terms of uncertainty, worry and fear. Kerry and Anne-Marie highlight a need for approbation and possible collaboration, without which, alternative pedagogies such as critical literacy, are likely to be dismissed. The glimpses into the student teachers' own critical literacy skills revealed in the data thus far have been insinuated. The following, final discussion of the data reinforces the social blindness that is a consequence of established patterns of privilege.

Social Blindness

Freire (1993) was adamant that teaching knowledge was important for teaching thinking. He advocated teaching content within a 'critical reading of reality', that is, to learn in relation to the world (1993:24). Knowledge, Freire argued, should not be taught by itself in the hope that critical perspective would emerge. The progressive educator he said, teaches 'a critical reading of the world alongside a critical reading of the word' (Freire, 1993:75). With this framework in mind, I planned two taught sessions, the first titled *Critical Literacy: The New Basic* (appendix X). This was followed by a session titled *Critical Literacy: A Pedagogy Powered by Love.* In line with Freire's (1993) philosophy, as well teaching the students about the concept of critical literacy a primary aim was to develop their ability to recognise oppression, prejudicial assumptions, bias, inequality and injustice in texts, structures and attitudes. Apple (2015:11) describes this approach as developing a 'sense of how meanings are inscribed, encoded, decoded, transmitted, deployed, circulated, and received in the arena of everyday social relations'. The context, as discussed in the previous chapter, is that the students brought with them 'deeply socialised histories, highly practiced routines and tightly woven beliefs and values that do not always frame others productively' (Dozier, Johnston and Rogers, 2006:11). In addition to this, most of the texts the students will encounter will reflect a society that is often gendered, classist and racist (Wallowitz, 2015). Awareness of oppression precedes taking concrete action (Zion et al, 2015: 918) and as potential critical educators, the students would be required to be able to call into question the ideological and political nature of the status quo so that they can potentially challenge and transform it. A further challenge, with respect to ethnicity and equity is that Northern Ireland is very limited in its racial diversity. As Orla commented:

> *In my primary school class, there was one black boy and that was it. He was the only one in the whole school. It was like a big deal that he was there*. (Week 11)

Yet, there was evidence from some students of an emerging critical perspective whilst others demonstrated contradictory, limited critical literacy. The challenge for me was

to try to help the students see the way in which we are all constructed and to see the role that texts play in shaping beliefs. In one of the teaching sessions I set out to problematise cultural representations in advertising texts. The main objective of the enquiry was to encourage students to reflect on their individual biases and assumptions that may be sexist, racist or classist. What follows is by no means a faultless example. Analysis of the advertisements was prefaced only by the fact that they had all caused controversy and public outcry and were subsequently withdrawn. By way of an introduction to the exercise I began with an advertisement that reifies gender stereotypes (Figure 7). Regrettably, I was not granted permission to reproduce the following images. The images have been replaced with descriptions and where possible a link.

> In an advertisement for children's clothing, a little boy is seen modelling grey casual trousers and a navy blue t-shirt with an image of Albert Einstein headlined, 'The Little Scholar: Your future starts here'. A little girl in what is a posed position is pictured modelling a cream sweater with a pink Gap 'G' logo, black casual trousers, and sparkly cat ears with the text, 'The Social Butterfly: Chambray shirts + logo sweaters are the talk of the playground'. This image is available at: https://www.mamamia.com.au/gap-kids-sexism/

Figure 7. Texts Create Positions

The students reacted slowly to this first image but were able to identify the inequitable framing of gender in the advertisement (Figure 7). Responses were tentative at first but as the group gathered confidence they began to build on each other's observations. For example:

> Orla: *It's just about selling children's clothes. Most people wouldn't notice anything wrong with it.* (Week 9)
>
> Louise: *The little girl is posed very provocatively though, like an adult model.* (Week 9)
>
> Ruth: *The message is that boys are clever, like Einstein, whereas girls are just meant to be sociable, like pretty social butterflies.* (Week 9)

Though it was recognised that the little girl was posed in a sexualised manner, no one found issue with the bunny ears. There was a lot of giggling when I suggested that perhaps they are a nod to the ears worn by Playboy bunnies. I found myself having to work hard to sell this idea. Underpinning this is incredulity that advertisers would use features of the sex industry to sell children's clothing. Moving on from this first image, we examined texts in which there are systemic distortions.

> In 2008 US Vogue came under attack for its cover featuring basketball star Lebron James and supermodel Gisele Bundchen. This was only the third time a man appeared on the cover (George Clooney and Richard Gere being the other two) and it was the first

time an African-American male was represented. The magazine came under fire for what was considered to be a negative stereotype of black men as aggressive and threatening. The image was compared to King Kong. This Vogue cover is available at: https://www.foliomag.com/cover-critique-vogue-s-lebron-and-gisele/

The second image came under fire for portraying the athlete Mo Farah looing aggressive. This image is available at: https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/682576887243191860/

Figure 8. Representation: Systemic Distortions in Everyday Texts

Students' responses to these images focused on the Gisele and LeBron's mismatch clothing and on Gisele's slim frame.

> *She's so thin. Is the problem to do with models' weight and size?* (Week 9)

> *It's odd that they're wearing different clothes. I don't get it. And he's playing basketball. LeBron should be dressed in a dinner suit.* (Week 9)

> *It's like it's two different magazine covers. He should be featured in a sports magazine, not Vogue.* (Week 9)

> *It reminds me of Beauty and the Beast.* (Week 9)

The group struggled to find the portrayal of an aggressive looking LeBron juxtaposed alongside a demure, smiling Gisele as racially provocative and gendered. They struggled to see why others, specifically black males would find this aesthetic problematic. In describing Mo Farrah's usual appearance comments included:

> Anne: *It's unusual because he's always smiling. He has an amazing smile so I suppose they're just presenting another side to him.* (Week 9)

> Kerry: *I've never him not smiling before.* (Week 9)

Aware that this kind of critical analysis is not easy, I introduced Wallowitz's concept of 'white gaze' (2015:154) and discussed the impact of privileged gaze on our perceptions. The students found these issues hard to grapple with. This is not surprising as they are the product of a system that has created and sustained their privilege. Due to their white habitus, as Jackson says they 'live behind a membrane' of relative security, largely insulated from the disadvantages often associated with ethnicity (2008: 397). The image in Figure 9 aroused an immediate response.

Nivea was forced to withdraw what was considered to be an outrageously offensive advertisement. The promotion was for Nivea men's skincare products. It featured a well-dressed, well-groomed black male about to throw a decapitated head of another black male with an afro and facial hair. The tag lines read 'recivilise yourself' and 'look Like you give a dam'. This image can be viewed at: https://www.businessinsider.com/nivea-racist-re-civilize-yourself-ad-2011-8?r=US&IR=T

Figure 9. Language and Power: Words and Images can Hurt

A shocked reaction focused initially on the fact that the model was carrying a head.

> Kerry: *That can't be a head, can it? It must be a mask.* (Week 9)
>
> Anne: *Oh my God, that's awful! That's so offensive. What it's saying is that you're not civilised if you have an afro.* (Week 9)
>
> Louise: *How would that make anyone buy Nivea? Not black people anyway.* (Week 9)
>
> Orla: *This has to come from America. Nowhere else would publish an ad like that.* (Week 9)

The students understood that the advertisement implied that throwing away an overtly black, hirsute appearance to look more western was problematic. The irony of Orla's comment of course is that it expresses a highly stereotypical view in itself. Ailish asked how old the advertisements were. The assumption being that this would not happen today.

In this controversial advertisement for Magnum ice cream, a black, well-groomed, beautiful woman is portrayed as the chocolate ice cream bar. She is naked and is looking sensually over her shoulder, lips glossed and pouting at her cracked black skin. Underneath the black skin is white skin and the woman appears to desire the white skin. This image can be viewed at: https://chocolateclass.wordpress.com/2016/04/08/magnum-chocolate-perpetuating-racial-ads/

Figure 10. Creating a Brand: Power and Discourse

The students' reactions to this Magnum advertisement were mixed. Missing the point, Rachel said *I'd look at a magnum like that too!* This was followed by group laughter. Other reactions included:

> Anne-Marie: *Oh my god that is so shocking! It looks like she wants to be white. How do they get away with that?* (Week 9)
>
> Ruth: *That's so bad! It's like she's desperate to be white.* (Week 9)

> Orla: *We spend our lives sunbathing and applying fake tan to get darker skin so what's wrong with wanting to be whiter?* (Week 9)

Yet when we went on to explore other controversial depictions of skin colour, the students struggled to find an issue, for example, the following responses to the Dove advertisement below (Figure 11), were resistant:

> Ailish: *You can't read that* [racism] *into it. It's just random.* (Week 9)

> Orla: *Those women just happen to be standing in that order. It could easily be the other way round. You're reading too much into it.* (Week 9)

> Ruth: *It's a fuss about nothing.* (Week 9)

> Kerry: *Dove's advertisers and manufacturers wouldn't deliberately set out to be racist.* (Week 9)

> Dove body wash came under fire for a controversial advertisement that featured three women, of different ethic origin posed in front of before and after skin samples. The black skinned woman appears in front of the less desirable 'before' skin image and the white skinned woman appears in front of the more desirable 'after' skin image. The narrative behind the image implies transitioning to a more desirable Caucasian aesthetic, from black to white, curvy to slender, and full wavy hair to sleek hair. This image is available at: https://www.businessinsider.com/doves-racist-ad-2017-10?r=US&IR=T

Figure 11. Positions on Colour: What is Valued?

What the students did not understand is that different people with different frames of reference might perceive and understand this advertisement differently. Only Anne saw an issue with this advertisement:

> *Visibly more beautiful skin is white skin. Basically it's implying that the whiter you are the more beautiful your skin is. That's so offensive.* (Week 9)

A second Dove advertisement (Figure 12) was met with confused laughter.

> In the second Dove advertisement, an African American woman in a brown top undresses to reveal a white woman in a light coloured top. The image implies that a black woman is cleaning off her blackness to

become white. Criticisms of the image are that it implies that clean skin is white skin. Dove was forced to apologise and the advertisement was withdrawn. This image can be viewed at: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/08/business/dove-ad-racist.html

Figure 12. Identity Positions: The Politics of Difference

Responses to this advertisement included, for example:

> Anne: *What's going on? That's just messed up.* (Week 9)
>
> Anne-Marie: *How can she become white? That doesn't make sense.* (Week 9)
>
> Ailish: *That's really bad. It makes no sense at all.* (Week 9)

Comparison of the two Dove advertisements, showed that to varying degrees the students recognised how some people might view the advertisements differently. However they struggled to recognise how the dominant class and group act as arbitrary agents of the dissemination of ideas, beliefs and values held by society, through the following images for example. In the 'othering' that occurs in the portrayals of the working classes in the moving image texts below, the oppressed were viewed by the students as perpetuating their oppression through personal choice.

Little Britain

The Jeremy Kyle Show

The Jeremy Kyle Show is a British tabloid talk show that featured working class people confronting those they have contentious

relationships with live on air. With an audience of one million viewers, it was one of the most popular daytime television programmes in the UK. A still image from the show can be viewed at: https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2019/05/human-bear-baiting-jeremy-kyle-show

Shameless

Shameless presents a downbeat, grim view of working class life. In this image the main protagonist looks unkempt, unhealthy and haggard. He is standing in a pub with a pint of bear in hand and a cigarette tipping from his mouth. His children are seen in the background. This image can be viewed at: https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/farewell-shameless-your-heirs-have-work-to-do-8631498.html

Figure 13. How Power Works in Texts in our Daily Lives

Initially, the images provoked laughter and comments such as *I love the Jeremy Kyle show* and *Oh my God that's so funny!* The students then concluded that working class representations in these texts are that they are *lazy, unhealthy, scroungers, irresponsible, vulgar, lacking moral values* and *poorly disciplined.* This mirrored some of the views the students appeared to hold about the working classes that were discussed in the previous chapter. For example, in respect of participants on the Jeremy Kyle Show:

> Kerry: *They do it for the money. They know what they're getting into.* (Week 9)
>
> Ailish: *Nobody is taking advantage of them. They get plenty of advice before they go on the show and a lot of help after.* (Week 9)
>
> Anne: *Nobody is making them do it.* (Week 9)
>
> Orla: *They just want their five minutes of fame.* (Week 9)

Again, responses reflected the privileged, pre-conscious patterns of outlook discussed in the previous chapter. Those experiencing poverty for example, were seen as agents of their own conditions. These sorts of ideological biases, stereotypes and prejudices hamper the students' ability to address inequity (Gorski, 2018). Viewing the world through such a deficit lens is problematic because we fail to see the barriers and challenges the disadvantaged encounter. Consequently, they go unaddressed. A teacher with a deficit mindset cannot turn a classroom into an equitable learning space for all.

Conclusion

What the above, and other activities showed, is that a privileged and dominant ideology cannot be shaken off easily, and that the task of enlivening the students' critical sensibilities is a challenging one. This is because the affective investments, that is the beliefs, values and attitudes they hold about themselves and others are highly structured (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Being so 'structured' by their habitus means they view the world with the social eyes of the dominant class. The problem is that Higher Education, specifically teacher training can all too easily continue and reproduce this 'structuring' process (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The consequence is that the students become unconscious agents in powerful discourses, misrecognising their power in the field and how it contributes to the reproduction of social inequity. The result is that they can become implicated in symbolic violence on the dominant groups (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Having a structural view and understanding would help bring these subjectivities into light. In the following final chapter I reflect on what I learnt from working with my student teachers over the duration of this study and discuss the implications for my own practice and for the wider field.

Chapter Seven:
Concluding Chapter: What my Students Taught Me

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to draw this Dissertation to a close and to reflect on this study. This requires me to fulfil a number of functions and it is these functions that provide the architecture for this chapter. I begin firstly, with a restatement of the aims and rationale of the research. Following this, I consider each of the research questions in turn, reflecting on the students' learning, and on what they taught me, as well as considering the implications of these findings. Next, I discuss the limitations and tensions of this study and consider the contribution it makes to the research field. Finally, I revisit the steps taken to ensure rigour and offer my recommendations for further research. Initially, I begin by recapping on the rationale and purpose of this research project.

A Recap of the Rationale and Research Questions

We live in a world in which social practices and structures may reveal, sometimes explicitly, implicit prejudice, racism, sexism and questionable values. Schooling, as a social practice and structure, is expected to be socially just, to avoid discrimination through sex, language culture, ethnicity, religion or disability, socio-economic status or geographical location (Cumming-Potvin, 2009). However, Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) reproduction theory frames schooling as an ideological act, an act of symbolic violence upon the working class. I have argued here that our duty as teachers is to question, to recognise social injustices, and to challenge these. However, the ability to identify systemic wrongs requires, as Giroux (2004) explains, a cultivation of the capacity for critical judgment and I have followed Cumming-Potvin's (2009) argument in this study that this is essential for helping student teachers understand the socially constructed nature of literacy. I have also noted that adopting a socially just literacy pedagogy privileges a wider approach to teaching literacy that includes not only knowledge acquisition and skill development, but also critical engagement (Luke, 2000).

Premised on the summary above, this research explored the extent to which a small group of third year student teachers have the capacity to develop a critical literacy perspective. An aim of the study was to embed critical pedagogy in a pre-existing BEd3 student teachers' literacy programme, and to consider the extent to which this might challenge and nurture their ideas about teaching literacy for social justice. The study was guided by the following research questions, responses to which are synthesised below.

1. Do student teachers have capacity to develop a critical literacy perspective?
2. How might a Bourdieusian reflexive sociology help student teachers

better understand reproduction and transformation in literacy teaching and learning?

3. What are the implications of this investigation for my work in preparing pre-service teachers to teach critical literacy in the interest of social justice?

Responses to the Research Questions

Research Question One

Do student teachers have capacity to develop a critical literacy perspective?

To answer this question it is useful to reassert what having a critical literacy perspective entails. As described in Chapter Two the extent to which individuals can be said to be critically literate involves having an active set of reflexive tools that I describe as four tendencies and sensibilities. These tendencies and sensibilities include a particular set of beliefs, values and attitudes about oneself and others, praxis or social agency, the ability to problem-pose and problem-solve, and the capacity for complex critical thinking. The overall response to critical literacy demonstrated by the students in this study showed a positive orientation and lack of contestation. However, as would be expected with any new learning, the data in this research showed that as the students negotiated critical literacy, their capacity to develop these skills, along with subject knowledge and understanding in critical literacy was variable. For example, a minority of students demonstrated critical literacy tendencies and sensibilities that were apparently innate, as exemplified by Anne. Anne's working class habitus and therefore her life experience are attributed with helping her to recognise and understand oppression in a way that her more privileged peers were not always able to do, or to do to the same extent. Though her critical literacy skills were pre-existing, Anne credited the course with helping her to conceptualise her own life experience, and to seeing and understanding how the social world works to privilege and reward those who are already advantaged. Regarding the other seven participants, the development of their critical consciousness is most accurately described as emergent. By this I mean there were indications that they were gradually developing their reflexive knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the concept of social justice. The following representative examples of the students' emerging critical literacy reflect this:

> Denise*: I would really be interested in actually finding out what their* [working class] *perception is because I think that's the only way we can help them. What do you think of school? What do you think of education? I think there's a lot of listening that needs to be done.*
>
> Ailish: *I think teachers are looking at it from this big governmental perspective, like a universal perspective rather than the lens of the child in the classroom and their background. They are not seeing the disconnect between children and literacy. They're not thinking about what that child is going through at home. I think that if they are not practicing it at home that is a problem but it should still be the teacher's responsibility. We*

expect parents to help but it is not a parent's job to teach them how to read.

These data extracts demonstrate the process of the invisible issue of social positioning becoming visible to the students, of problematising that which may have seemed acceptable beforehand, and a focus on relational solutions based on agency, which is key to Bourdieu's (1983) thesis.

An important point to make in relation to these outcomes, is that developing student teachers' critical consciousness cannot be achieved in single teaching sessions, isolated modules, or indeed one off courses. A consistent more embedded and lengthy approach is needed to encourage the reflexive tendencies and sensibilities that will foster a commitment to the principles of critical literacy for social justice. This offers hope that given the right opportunities, contexts and experiences in their teacher preparation courses, that many pre-service teachers could become critically literate. The real challenge, as discussed in Chapter Three, is however much greater than one of logistics and timetabling matters. Not only is a lot more work needed to develop these skills, that work needs to counter very powerful and reproductive constraints operating in the field. For example, one factor that inhibited the students' ability to see and understand oppressive conditions in this study was the relative positioning of privilege participants held. These positions made it hard for them to understand the structuring structures at work in the social world (Bourdieu, 1983). This subsequently led to misrecognition (Bourdieu, 1983) that this data showed manifest as a belief in meritocracy, prejudicial stereotyping, attribution of fault, and social blindness (as reported in Chapters Five and Six). Nevertheless, I remain confident that with time and opportunity to learn, some of the students' critical literacy tendencies and sensibilities would have evolved beyond the emergent stage. I say 'some' here because I would realistically expect that some students may be resistant to exploring the principles of critical literacy, some may feel apathetic towards issues of ideology and oppression, and because of the nature of this work others may feel helpless and disempowered, thus reducing commitment. The challenge for teacher educators is to make this work relevant, meaningful and purposeful.

Research Question Two

How might a Bourdieusian reflexive sociology help student teachers better understand reproduction and transformation in literacy teaching and learning?

For Bourdieu, agents negotiate fields and engage in practice using two principal logics, practical knowledge, and reflexive knowledge (Schircato and Webb, 2002: 255). Practical knowledge is what Bourdieu refers to as having a sportsperson-like 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 81). As part of the habitus it is knowledge that appears to render some individuals natural, gifted and talented (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). It is this privileged position of natural ability that as discussed in Chapter Three results in misrecognition. Briefly, misrecognition is a Bourdieusian concept that refers to the general relationship of educational success to social advantage (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). As a result of their pedagogic

habitus, the student participants in this study demonstrated this kind of practical knowledge. From relatively privileged positions the students' beliefs and attitudes indicated a perception of education as neutral, a position that works against teaching for social justice. This belief and attitude was demonstrated for example, in the representative comment that:

> *Being working class doesn't generally mean that you're not going to succeed, even though the statistics show otherwise.*

This example shows how practical knowledge, because it is mostly non-reflexive, tends to function as a delimitation with Schircato and Webb (2002) describing this as a form of ignorance or illiteracy.

Reflexive knowledge on the other hand is:

> An extension and development of this practical sense away from automatic or habituated practice to a more aware and evaluative relation to oneself and one's contexts. (Schirato and Webb, 2002: 256)

Schircato and Webb's point is that reflexive skills and dispositions can change our relation to ourselves, to the social world, and ultimately to our own practices in social fields. This is important because as this study showed, there was a tendency for the participants not to question the familiar and habitual assumptions that they hold about education, pupils, their parents, and their communities. As discussed in Chapters Five and Six, misrecognition played a large part in the students' understanding of the causes of disadvantage. This manifested, as mentioned above, in a belief in meritocracy, prejudicial stereotyping, attribution of fault to the working classes for their inequitable outcomes, and social blindness. Maintaining these dispositions will continue to reproduce social inequality in education; but it does not have to do so. Bourdieu invokes us to think reflexively, by which he means relationally, in order that we see social space as 'nothing other than structure, a set of relationships' (Grenfell, 2008: 217).

Bourdieu's contention is that reflexive skills can be taught and learned by acquiring an active set of tools, such as the tendencies and sensibilities associated with critical literacy and outlined in Chapter Two. These skills can help student teachers become more aware of the beliefs, values and attitudes they hold about themselves and others, by encouraging them to 'question the underlying social and political functions of a teaching relationship that so often fails' those it is intended to help (Bourdieu et al, 1994: 3). Becoming more aware and more evaluative has the potential then to change our relation to ourselves and to others in the social world. This was evidenced at numerous times during this research project. In fact after the first taught session Anne-Marie commented:

> *I hadn't realised how privileged I was in school. My family background gave me a head start. We take this for granted.*

Anne-Marie's recognition of how privilege positioned her favourably in the schooling system is indicative of the outcomes of this study, which showed that reflexive practice is an attainable goal, and that it can help give agents a better feel for the real game, as it is played out in a particular field. Importantly, and in keeping with Bourdieu (1983), the ability to think critically is not some kind of higher intellectual faculty that only the truly gifted among us will ever really reach. Rather, reflexive positioning must and should be an aspiration for us to have for all student teachers. All eight participants in this study for example, showed varying levels of capacity for critically reflexive thinking throughout the duration of the course. Yet, the persistence of misrecognition endured. In the final interviews for example, the students raised questions about the educability of working class children. There was a feeling that teachers were *fighting a losing battle* due to reasons such as poor behaviour, lack of motivation, and little parental support or care.

However, on a more reassuring note, over the duration of the course the students demonstrated that to varying degrees they were developing an emerging awareness of the symbolic systems that make up the social world and how these systems impact on different groups of people. Thus Anne's observation that *our education system is middle class, isn't it? Teachers' behaviour and attitudes are like those of the middle class,* Ruth's comment that *teachers are generally coming from a middle-class background so they are sort of disconnected from the disadvantaged,* and Denise's point that *middle class children are perceived as being more able because of their language,* showed signs that the students were starting to see the relationship between social class and educational inequality. The ongoing challenge is how to broaden their reflexive capacity to recognise misrecognition.

Deepening the students' reflexive knowledge would also enable them to begin to explore heterodoxic ways to think and act. According to Bourdieu, heterodoxic discourse:

> Destroys the spuriously clear and self-evident discourses of orthodoxy…contains a symbolic power of mobilisation and subversion, the power to actualise the potential power of the dominated classes. (1991: 277)

What Bourdieu is saying here is that reflexive sociology can help us to recognise misrecognition and in doing so help us to resist symbolic violence. Developing heterodoxic ways to think and act would help student teachers move away from unthinkingness. It would involve them in developing interesting ideas about *what* needs to change in classrooms, schools and educational policy in order to improve outcomes for marginalised pupils in the field. This was seen in Denise's suggestion for example, that there is a need to *have teachers who are from that background in every school...get teachers with experience of impoverished backgrounds.* Here, Denise shows awareness of a structural issue within the field of education that is, the lack of diversity in the teacher population. What this showed is that it is possible to shift student teacher's thinking from unquestioning acceptance of the status quo, from attributing fault and blaming learners and their parents, to thinking about how we

could intervene to change the field of education for the betterment of all. Another example of this is reflected in Orla's assertion:

> *I never realised the impact not being able to read would have on a person. I feel responsible for making sure I prevent any child* [I teach] *from living a life without words.*

Despite individual participants seeming at times to be foreclosed to the effect of social change, Orla recognises the individual power and agency she has to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged learners. She understands that a teacher has the ability and the responsibility to be a transformative influence.

However, Bourdieu cautions that having 'agency and the ability to act to change social structures, does not mean they will act' (2014: 580). One of the challenges to heterodoxy highlighted in this research was that though the students were positively orientated to the concept of critical literacy, sensitivity to structuring structures within the field means that the potential of take up among the majority of students may be unlikely. Underpinning this is a misconception that critical literacy, as discussed in Chapter One, most often involves exercising power in the more mundane and ordinary aspects of daily life (Comber, 2001). The students here tended to view critical literacy as something to teach, as opposed to it being a personal and professional mindset and set of values that, echoing Shor (1999), infuse how we think and what we say and do as teachers. For example, having a critically literate perspective might change the kind of relationship we would have with parents like Orla, or with vulnerable learners like Tony or the boy in Strabane, as discussed in the stories in Chapter One.

To conclude my response to this question, developing the capacity to see the social world as it is, is a crucial step in developing a critical literacy perspective. What is critical literacy if it is not the ability to recognise misrecognition, to see the buried structures at work in the field, to understand how dominant forces are legitimised and reproduced through power relations, and to take action that will help make schooling more socially just (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977).

Research Question Three

What are the implications of this investigation for my work in preparing pre-service teachers to teach critical literacy in the interest of social justice?

Drawing on the theoretical tools of Bourdieu, what this study has shown me is that student teachers have the capacity to develop a critically literate perspective but that there are significant challenges and constraints acting as inhibiting forces. I have also learnt that there is a need for student teachers to be better prepared to work with difference productively, and that becoming critically literate can go some way to addressing this need. The impact of this research for my work in preparing pre-service teachers to teach critical literacy in the interest of social justice highlights several insights and understandings, which I discuss below.

First, student teachers as future educators will have it within their power to positively impact on the transformation of hegemonic culture. The data from this research shows that this power is not being harnessed to its full extent. This is because the students bring with them 'deeply socialised histories, highly practiced routines and tightly woven beliefs and values that do not always frame others productively' (Dozier et al, 2006: 11). As discussed in Chapters Five and Six, the majority of the students tended to act unwittingly as ideological mirrors of a system that often marginalises the disadvantaged. This was reflected in the highly stereotyped and prejudicial views expressed in relation to pupils and parents. These attitudes work as barriers against the interests of the most disadvantaged. What Bourdieu's (1983) apparatus shows us is that we have the potential to mitigate against these barriers by confronting them reflexively. Being reflexive can help pre-service teachers develop a structural understanding of societal disparity and developing critical literacy, could, I believe, help change the mindset of poverty shown to exist and discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Becoming aware of this has reaffirmed my commitment to developing student teachers' critical literacy perspective. As discussed in Chapter Two, this is not an easy task. One of the main challenges is that critical literacy 'needs to achieve critical mass if it is to achieve real emancipatory change' (McArthur, 2010:9). However, Janks, uses Lorenz's (1972) 'butterfly effect' to illustrate how social agency can 'generate a tornado' (2005:31-32; 2014:350). What she means by this is that a single protagonist can make a huge difference in the direction of social justice. It just takes that person to make a start. Anne is a good example of this. Anne demonstrated pre-existing critical literacy tendencies and sensibilities, such as, individual agency, complex critical thinking, and beliefs, values and attitudes that saw education as an unequal playing field. She found exploring issues of social class and disadvantage as part of the BEd3 critical literacy programme, empowering and she pursued these ideas in her final BEd4 dissertations.

Second, Hooks (1994) makes the point that students often seek easy answers, and that they are keen that we tell them what to do and how to do it. In an assessment culture driven by accountability this is not surprising. It is also a reasonable expectation on the part of apprentice teachers that they learn the craft of teaching from those with experience and expertise in the field. Yet knowledge, Freire (1993) argued, should not be taught by itself in the hope that critical perspective will emerge. For the teacher educator the challenge is how to accomplish a balance between the teaching of critical literacy as emancipatory knowledge with students' need for technical and practical knowledge (Habermas, 1972). To complicate matters further, critical literacy is a nebulous phenomenon that is in itself challenging for the tutor to teach. For example, the contradictory logics shown to exist and discussed in Chapter Five, around issues such as privilege, teacher identity and personal priorities, should be interrogated as and when they arise in context, but importantly, they should not be left to chance. Developing student teachers' critical consciousness should be the focus of their preparation to teach. However, and very importantly, students should not be forced into critical literacy, for instance by making it the focus of assessment. This would go against the principles of the discipline and constitute a form of ideological

symbolic violence. There is a tendency when knowledge is mediated by authority figures, that students, in accordance with their pedagogic habitus respond with complicity. A lack of contestation though, as in this research, does not ultimately lead to all students developing a critical literacy perspective. In the longer term this will require a new paradigm of thinking about teacher preparation that offers a balanced and thoughtful programme that meets students' needs in learning to teach while proving them with an experience that is meaningful, purposeful, and emancipatory.

Third, a further complication highlighted by this research, is that critical literacy cannot be achieved in isolated modules. Reflexive pedagogies are time-intensive. They need to involve school-based experience and taught experience with sustained reflection that focuses on questions of diversity and disadvantage. The aim of which should be to weaken the relationship between social class and academic achievement, while providing all students with the cultural capital they need to succeed (Bernstein, 1990). As Freire says, we need a programme that teaches 'a critical reading of the world alongside a critical reading of the word' (1993: 75). Though the challenges seem huge, it is making a start that is often the hardest thing to do, and this research has done that.

Fourth, as discussed in Chapter One, discourses are powerful. The dominant discourse in education is a structuring force that conveys a sense of what teachers should value, how they should act, and what knowledge and competences they and their pupils should aspire to. This discourse is mediated not only through policy, syllabi, and curricula but it is reproduced in and through agents in the field, as discussed in Chapters Five and Six. Traditional literacy can tend to rely on subject knowledge and technical proficiency that does not extend to questioning the dominant discourse. This study showed that there is a need for literacy to be as much about values, ideology and identity as it is about knowledge and skills. This was exemplified for example in Chapter Five in regard to student teachers' conceptions of privilege. To address this issue, acquiring a critical literacy perspective would help cultivate students' capacity to:

> Question dominant epistemological, axiological, and political assumptions that are often taken for granted and often prop up the dominant social class. (McLaren, 2015: 8)

In line with Freire's views, this should involve problem posing literacy teaching and learning, including critical literacy itself, in order to 'stimulate true reflection and action upon reality' (1970: 84).

Fifth, Bourdieu's concepts have given me a way into understanding what might be possible in cultivating student teachers' critical literacy perspective. Essentially, what I have learnt is that while habitus is durable and is incorporated into the subject as a set of values and dispositions, transformation is possible in the right conditions. Critical literacy alone cannot achieve transformation however. Change in organisational field and in individual habitus is also necessary. To endow student teachers with cultural capital that enhances their reflexive capacity will require

changes in the traditional hierarchies of power that can exist in the field, changes in the dispositions or habitus of some teacher educators, changes in pedagogy, and changes to programmes so that they move beyond a superficial treatment of social justice issues.

To conclude this section, as teacher educators I believe we can and should be doing more in supporting student teachers in acquiring the dispositions to teach a diverse school population in more socially just ways. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts, critical literacy can add to students' cultural capital by developing their reflexive knowledge so as to make them aware of the dissonance and incongruence between habitus and the field of education. It can do this by helping them to get a better feel for the game that dispels the notion of education as neutral. It has potential in other words to help them recognise misrecognition. To demonstrate trustworthiness in these findings and to reduce the effects of researcher bias, several steps were taken to ensure measures of goodness. These are discussed in the following section.

Ensuring Quality: Measures of Goodness

It is widely accepted that qualitative research should use appropriate and rigorous methods that demonstrate trustworthiness or what are termed measures of goodness (Cohen and Crabtree, 2008). Drawing on Guba (1981) this includes the principles of credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. The following summaries are intended to demonstrate the integrity and the appropriate equivalent reliability of this research in regard to these principles.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Shenton (2004) outlines a number of strategies that the researcher can use to promote confidence. Several of these tactics were used in this study. They include the adoption of well-established research methods, random sampling, triangulation, assuring participants that they could withdraw at any time, establishing rapport, identifying the context and culture at the outset, emphasising the independent role of the researcher, member checks, examination of previous research, and finally, the background, qualifications and experience of the researcher.

Transferability

Importantly, it is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions of a qualitative project are applicable to other situations and populations. The findings in this study are specific to a particular context and group of eight individuals (Shenton, 2004). However, Guba (1981), Cole and Gardner (1979), Marchionini and Teague (1987), and Pitts (1994) agree that a clearly defined explanation of the research can facilitate transference. To provide transferability, Chapter Four details the data collection methods, the population of interest, recruitment, and the data analysis and techniques used in this research project. In addition to this, Chapter Three carefully

considers the central concepts of the theoretical framework that has informed this study.

Dependability

Dependability was achieved by deliberately gathering data from a range of sources, an approach often referred to as triangulation (Patton, 2002). The sources included engaging with multiple methods that included action research observation and field notes, group and individual semi-structured interviews. Secondly, an audit trail of the data analysis process was included in the accompanying Appendices with the intention of providing evidentiary adequacy and adequacy of interpretation and in doing so, strengthening this project's dependability (Morrow, 2005). For example, the documentary evidence that includes interview transcripts, codebooks, field notes, and matrices, shows that an adequate amount of information-rich data was collected and that interpretation and analysis was robust.

Confirmability

A number of steps were taken to help ensure as far as possible that the findings from this research project were the result of the beliefs and attitudes of the participants, rather than that of the researcher. In other words the intrusion of researcher bias was minimised (Patton, 1990). A number of strategies were employed in the pursuit of objectivity. Firstly, rather than being predetermined, sampling was purposive and resulted in eight self-selecting students in their third year of teacher preparation volunteering to participant in this study. The criterion for choosing third year students was that they had acquired two years of College and school-based experience, and they would not be facing the demands of final year coursework. Secondly, to address the issue of fairness in representing participants' experiences, we endeavoured to make sense together of the interviewees' worlds. In addition to asking for explanation, every opportunity was taken where necessary to clarify points with the participants. Occasionally in interviews, questions were asked to 'check the veracity of statements made previously by the respondent' (Fontana and Frey, 1998: 67). Member checks such as these, are described by Guba and Lincoln as 'the most crucial technique for establishing credibility' in a study (1985: 314). This is because they help ensure that researcher bias does not skew representation. Despite the measures taken in this study to ensure measures of goodness, a final factor recognised by Guba (1981) is to be aware of the limitations and tensions of a study, which I now consider.

Limitations and Tensions in this Research

There were a number of limitations and tensions in this study. First, is the issue of scale. Constraints of time and timetabling meant that the duration of the course was not long enough to bring about change that is durable and effective. For example, I only had one hour per week over a twelve-week semester to teach the course. Time and intensity in the field did not allow for a thorough enough exploration of what were complex issues. A further scaling issue relates to the number of participants. Though the participant group was sufficient for the purposes of this research, a larger

and more diverse sample would have helped make conclusions more trustworthy. These tensions around the scale of the study raise questions of relevance, trustworthiness and replicability of the findings. However, the data reflect and are corroborated by, the research field (as considered in Chapter Two). Second, there were limitations to embedding critical literacy into a pre-existing programme. As Albright points out:

> The problematic of teaching is that our good lessons and pedagogical intentions may be helpful for some of our students and may not be for others. (2002: 301)

So no matter what I did while teaching, or in the designing of the course, or what decisions I made, I knew that I was always right and always wrong (Newman, 1992). This is because the nature of critical literacy, as discussed in Chapter Two, is that we make the road by walking (Machado, 1982). Critical literacy is a theoretical and practical attitude, an evolving concept, and not a formula, procedure, or specific set of practices (Luke, 2000; Aukerman, 2012). Third, as the data collection methods were interpretive, and analysis was filtered through my white, middle-aged, female, teacher educator lens, analysis was influenced and limited by my position. I aspired therefore to be as reflexive as possible in my interpretations. Data analysis for example, involved several stages and the process was treated as an opportunity to ponder how the research impacted, enriched and improved my own learning and understanding (van der Reit, 2010). Fourth, there is the issue of interest and proximity, or what Morrow (2005) terms, researcher as instrument. In educational research, many are accustomed to regarding personal or professional proximity to educational processes as a bonus, albeit one that needs careful handling. The teacher-as-researcher tradition, and much of the work collectively known as action research, relies heavily on the longstanding methodological pivot of dealing with familiarity by making it strange (Atkinson, et al., 2003; Sikes, 2006). Following Bourdieusian theory, we have interests that limit what we can easily see. For example, I was aware that my desire to generate a commitment to the principles of critical literacy could have bordered on indoctrination leading to frustration with students who did not seem to understand it, and unconscious approbation for those who did. Trying to maintain awareness and objectivity was important throughout the taught programme, and particularly when analysing the data. Finally, in respect of the findings, there is a tension between pessimism and optimism. What, for instance, would the students who like the confidence afforded by certainty and quick and easy answers, make of the findings? My concern is that these findings would frustrate and demotivate student teachers who generally speaking are keen to learn and to develop as good practitioners. As these findings have the potential to present students with what seems like an overwhelming challenge, a carefully considered, sensitive approach will be required. Likewise with policy makers, would it make them feel powerless? Whilst acknowledging these limitations, it is important to reaffirm that this small-scale study was undertaken with integrity, and therefore this work makes the following contribution to the research field.

Contribution to the Research Field

Though the literature on critical literacy is expansive, Kerrett (2010) highlights a gap and therefore a need for additional studies about how to develop pre-service teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach critical literacy for social justice. Mosley (2010) similarly acknowledges that there are few studies about how critical literacy pedagogy develops within pre-service education programmes. For the most part, Mosley says the research community has not studied just how pre-service teachers learn to take up critical literacy pedagogy in their teaching. Significantly, Marsh (2006) points out that although there have been a number of studies of student teachers' critical literacy, there has been little empirical exploration of how structural processes have an effect on critical literacy acquisition. Collins (2000) concludes that, though Bourdieu argued that his concepts needed to be used empirically to have meaning, 'they have not extensively informed analysis of the literacy curriculum'. It would appear, therefore, that there is a gap in the literary field. As there are no comparable studies of this kind in Northern Ireland, this research contributes not insignificantly to the field of teacher education in the Province. The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's (GTCNI, 2007) guidance on reflective practice offers a mandate for 'The Reflective and Activist Teacher', an aim to which this study contributes. The GTCNI's policy might usefully be reviewed and enhanced by recent, context led research such as this. With respect to further research, there are a great many insights to be gained from exploring how structural processes have an effect on critical literacy acquisition as Kerrett (2010), Mosley (2010) and Marsh (2006) suggest. This, and other recommendations arising from this work are discussed next.

Professional Recommendations

For Future Research

As time was a limiting factor in this study, future research into critical literacy might usefully focus on the impact of more intensive tuition that connects theory with relevant school-based experiences. This could potentially involve collaboration between pre- and in-service teachers. I suggest that there is also a need for researchers to explore and develop mechanisms for enhancing engagement with critical literacy that extends beyond the emergent phase. Finally, a further avenue for study would be to research specifically how structural processes have an effect on critical literacy acquisition as suggested by Kerrett (2010), Mosley (2010) and Marsh (2006). The findings of this study conclude that fostering student teachers' critical literacy skills is crucial. The extent to which this is achievable is dependent on the skills of their tutors, so my own research plan is to explore the extent to which teacher educators are themselves critically literate. I am also interested in carrying out similar research in other countries to see if the issues that arose in this study are similar. Firstly however, I am keen to disseminate the findings of this research and to collaborate with others who are doing similar work.

For Future Practice

Following this research, there is a case to be made here for research-led educators to inform the field by creating spaces for teachers to come together to learn more about critical literacy theory and methodology. This would afford practitioners the opportunity to work together to develop creative solutions for reflexive work in classrooms and schools. My own professional practice has changed irrevocably. As a direct result of this research, I have several plans to help foster knowledge and skills in critical literacy. These include revising a critical literacy teaching resource that I published in 2007 and that is used with Key Stage Two and Three pupils in schools across Northern Ireland. I shall also develop a Master's level critical literacy module for in-service teachers, and embed critical literacy in undergraduate literacy modules.

Policy

This study has shown that there is a need to develop student teachers' critical literacy skills. I recommend that policymakers review the substantive and collective theory and research relating to Bourdieu's sociology of education and to critical literacy, and to consider what needs to change in the field to establish more equitable possibilities. I would argue that makers of educational policy and curricula have a responsibility to engage with the challenge of using research such as this, to critique and inform attempts at realising social justice. With regard to my own institution, I plan to revise our literacy policy and programmes so that critical literacy features as a primary objective in pre-service teacher preparation.

Conclusion

Bourdieu (1998) holds that practical knowledge or the unconscious dimension of the habitus means that social agents tend not to reflect on the forces that dispose them to act and behave as they do. In other words we tend to be blind to the objective structural relations and institutional processes that mediate through us. As teachers for example, we can be blind to the failure of our communication processes to reach students from varying cultural contexts effectively. Bourdieu's work helps us to 'remember that symbolic domination is indeed both everywhere and nowhere' (Schubert, 2014: 192). His concepts can provide us with a way of seeing the world that is truly aware. Through this study I have come to know that not only is he 'very good to see with' (Schirato and Webb, 2002: 9-10) but he is also 'good to think with' (Jenkins, 1992: 11). His ideas provide us with a set of literacies that enable us to see and think about agents and contexts within the educational field so that we can negotiate them more effectively (Schirato and Webb, 2002). They give us a particular focus that constitutes a much better 'feel for the game'. Importantly however, 'change cannot happen in a vacuum' (Apple, 2004: 13). It needs to 'gain strength from different perspectives, contexts, and ideas need to be shared and argued over in safe, creative, public spaces' (McArthur, 2010: 501).

Though Bourdieu is criticised for a tendency towards pessimism (James, 2015), for me, learning to see and think with his concepts has been revelatory and optimistic. It has reshaped my habitus. Insight into Bourdieu's logic of practice has added to my linguistic and cultural capital by giving me the language and conceptual tools to name,

discuss and examine the field of literacy education. I also now understand power differently and am increasingly alert to everyday misrecognition and symbolic violence in the field of education. Working with Bourdieu has also made me more reflexive as I try to make sense of the social world, specifically, literacy teaching and learning. With these new understandings comes a greater sense of agency and determination to fight for change in the pursuit of equity. With this knowledge I feel an ethical responsibility to try to shape the educative experiences of my students that opens them up to a structural view of the social world, disrupts the reproduction of privilege, creates a shift in their habitus, and new positions and dispositions within the field.

This research was a positive, rewarding and generative learning experience for me and, I hope and think, for the student teachers involved. As a teacher researcher and insider in the field I learned a lot from my students. This included increased professional agency, new knowledge and understandings, and new pedagogic solutions inspired by Bourdieu's theory of reproduction and by critical literacy theory and research. This study has provided the early stages of exploration for me, and the start of a personal and professional journey that I welcome with optimism.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Overview of the Revised BE3 Literacy Course

Table 2. Overview of the Revised BEd3 Literacy Course

Aim: In the interests of social justice, students should commit to doing schools, pedagogy, curriculum, and affiliated work differently, and hopefully better.

Wk	Revised Course Content	Learning Intentions Students should:	Teaching Strategies	Resources	Critical Literacy Models
1	Welcome and Introduction Privilege and Positioning in Literacy Teaching and Learning	• Understand the concept of privilege. • Recognise and problematise the privilege that permeates our lives.	• Thought Museum workshop • Discussion and reflection	• Thought Museum artefacts • Flip chart paper • Privilege Walk YouTube video	• Develop critical enquiry and analysis; develop critical stances (Rogers, Kramer and Mosely, 2009) • Focus on sociopolitical issues by examining power relations (Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002) • Find and name the issue (Janks, 2014)
2	Literacy Changes Lives	• Begin to see outside the blinkers of their own educational experience to identify how discrimination through structurally imposed privilege affects lives. • Understand how privilege affects outcomes in Literacy learning.	• Film viewing followed by individual reflection, group and guided whole class discussion	• PowerPoint • Barnardos' reports • Documentary-film 'Can't Read, Can't Write' • Post-it notes	• Focus on sociopolitical issues by examining power relations (Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002) • Focus on issues of power (McLaughlin and De Voogd, 2004)
3	Teaching with Texts and Contexts	• Confront assumptions about appropriate texts for literacy teaching and learning.	• Audits of classroom libraries • Critique, discussion and reflection	• Graphic organisers • Literacy Centre library as a model of an inclusive classroom library	• Develop critical stances; develop critical enquiry and analysis (Rogers, Kramer and Mosely, 2009)

Wk	Revised Course Content	Learning Intentions Students should:	Teaching Strategies	Resources	Critical Literacy Models
4	Problematising Texts	• Understand that texts are never neutral. • Exploring constructions of reality depicted in texts • Develop ability to critically analyse texts.	• Critique, discussion and reflection • Exploring Constructions of Reality Workshop, e.g. If you know only about families from reading this text, what does the author say about girls, boys, mothers and fathers/women and men? (Fehring and Green, 2001:93)	• Metatextual questions to scrutinise the constructed nature of texts • Selection of children's texts including novels, comics, birthday cards and fairy tales • Mothers' Day and Father's Day cards	• Textual deconstruction (Jones, 2002) • Critical enquiry and analysis; develop critical stances (Rogers, Kramer and Mosely, 2009) • Focus on sociopolitical issues by examining power relations (Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002)
5	The Problematics of a Broad, Balanced Literacy Curriculum	• Recognise that pedagogy and policy are not neutral. • Learn to question beliefs about Literacy teaching and learning. • Begin to think of Literacy as a political act.	• One minute paper • Reflection, critique and discussion of Literacy pedagogy and relevant school experience	• Rotating Stations Dialogue Workshop • Flip chart pages posted around room.	• Find and name the issue, link it to learners' lives; examine who benefits or is disadvantaged (Janks, 2014) • Critical enquiry and analysis; develop critical stances (Rogers, Kramer and Mosely, 2009)
6	Teaching verses Testing Comprehension	• Understand how to *teach* comprehension effectively. • Learn to question beliefs about Literacy teaching and learning.	• Reflection, critique and discussion of reading comprehension pedagogy in the context of relevant personal and professional experience	• Group mind maps • PowerPoint	• Find and name the issue, link it to learners' lives; examine who benefits or is disadvantaged (Janks, 2014) • Critical enquiry and analysis; develop critical stances (Rogers, Kramer and Mosely, 2009)

Wk	Revised Course Content	Learning Intentions Students should:	Teaching Strategies	Resources	Critical Literacy Models
7	From Difference to Disadvantage: Talking to Children Matters	• Understand the social space in relation to the sociocultural, economic and political limitations impacting on work in schools. • Develop awareness of the concept of linguistic capital and the role it plays in inequitable outcomes in Literacy.	• Reflection, critique and discussion of reading pedagogy and relevant personal and professional experience • Hatful of quotes	• PowerPoint • School inspection reports from middle class and disadvantaged Belfast schools • Relevant research articles, e.g. Basil Bernstein's restricted and elaborated codes • Relevant newspaper articles	• Focusing on sociopolitical issues (Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002) • Find and name the issue (Janks, 2014) • Foucs on issues of power (McLaughlin and De Voogd, 2004) • Text analysis (Freebody and Luke, 1990)
8	Opening Spaces for Critical Literacy: Dialogic Engagement	• Develop an understanding of dialogic pedagogy. • Feel empowered to create dialogic classroom environments.	• Teaching Dialogic Talk workshop • Reflection, analysis and discussion	• Mercer, Lynn and Dawes dialogic talk teaching resources • Research articles, e.g. Aukermand, M. 92012) Why do you say yes to Pedro but no to me? Toward a critical literacy of dialogic engagement, *Theory and Practice*, Vol.51, pp. 42-48.	• Dialogic, problem-posing pedagogy (Janks, 2014) • Promote transformation (McLaughlin and De Voogd, 2004)
9	Critical Literacy: A New Basic	• Understand the pedagogical goals associated with critical literacy.	• Workshop activities followed by reflection, analysis and discussion	• PowerPoint • My own critical literacy teaching resource for schools • Freebody and Luke's Four Resources Model • Carousel activities • Newspapers	• Modelling Freebody and Luke's (1990) Four Resources Model

Wk	Revised Course Content	Learning Intentions Students should:	Teaching Strategies	Resources	Critical Literacy Models
10	Critical Literacy: A Pedagogy Powered by Love	• Understand the philosophical goals associated with critical literacy. • Enhance their ability to recognise oppression, prejudicial assumptions, bias, inequality and injustice in texts, structures and attitudes.	• Guided reflection, analysis and discussion	• PowerPoint • A series of controversial advertisements • Film 'Consuming Our Kids'	• Examining multiple viewpoints (Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002); McLaughlin nd De Voogd, 2004) • Deconstruction of texts (Jones (2002) • Meaning-making (Freebody and Luke, 1990) • Find and name the issue (Janks, 2014)
11	Accelerating Literacy with Culturally Conscious Teaching	• Enhance their ability to recognise oppression, prejudicial assumptions, bias, inequality and injustice in texts, structures and attitudes. • Understand the need to engage a diverse range of literacy earners.	• Pause and Ponder workshop • Reflection, analysis and discussion	• Research article 'Combating I hate this stupid book! Black males and critical literacy' • 'Pause and Ponder' graphic organisers • Poem 'Happy Birthday Dilroy • Magazines	• Examining multiple perspectives (Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002); McLaughlin nd De Voogd, 2004) • Develop critical stances (Rogers, Kramer and Mosely, 2009) • Promote transformation and action (McLaughlin and De Voogd, 2004)
12	Becoming an Effective Teacher of Literacy: Towards Good and Just Teaching	• Develop awareness of the concept of socially just teaching. • Understand what good and just teaching looks like. • Reflect on their learning.	• Learning audit: what do you know now that you didn't know at the beginning of the course? • The most important idea... • The most confusing idea... • The most challenging idea...	• Morgan, W. (1997) *Critical literacy in the classroom: the art of the possible*, London: Routledge. • Christensen, L. (2000) *Reading, writing and rising up: teaching about social justice and the power of the word*, A Thinking Schools Publication.	• Disrupting common understanding (Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002) • Imagining possibilities... (Janks, 2014) • Promote transformation (McLaughlin and De Voogd, 2004)

Appendix 2: Consent Forms

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form: Group Interview

Title of Project: Developing A Critical Literacy Perspective
Name of Researcher: Mrs Donna Hazzard
Name of Supervisor: Professor Nicki Hedge

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent to my participation in a group interview being audio-recorded. I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to using a pseudonym, in any report or publication arising from this research. The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times. However guarantees of confidentiality are limited due to the nature of the group interview.

I acknowledge that there will be no effect on my grades or relationship with the researching tutor arising from my participation or non-participation in this research.

I agree that the data collected in the course of this research will not be shared with others as set out in the Plain Language Statement.

I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant: Signature:

Date:

Name of Researcher: Donna Hazzard Signature: Donna Hazzard

Date: 21/9/18

Signed: Date: 18th September 2016

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form: Individual Interview

Title of Project: Developing A Critical Literacy Perspective
Name of Researcher: Mrs Donna Hazzard
Name of Supervisor: Professor Nicki Hedge

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent to my participation in an individual interview being audio-recorded. I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym in any report or publication arising from this research. The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.

I acknowledge that there will be no effect on my grades or relationship with the researching tutor arising from my participation or non-participation in this research.

I agree that the data collected in the course of this research will not be shared as set out in the Plain Language Statement.

I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant: Signature:

Date

Name of Researcher: Donna Hazzard Signature: Donna Hazzard

Date: 21/9/18

Signed: Dated: 18th September 2016

Appendix 3: Plain English Statement

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Plain Language Statement

Study title Developing A Critical Literacy Perspective

Researcher Details: Donna Hazzard, EdD student, University of Glasgow

Invitation to participate in a research study
You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please don't hesitate to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Kind regards,

Donna

What is the purpose of the study?
We live in a world where social practices and structures can advance prejudice, racism, sexism, questionable values, etc. Our duty is to question, to recognise social injustices, and to challenge these. The ability to identify systemic wrongs requires as Giroux (2004) explains, requires a cultivation of the capacity for critical judgment. This research aims to explore the extent to which an undergraduate student teacher literacy course focused on critical literacy can help student teachers develop socially just literacy pedagogy.

Why have I been chosen?
I am sending this email to all BEd3 students. I have chosen your year because of the knowledge, understanding and school based experience you have gained.

Do I have to take part?
You do not have to take part. Participants wishing to be involved will do so on a voluntary basis.

What will happen to me if I take part?
There is no price to pay for not volunteering to participate. Grades will not be affected and nor will your relationship with me.

What will participation involve?
Participation will entail one group, guided conversation lasting no more than two hours, and one face-to-face interview, lasting up to forty minutes, both of which will be audio-recorded. Questions will be open-ended, non-intrusive and will cover a range of themes that will include the following.

- The context of poverty and education in Northern Ireland
- Factors that impact on educational outcomes
- The material and cultural effects of poverty, educational achievement and expectations
- Disadvantage in education
- Social discrimination
- Social inequality – forms, causes and consequences
- The role of teachers in mitigating the impact of disadvantage
- The role of teachers in pursuing social justice for disadvantaged children
- Critical literacy

Data collection will also involve the collection of written artefacts produced as part of the course.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases I may be obliged to contact Mrs Deirdre Cree, coordinator of the student services committee. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of a group interview.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results of this trial study will form part of my doctoral assessment and may be used, in anonymised form, in conference presentations or written papers.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact me at, d.hazzard@smucb.ac.uk. You may also contact my supervisor, Prof. Nicki Hedge at Nicki.Hedge@glasgow.ac.uk.

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee but further information and any complaints this should be made to the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Donna Hazzard

Appendix 4: Sample Transcripts

Interview with Anne

Interviewer: Anne, thank you for kindly agreeing to take part in this research project. We'll start with the first question; what is your understanding of critical literacy? What will you take away from the work on critical literacy that we did in class?
Anne: It's like relating to their [pupils'] experiences in a way that they like. For example, I remember doing the vector zoos.
Interviewer: Yes.
Anne: It relates to the child. It's all child centred. Making comprehensions fun and active and interactive, not just reading questions and answering them. Because I can get bored and then maybe help them understand like why you're doing this. Why do you want to analyse the texts or why do you need to read and write like the writers sort of thing. It's just being critical [laughter] which is everything, isn't it?
Interviewer: Do you think there is a need to teach critical literacy skills to pupils?
Anne: Yes. It's not like the metacognitive teaching strategies.
Interviewer: Yes?
Anne: Yes. I remember I wrote them [metacognitive teaching strategies] in my scheme.
Interviewer: Good for you.
Anne: Yes, I am a visual person, I need to have like everything in front of me.
Interviewer: It's interesting because you were talking about the media in class and how it portrays images of beauty or a concept of what beauty is for women particularly, but increasingly for men.
Anne: Yes. For women I think it's scary. I was trying to argue that there are all these different perceptions of beauty. Then what you notice is that each person conforms to the ideal beauty thing that is in their culture. This aspect of conforming to what's expected of them across the culture. For example, the thing about eyebrows at the moment. [laughs] You see them everywhere. It's just like everyone must conform, you need to have your eyebrows a certain way. You must if you haven't got this.
Interviewer: Do you think there's a role for critical literacy there? Would critical literacy help us to deconstruct those kind of ideas, images, concepts?
Anne: Yes, actually I do, because you can be brainwashed if you're just looking at things. This is what's expected of me if you're not being critical and then but why should I be like that? Who's telling me? Are they trying to sell me something? Is that what their intention is here? Do you know what I mean? That's really what critical literacy is all about. It's somebody saying how am I being manipulated here? Why am I being persuaded, convinced to think that my eyebrows have to be like that and if they are that not like that then I shouldn't go out. I'm not ready to go out and party with my friends because I haven't got the right eyebrows. It's a bizarre example, but this whole eyebrow thing [voice trails off].
Interviewer: So it's looking at behind what's happening?
Anne: Yes, like reading between the lines.

Interviewer: We talked in class about the idea of literacy for social justice and the concept of good and just teaching. What's your understanding of that?
Anne: Well, our education systems like middle class, isn't it? Because it's behaviour and attitudes are like those of the middle class. If you don't conform to that, the teacher can have this perception or stereotype that this child over there, they are not right. This kid might directly or indirectly be put into an ability grade and given much praise. Just because one of the brighter children accelerates and you're like, "Oh, that's brilliant". That other person compares himself and so it's like a self-fulfilling prophecy.
Interviewer: Who benefits from socially just teaching?
Anne: I think teachers really need to be aware of it. Particularly, like oral language because like children from middle-class backgrounds are surrounded by language at home. Whereas children from working class backgrounds, although, are just not surrounded by the same language, but it doesn't mean it's inferior. Do you know what I mean? They can still think, it's just they're [middle-class children] perceived as being more able because of their language. That may be why teachers put them into certain groups.
Teachers need to be aware of it just so they can combat it be like, "Why am I treating that child in this way, or should that child be in this ability group or what can I do to make them progress". Even with books and stuff at home, some children may not have access to books at home. Maybe just have a library in the class.
The teachers might quite often just take it for granted that they will have books at home, that there'll be somebody at home to do the reading with them, but the parents might not be helping. That could happen in any kind of a home background though.
With iPads as well. Just like people just want to sit in the iPad all day. It's easier just to let them sit in the iPad than be like, "Do you want to read a book?" If they have an iPad, they're going to be sitting playing games and you spend so much money on the iPad that you're not going to go out and buy books at the same time. It can be all these different things.
Interviewer: So you think it's working class children who maybe benefit from teaching for social justice?
Anne: I think both [classes] can benefit at the same time. It's not just because you're middle class or working class. Being working class doesn't generally mean that you're not going to succeed, but even though the statistics show otherwise. Middle-class children there might be someone in the middle group who might need the extra push or the bottom group who may need the extra push as well. You just can't make an assumption or judgment based on where they come from. It's not fair.
Interviewer: What do you think you might have gained or learned from the critical literacy work that we did this year? Is there anything that you will take away from it? Do you think it's made you look at the role of literacy and teaching of literacy any differently?
Anne: Remember we did that Exquisite Corpse thing, I thought I had all these ideas. I was going to do when I went in teaching practice. My teacher was just like we're doing this because that's what they were used to. I was like, "Can we do that?" That's a good idea. Today we're doing this, maybe another time. I was like, "That's a nice way of telling me that you don't want me to do that". I ended up

doing a storyboard but it took so long to do it. It took three lessons for the children to get the storyboard. It was like he [the host teacher] had to start with the basics of Anne Frank and it was recalling information and stuff, but like the kids really enjoyed it as well. They were working at their own level. It wasn't like lots of work sheets with the children in lower ability group getting the easy worksheet and the other kids like, "That's so easy. You're stupid". That happened in my class I was like, "That's awful". I gave them all a blank stare. They all had the same work. I differentiated in terms of how I helped out.
Interviewer: So what you are saying is that children are aware that there are different ability groups and are doing different work at different levels, and this reinforces self-fulfilling prophecy?
Anne: Yes. One girl was working at a very low level, and the teacher was like her brother was like that, and her other brother was like that. I was like it doesn't mean to say that she's not going to do any better. I think because people were saying you are stupid that she believed it and she just didn't try anymore. She was just like I'm not good at things like this.
Interviewer: So it is important to have high expectations of all pupils?
Anne: Yes, it actually brought to my attention, the education system and stuff. I'm from working class I didn't really notice it, because I was one of the ones that actually went through the system.
Interviewer: Is there anything else that you thought about this year that maybe you haven't before in terms of literacy, social justice, the class system, the education system in general/
Anne: Yes. I didn't really realise it until we were talking about it but then I noticed when I was reflecting back, that everyone from my secondary school did a vocational course. Even me, I went to do a sports degree first, then I dropped it after a year. I was like, "This isn't me, it's not what I want to do." Everybody else in my year did vocational courses. The majority went to do a sports degree or drama degree or the ones that are non-academic.
Interviewer: They all went on a lot on to do degrees anyway?
Anne: Yes.
Interviewer: But not professional degrees?
Anne: Yes.
Interviewer: Did any of them go into dentistry, medicine or teaching or law?
Anne: I think I'm the only one in my year group that went into teaching. Even when we were doing UCAS forms we didn't like, they told us "you're going to apply to do this or the other". Do you know what I mean?
Interviewer: Do you think the school promoted a range of opportunities and so on for you?
Anne: We did collaboration with other schools when we didn't have a subject on offer. Not enough people picked science for instance. People were able to go to another school and do science, which was really good. It was a really good school.
Interviewer: That's good. If we go back to critical literacy Anne, would you have any reservations or concerns about teaching critical literacy? Is it something that you feel enthusiastic about or something you have reservations about?
Anne: I like teaching literacy in general. I taught about eight literacy lessons a week on teaching practice.
Interviewer: Wow.

Anne: She [host teacher] just loved literacy. She just loved it and they [pupils] loved it too, even over numeracy. But I noticed the kids were not trying anymore with their handwriting. She [host teacher] was doing it so often and she had this book, from her niece and she kept bringing it out and it's like, "Look what my niece has done." Then I looked at the book and I was like, she'd done like less of it, so it was like better quality. Sometimes it's like if you focus on the quality instead of the quantity.
Interviewer: That's an interesting point.
Anne: I feel the kids were getting bored and then some of the kids were falling away, they weren't getting it. Then you're moving to the next topic and the next one and they are constantly falling behind. I was just like, "No. Do less or something!"
Interviewer: Why do you think she was doing so much literacy?
Anne: I don't know, I think she was just like, "We need to get this done." She thought if you do more, you get better at skills and stuff. Do you know what I mean? I was getting bored doing it. I was so bored. She's like, "Do you want to do the Literacy lesson?" I was like, "Yes." [laughter]. You know what she made me do?
Interviewer: What?
Anne: I was like, she's got an artist [an Art student]. I was only there for five weeks because I went to New York for the exchange. In my last week I had a visit from Mary [Art tutor]. I wanted to do Art. She [host teacher] told me, "You should do this for your lesson". I was like, "right, I'll do it for my first tutor visit." Then for the second one, she was like, "You should do this," and I was like, "That's not me." Do you know what I mean? [laughs]
Interviewer: Yes.
Anne: She liked things done a particular way. There's other ways of doing things to get the same results.
Interviewer: What did the teacher ask you to teach?
Anne: Literacy. It was a good school. She [host teacher] just didn't get me. [laugh]
Interviewer: You thought since she had an artist there in her classroom, she should use your strengths?
Anne: She made me draw like a big picture of Hitler, because we were doing World War II, and she was like, "Draw that. Let's see if you can paint that." It was a template for kids to paint. I was in Carl's workshop drawing it one day, and everyone was like, "Why are you drawing Hitler?" The teacher wants the kids to paint it. [laughter] That's so funny. Like a picture of Hitler [laughter]. Leaving mass, and I had to carry that to the school and all. You know what's bad [laughs]? She was all proud of him, and I was like, "put that on display". [laughs]
Interviewer: My goodness.
Anne: I know. It flies in the face of everything that Art education is about. You can't really argue on teaching practice.
Interviewer: You can't?
Anne: They tell you, you can't.
Interviewer: So you feel you just have to say yes?
Anne: Yes, you're just like, "I've got to conform." You have to. [laughs]
Interviewer: So to go back to critical literacy. You were saying that you're not that enthusiastic maybe about literacy teaching in general?
Anne: Just this year.

Interviewer: Just this year?
Anne: Yes, because it was just like a cat going at it. That was because of the teacher [blames school experience]. In previous years and last year, the teacher was all about comprehension. I think he had OCD. I loved him. He was so funny. He always had comprehension sheets, and he was like, "You have to stick this here and stick that there," and everything was like, the picture's so neat or it's stuck in the wrong place. He ripped one out and was like, "No. You need to put it here like that," and he ripped it out.
Comprehension was just about the questions. I would read the novel, and they would follow it. He wanted them to answer the questions, but I just **[unintelligible]** ... to make it a wee bit interesting. That's what he wanted. I feel like sometimes he was like, "you do what you want," but he wanted this part done, but I could do what I want. I could use hot air balloons, or question cards, or just stuff like that.
Interviewer: As a student teacher, what is it that you want from your literacy lectures? What are your expectations? What do you want to leave with?
Anne: want to be more aware of the kids in the classroom. Why is that child reacting like that? What can I do to make him or her feel better and make them happier in school? Some of them are going home, and they're not in the happiest environment. Then if you come into school and have no homework done, and the teacher's like, "Why haven't you got that done?" Then the kids, they don't say anything, because although it's hard for them at home, you're making it hard for them in school. I just want to make sure everybody is happy in class as well as learning.
There's just so much on top of you as well in teaching...your curriculum, you have to meet all these deadlines, check all these boxes, and sometimes you forget [about the pupils]. I just want to make sure I'm always aware of the kids in the class.
I work up at the Youth Initiatives. Have you ever heard of it?
Interviewer: No, I haven't Anne.
Anne: No? It's really good, but they're always like, it's a faith-based organisation, that they're always aware of the person. That's what I really like. I think that's what teaching should all be about.
Interviewer: Is that teaching for social justice?
Anne: It is. If the children are happy, they'll enjoy coming to school. They'll have a good relationship with their teacher, because they know their teacher cares about them and believes and trusts in them and whatever. Then learning happens. You know? It will happen. You wonder then about teachers who would be punitive with children who they know are maybe going home to, goodness knows what kind of background, where there might not be any care. There might be neglect or whatever, and the teachers are getting after them for not doing homework. You know?
It's like core values you have to uphold. I think people just write that in their assignments though and they're just like, you know what I mean? Then they don't really...[voice trails off].
Interviewer: Live it?
Anne: Internalise it and live it and actually do it. Do you know what I mean? And it would be like, "Put that in" [into an essay] to get a mark. I feel like everybody in

this Uni, is like grades, grades, grades. You want your grades. I feel like people have a hierarchy of what they want.
Interviewer: Do you think that dictates how they go about what they do and how they teach in school?.
Anne: I think there's like two different spectrums, then there's like in the middle. Some people probably would just tick all the boxes and then you have the ones that try and do a balance of both which is probably the best because you do have to tick the boxes at the same time.
Interviewer: That brings me back to, what do you, or students in general want from your literacy classes? Do they want the answers so they can tick the boxes, to get the grade? Or do they want to be made to think and be critical and think about issues such as social justice?
Anne: Even when you were doing assignments, you're just wondering what's beyond the assignment. Do you know what I mean? So it's just like pointless. Even like when you've finished your assignment, you're kind of like, "I don't really need to go to that class now." I've done that myself [laughs] if I'm being honest. You have these other deadlines and then you're just like all these things on top of you because there's so much expected of you at the same time. Even though you probably would've learned in that class you don't need it for your assignment.
Interviewer: So the assignment, the assessment, the system is kind of driving what student teachers are deciding to focus on?
Anne: Not everybody. I'm just going to be honest, but I would do that at some points.
Interviewer: So critical literacy, for example, and teaching for social justice because it isn't an assignment, does this affect student teachers' attitude to it? Maybe today's student teachers have other needs and it's not going to make any big difference now?
Anne: Yes. I think our education system, if you try and make something work and it goes against the system, it's not going to work. If you make something try and work, but if you like find a way that it goes with the system. Maybe like your little stones at the start and then it gets bigger and bigger and bigger and then it's like a kindling who you know as well, isn't it.
Interviewer: Do you think all student teachers have equal voice when they go out into schools? Do you think student teachers' backgrounds, student teachers' own social class makes a difference?
Anne: I was in the school, for example, there were three students in the school and one of the things the principal said to me. All three of them, their mothers were teachers and the principal pointed this out, "Oh, they're all great. They're all good girls." Of course they are, you know their parents are all teachers. They come from a family of teachers. Did you know that? Did you know that?" and I was thinking, "Well, I actually did because I come from the area myself, so I actually know their parents."
I would have known all of them but they didn't notice it. I thought, "That's amazing that you're pointing it out to me." Had one of them not been connected in terms of having a parent a teacher, would she have made a judgment, a value judgment about that student? When you go into a school, you have to make a good impression. Sometimes I speak and I have a bit of an accent more. When I'm in schools I'm more like prim and proper if you get me. It's like, "oh God! They're getting aware of where I'm from".

I know a wee girl that I was with back in America, she's at xxxxxxxxxxx college but she's also a Catholic. She went into a Protestant school. Her name didn't say she was Protestant, and they were asking her, "What school did you go to?" She said, "xxxxxxxxxxxx" That's a Catholic school and she said she had to eat her lunch in the library and I was like, "No way." I was like, "You're joking." She was just in there on her own and there weren't even proper seats in the library. They wouldn't let her in the staffroom. They never said why. They just said, "No we don't have student teachers in the staffroom." She says the previous year people were allowed in the staffroom. She thought it was because of where she was from. I think there can be a little bit of discrimination. At the same time, it depends on the person who's at the top, doesn't it, or who has the most power in the school, what's said is what's done. If they have this perception or they're interviewing people they can be the like they are the better one, do you know what I mean?
Interviewer: Are male and female students discriminated against?
Anne: Yes. I feel like there's mostly women in education. It's like a women's thing, but if you look higher up it's all men calling the shots. You're just like it kills me.
Interviewer: So there are more female teachers in schools but more males leading and managing schools?
Anne: Yes. One particular school for example, it was one but it's typical of many. All the senior people in the school were male, every one of them. I was introduced to the principal, a man, I was introduced to the vice principal, a man, I was introduced SENCO, a man. He's looking floating around the school, does an hour here and an hour there with children. He's not going to kill himself and they're all golfing buddies and I was thinking it's just a wee man's club.
Interviewer: Is this an issue?
Anne: The first school I went to, had a woman principal, she comes in to my work and talks away to me. She's really a good teacher, I loved her. She was there and they had a new principal and it was a male and then last year up in St. xxxxxx, there were four male staff members, one was the principal, the rest were all women. It just showed you. Then the one I was with he was actually doing his principals' course [PQH]. He was like he had the authority for it. It just shows you that's what they want in the education system. They seem to want men. They seem to see men as having the power or the authority or the gravitas or whatever. Maybe I don't know, I think it's a massive problem. Maybe that's something we'll have to teach a bit about for social justice?
Interviewer: Absolutely. This is all critical literacy, being critical of the system and whatever. It's critical literacy because you're looking at it as a teacher and you're being critically evaluative which is really good? Do think you are critically literate?
Anne: A lot of people aren't independent, it's hard to be, but it's very good, I think it's so important. You're identifying problems in the system and being aware of them is all to do with social justice because even for wee girls going through the school system, if you see that the principal and the vice principal are men, the IT coordinator is a man, the SENCO is a man, all the people that have any kind of authority in the school who make the decisions ultimately are male, what message does that keep perpetuating? It's like monkey see, monkey do.
Interviewer: Is that about social justice?

Anne: Yes, because we're keeping women in their place, we're keeping women down and empowering men. Like all the PE grades, for example. Oh my god, they turn my head.
Interviewer: I love your honesty. [laughs]
Anne: They walk up here like they own it and I'm like, you don't. I'm from Belfast. I have four brothers. They just glide through really but I feel like I get a lot of my personality from brothers. I played a lot of sports. I was going to be a PE student. It was either between PE or Art if you get me, but then I did it in uni and that's one of the reasons I didn't like the course. I thought I wasn't taken seriously in PE. Do you know what I mean? I want to be taken seriously. I got here. I want to go all the way to be a principal one-day. Before 40. [laughs]
Interviewer: Last question. So many children still fail in literacy. Why do you think that happens? What factors do you think contribute to some children leaving school with very low levels of literacy?
Anne: Well, it could be parents at home. Are they involved? I know a lot of parents feel the teachers are going to be there at school so then I don't really need to help out because that's the role of the teacher so, that could be one. Could be self-motivation as well. Do you know what I mean? They are just like this is boring, what's the point of doing it? If their mommies or daddies have a certain job and they're like, "I'm just going to work in daddy's business when I'm older." Like from a young age, this is what I want to be. I think there needs to be more, you need this for this or you need that for that. Do you know what I mean? Like why am I doing that sort of thing?
Interviewer: Why do some children fail in literacy? What are the reasons?
Anne: It can be the teacher as well I feel. You shouldn't be like, "they are not progressing because they can't, they just don't get it." You should be like why are they not doing it? Is it me? Put it on yourself. Is it the way I'm teaching? Is it the voice I'm using or is it, I'm not giving them enough attention? Are the worksheets, not the best? The worksheets, should they be used all together? Should we be doing it like this or are the books interesting? Do we need new books in the class? Have they read all of the books? Do you know what I mean? That comes back on the funding as well. If you read all the books, what's the point of reading them again? You know what's going to happen.
I don't read, Donna either. I don't know how I got here. [Laughs] I read textbooks. I have to read things four times for them to go into my head, if you get me.
Interviewer: Most people are the same.
Anne: I just not a reader.
Interviewer: Do you read with a highlighter or something?
Anne: I have all my different colour pens to make it fun. [Laughs]
Interviewer: Interacting with the text makes such a difference and you can use stickers, post-its and things too.
Anne: Colouring. That is what I do. Then I'm like Hitler. [Laughs]
Interviewer: You need to find some way to interact with texts with texts that works for you.
Anne: Yes or making it more inquisitive as well. I always find if I need to know more about something I Google it. I don't have Facebook or anything anymore, I deleted it in January. It was just annoying me. I will probably get it back now and again if I need to contact someone because I have a lot of friends from Dublin and stuff, so I can still keep in contact with them.

Interviewer: I'm not on it at all.
Anne: It's really annoying or something I don't know. It's like brainwashing. I think that could be one of the things linked to the mental health that is on the increase. You're looking at all these unrealistic people's lives, unrealistic faces and stuff and you're like, "oh goodness".
Interviewer: Do you think critical literacy skills would be helpful?
Anne: Yes, it is so important because critical literacy makes you think what are they trying to do? You're not just looking at the images and thinking, "oh my god!" Going back to the beautiful concept...doesn't she look gorgeous and she's so thin, her hair is amazing and her eyebrows are fantastic! [Laughs] And there's false news.
Interviewer: False news?
Anne: I just think put it all away just, oh anyway. It's all to do with marketing. It's all to do with people who want to make money. If they can sell those eye brow kits or whatever it is - clothes, products, face cream, whatever, because we're all buying into this beauty concept. The whole idea that critical literacy helps girls and boys, but it helps us not to fall into those traps, that they should be able to think critically and think I don't think that actually would work. I don't think that's just a trend and I'm going to be my own person, be myself and not fall into that. This is what I think. This is what I believe and have the confidence to go with it.
I think Art helps you be critical as well. It's like business aside. I think I got -- I like being critical from Art as well because it was more like I was investigating something if you get me. I got to pick something that I was interested in.
Interviewer: It's your interpretation.
Anne: Yes. Then you use all these other sources as well. They get different viewpoints and they're like it just develops from GCSE to A-level. They're like it's even developing more in Uni because they're just like even like a teacher being like you -- in my first and year second never thought of that before like go and do what else you could do --
Interviewer: It teaches you to be an independent thinker?
Anne: I don't feel like a lot of people independent thinkers. No, it's just a mindset and everybody thinks it's amazing sometimes we've seen maybe a whole bunch of girls or fellas walking down the street and they all think they're all unique and different, but every one of them is wearing a uniform. Every one of them the hair, the makeup or if it's men...[voice trails off]. It's a uniform. They're all conforming but they don't realise it. They all think there are slight variations in what they're doing or wearing or whatever, but it's basically the same. People are afraid to step out of that, aren't they? [Laughter] And here's me in Gap t-shirt! I bought this as I come home from work and I was like so I'm single.
Interviewer: Very good Anne. Thank you so much.
Anne: Talk and talk and talk.
Interviewer: It's really interesting and very refreshing to have somebody just so open and honest.
Anne: I've always been argumentative but I remember when I was younger, I must have been fourteen. I have a brother who's one year old than me, I was like, "Why is he allowed to stay out that time and I'm not?" They [parents] were like, "because you're a girl." I was like, "That's not fair". Why can't I be allowed to stay

out because I'm a girl, next year when I'm the same age. I just find that was really unfair.

Interview with Anne-Marie

Interviewer: What is your understanding of critical literacy and what do you think the purpose of it is?
Anne-Marie: I think critical literacy is to help you understand texts to a deeper level. It's not just who's the main character, what's the story about, your opinion of the character, it's more what the author of the text is trying to portray. Perhaps this is more for non-fiction texts than fiction texts. I think also critical literacy it's like Bloom's Taxonomy the way there is the hierarchy of thinking skills. I think it's like moving up levels of complexity. It's analysing texts, evaluating them and developing thinking skills and personal capabilities which is more than just reading between the lines.
Interviewer: Do you think there's a need for teachers to teach critical literacy?
Anne-Marie: Yes, I do, definitely but I think it can be hard to do. I think it's easier for more able children to do. I think you could maybe set a critical literacy extension task for your more able pupils; definitely it's more for them, more able children, because you're less able children are probably going to definitely find it difficult. At Key Stage One you are still focusing on word work and sentence structure and analysing at a very basic level. I think you could bring it in for your more able at Key Stage One children and then for everyone at Key Stage Two but I don't think you could do it in Foundation Stage.
Interviewer: Okay, so you feel that Foundation Stage is a no go age group for critical literacy?
Anne-Marie: Yes, I think so.
Interviewer: You were talking about text there. Can you see critical literacy applying to anything else other than additional texts?
Anne-Marie: Yes, I think it can come into PDMU. For example, where you talked about the Mother's Day cards. I think allowing children to see that yes some mothers might like flowers and all things pink and cooking and baking, but whenever you ask other children what does their mother like to do [voice tails off]. I remember on my teaching practice they were making a calligram and they were writing words about their mom. One boy wrote my mom is sporty and I said nothing but then I mentioned it to the teacher afterwards and she said yes, that's right, his mom is very sporty. I suppose I was just expecting what is normal and then whenever he [the child] said that I thought it was slightly unusual.
Interviewer: But it is the reality isn't it?
Anne-Marie: Yes, that Moms are sporty or whatever and might help him to be. Lots of moms might like DIY, might like painting and decorating and doing things like that.
Interviewer: Do you think critical literacy actually something that is helpful for children to learn? What is the value of it?
Anne-Marie: Yes and especially when children are so exposed to social media and a lot of children might not fit the typical social media norms.
Interviewer: What do you mean by social media norms?
Anne-Marie: They're told to maybe dress a certain way, look a certain way. I know this probably doesn't really apply to primary school but in secondary school when you start getting Instagram accounts and they'll be taking pictures and putting filters on.

I suppose critical literacy can help to normalise things. That it's okay to take one picture and put it up, and it doesn't matter how many likes you get. Everyone is making all these lovely photos just to get likes. I suppose through critical literacy, it's helping children to see that they don't have to act or behave in a certain way.
Interviewer: We talked in class about social justice. What do you think it means to teach literacy for social justice?
Anne-Marie: It's like having a library that may not necessarily reflect the class. You might have a class full of 30 white children, but you want to have a library that reflects the world cultures. You want to have books about black children, Afro Caribbean children, Chinese children, as well as your white children. Books that show how people in other countries live and what they like to do. The reality is you could have a child that is from that background. That will hopefully help them feel included and it's very important that they are included.
Interviewer: So there's a multicultural aspect to teaching literacy for social justice, anything else?
Anne-Marie: I suppose it's reaching out to children from deprived backgrounds too. Recently actually on my teaching practice, the P1 teacher was telling me at Christmas time she'd bought a book for every child in the class and wrapped it up.
Interviewer: Oh, lovely.
Anne-Marie: I know. This one wee girl and I remember the wee girl. She was just so difficult behaviour-wise. The teacher was telling me when she got the book, this was her first ever book. She just stopped and was so still for the first time. She now owned a book. It's so touching. That was a P1 teacher who did that. Hopefully the parents are going to read it to her.
It's very hard because a lot of the less able children - well there was a group of six in my class that were significantly less able than the rest of the children. Nearly every Friday you might only have had three out of the six in schools.
Interviewer: Absenteeism?
Anne-Marie: Yes, that was a big thing.
Interviewer: What's the role of the teacher there Anne-Marie?
Anne-Marie: I suppose you're going to request the note. It's hard because you're asking for the note from the child, but the child is only in P2. It's not the child's fault that he or she is not in school.
Interviewer: Who's fault is it?
Anne-Marie: The parent, definitely.
Interviewer: The parent?
Anne-Marie: There are some very irresponsible parents. You shouldn't probably say that. My teacher would've sent books home with this wee boy and a wee girl who were very weak. The teacher was trying her best to get them reading but the books weren't being taken out of the bag. Most times the child didn't even come to school with a school bag. She [the teacher] was doing everything she could but reading books wouldn't come back.
Then you have the other extreme too, where the parents would do everything they can for their child, reading to them every night.
Interviewer: What's makes difference between the parents who'll not send the book back and the parent who'll do everything they can?

Anne-Marie: I suppose the parent who will do everything they can values education more and perhaps is more educated and knows the importance of education. Whereas the other parent maybe just, well you don't know what's going on in their lives.
Interviewer: That's right.
Anne-Marie: You don't know. Like one wee boy and girl never had a full uniform. He was wearing tracksuit bottoms and a top. On a lot of days there was no coat. It just breaks your heart.
Interviewer: Especially in the winter.
Anne-Marie: Oh God, yes.
Interviewer: What do you think the teacher can do there?
Anne-Marie: A lot of the times when the teacher was teaching lessons she would say to me, ''Take those letters out and go through sounds and making words and stuff,'' so that they were getting some one on one support.
Interviewer: What do you think happens when you're not there?
Mary: That opportunity wasn't there then. During a lot of my lessons the teacher would take those two wee ones out. Even when I had tutor visits when maybe I would've been teaching Music or Art or something, she had them out. That's not right either but the way she looked at it is they might not be in school tomorrow. It's very very hard.
Interviewer: What is very hard?
Anne-Marie: The teacher was so good, she would say, ''These kids are going into P3 now and they're still not reading proper books. It's going to be just so much harder for them".
Interviewer: The gap continues to widen. If you're teaching literacy for social justice, who benefits?
Anne-Marie: I think your whole class is going to benefit. I suppose it's trying to deliver those deep messages, but you'd need nearly all the teachers to be doing critical literacy for it to follow through. Going back to the social media thing, I guess it's so much more powerful than teachers. It's like you're fighting a losing battle, it can seem that way when you're trying to make an impact.
I don't know if that answered the question or not [laughs].
Interviewer: That's a good example. What do you think you've gained or learned from the work we've done in literacy this year? Do you think it's changed the way that you view literacy in any way?
Anne-Marie: Yes. I hadn't really thought about bringing in a wide range of texts before that reflect the cultures. I think maybe that's because in my class I had one child that was just slightly darker than the rest of the children. I suppose also, looking back on my time in school, everyone was white. The reality is I could be teaching in Belfast or Dungannon, even other areas where there is a higher per-centage of diversity.
I think definitely bringing in a wide range of texts, and really looking deeply at the messages that are being portrayed in literature. We should definitely allow our children to develop those higher thinking skills.
Do you know what I think too? Teachers have those exams, the progress tests in English and Maths. I think the pressure teachers are under implies a lack of trust for teachers. I know my teacher, she just had so many things to think about, but in the back of the mind she was always thinking, "These children have to do these tests and I hope they're ready". Everything was just so literacy

and numeracy-driven, but there's a lack of trust in teachers' ability. Everything has to be backed up with data and statistics.
Interviewer: Is critical literacy then just another thing for teachers to do?
Mary: It shouldn't be another thing to do. I think it's very cross-curricular. It can be incorporated through other areas of the curriculum like PDMU, Religion definitely and perhaps the World Around Us.
Interviewer: It can be taught across the curriculum?
Anne-Marie: Yes.
Interviewer: What are your needs and priorities as a student teacher learning to teach literacy?
Anne-Marie: I love how with the comics you showed us practical lessons we can do and the example of the greetings cards too. It's good when you're given ideas that hopefully will spark other ideas.
Interviewer: So practical ideas are very useful?
Anne-Marie: Yes. I loved practical ideas. Just ideas that you can use that will hopefully then spark off other lesson ideas.
Interviewer: If we move on then to question number four. What concerns might you have about taking up a critical literacy perspective in the classroom? Is it something that you feel enthusiastic about? Do you have any reservations about it?
Anne-Marie: I think it's definitely something that I would want to do but I think going out as a newly qualified teacher, if I'm in a school and say you have a P4 class and there is another P4 teacher and they don't do it. Well if you are just new into the school and you're saying, I think we should do this, I wouldn't have the confidence to do that. Just because of my lack of experience coming in new to the school. I think if you're in a school with supportive staff and staff who did do critical literacy, I definitely think I would do it then.
Interviewer: Do you feel, as a student teacher or as an NQT you don't feel that it's your place to suggest things?
Anne-Marie: I don't know. Other staff might be like, "You're just new". Or else you can perhaps talk to the literacy coordinator and give examples of what you've done and then see what she thinks.
Interviewer: Yes. I think that's the great thing. I think if you have ideas and you have skills, whatever they might be, you should be making suggestions and sharing good practice with other teachers.
Just to go back to the questions, why do some children fail in literacy? What factors, contribute to low progress in literacy?
Anne-Marie: I think it comes from those crucial years when children are born. If they're not spoken to and not listened to, and they're put in front of a screen, that's going to have such a huge impact. Even essential communication skills, again I'm going back to this wee P2 class that I had and those two children. They weren't able to give you eye contact. The wee boy was a sweetheart but if you said good morning, there was just nothing. Every day I tried to get the wee girl to say good morning and respond to me. It's just a lack of support from home. They're not read to or talked to, and reading at home is so important.
It's hard for those children to grasp whenever you have more able children, well not all of them are probably getting read to every night, but they're probably being spoken to a lot more.

Interviewer: What other things might be happening to cause a child not to develop in their acquisition of literacy?
Anne-Marie: I think, although the teacher always tries to group the children discreetly, children always know who's up here [top group] and who's down here [bottom group]. I think your less able children know that they're less able and I think sometimes they can lack confidence. When they lack confidence they just think, I can't do it anyway. They have no interest. I think that can have a big impact. I suppose you're trying to include those children with just simple tasks for them to do so they feel a sense of achievement. That can be very hard whenever they see what the more able children are doing.
Interviewer: Do you think the whole structure of the education system, schooling, and teachers themselves have a role to play in the fact that children are failing?
Anne-Marie: I've heard of some schools doing parent workshops where they bring parents in and show them how to do homework with the children. Perhaps telling them to read with their child as much as they can. I think that's a good idea. It's probably more or less aimed at parents who aren't willing to help and who are probably not helping. They'll probably not come though.
Interviewer: Why? Why wouldn't they come?
Anne-Marie: I don't know. They've this perception maybe that the teacher's just [voice tails off]. Their idea is that they [teachers] have read a book and they think they know. I've actually heard that before. It was actually a parent that I worked with in my part-time job in the bakery. It was when her grandson started nursery. The nursery had said this kid has bad behaviour and instead of letting him come every morning they said they were going to phase him in gradually.
She's going off saying, "Just because they've read a good book or two", that's awful and I was surprised when she said that. She's uneducated and I suppose that was just her perception. I don't know. I think it's very interesting that there's a negative perception that parents might hold about teachers. Teachers by and large are well thought of and they're middle class, very educated and so when she says that, and they fit you into a box. Certainly, in most people's minds, if you're far removed from that box and you're not middle class, and you're not educated, someone else should say. It's very easy to have them and us.
Anne-Marie: The labelling?
Interviewer: Yes. Does that then create a problem for the child?
Anne-Marie: Child? Yes.
Interviewer: Can we change that perception of teachers?
Anne-Marie: I don't know. It's a hard thing to do.
Interviewer: How do we change the culture of schooling that it is seen as something for everyone? Do you know what I mean?
Mary: Perhaps it's probably done already, especially in P1. A P1 teacher can make such an impact by knowing that perhaps that parent is uneducated and always making an effort just to be normal and just don't say, "Hi, how high are you? What's the crack?" Just try and get on to their level and maybe try and change their perspective by building relationships. That's important, but then you could have some teachers who are just - that's not what I'm here for. I'm

here for the kids. Then you could have one teacher who makes one wrong move and then that's it.
Interviewer: That's it? Are there parents who are afraid of teachers, afraid of schools, of the education system?
Anne-Marie: Some parents could have bad feelings associated with school if they didn't do well themselves. Perhaps they were bullied or just didn't like it or they just didn't have positive experiences of school. That could be a problem too.
Interviewer: Do you think those parents still want their children to do well at school?
Anne-Marie: Yes. You'd have to be wicked not to want your child to do well at school. It's hard, isn't it?
Interviewer: It is. It's very complex, but it's good to try and look at it from the parents' point of view, which is what you're doing, which is really good.
Anne-Marie: Yes, and if the child is struggling and you approach the parent and say, “Listen, your child is not performing so well". That could just upset them even more.
Interviewer: Absolutely.
Anne-Marie: Those conversations are very difficult. Very difficult, and then the thing is some parents either they don't want to know or they fly off because how dare you make that judgment of my child even though it's an accurate assessment. Then some don't want their child to receive extra help because they don't want their child to be labelled or stigmatised that they might be like they're in denial. Yet without the help, the child isn't going to be supported. Their needs are not going to be met. That can happen.
Interviewer: Just one last question We've talked critical literacy as something you teach children. Do you think teachers themselves need to be critically literate?
Mary: Yes, it's a mindset. It's how you look at things. Your literacy coordinator comes in on a Monday morning and says, "We've got a great new development, we're going to develop reading by introducing ta-dah, whatever." Everybody's going, "Not another one I should do, but I have to do it because that's my job," and they go along with it. If you're critically literate, you would be saying, "Okay, let's take this step back". What's the philosophy behind that? What's different about this?
Interviewer: What’s different?
Anne-Marie: What's the evidence? What does the research say? And rather than jump on the bandwagon and introduce this, no, let's research it. Let's think about it. Let's debate it. Let's explore it, and so on. Yes. I think that.
Interviewer: That would be the difference then if teachers had a critically literate perspective?
Mary: I think though, it's easy for me to say "Yes, that's good. Explore it," all the rest, but if you have 30 children and they've just gone home at 3 o'clock, and you've books to mark, and you've planning, and you've parents to meet, and you have APs to write, and plans to submit, you may be saying, "That's too much for me." I think it's very easy to say, yes. But that's definitely how it should be done in an ideal world. Definitely. Because then that's, I suppose if they need to spend an hour to be in it [the new initiative], then that's an extra hour of work they have to do at home.

Interviewer: It comes back to teacher workload, expectations and accountability?
Anne-Marie: Yeah, in Finland teachers are ranked so much higher.
Interviewer: They are?
Anne-Marie: They're sixth I think in Europe.
Interviewer: Thank you so much for giving me your time.
Anne-Marie: You're welcome. I hope it's okay.
Interviewer: Yes, there are lots of interesting thoughts, ideas, and lots of nice examples I'd be able to use. I'm so appreciative that you volunteered to do the interview.

Appendix 5: Code Book

Transcriptions and Memos 12,862 words	Dataset Initial Codes	Emerging Themes	Meta Themes
Key: **Memos/questions** **Interesting points** **Conversations**			
• I have never thought about it. • Father comes in there, shop at home. It's the same thing. He just hands you the shopping list at the start. He's a bit funny himself and you never really think that much of it but I think it is down to illiteracy. If he does have to do it on his own, he struggles a lot and always misses a few things.	Level of awareness of illiteracy		
• There are more things in place to stop that from happening. • The code of practice for best education, needs and things like that, anybody before that, they wouldn't have been recognised as having dyslexia or any sort of inability to connect with the literature or the literacy curriculum. • The school that I was working in, they had already set up interventions for the children who weren't achieving. • I came from free school meals, but look at me, I'm coming in to be a teacher. • We have such a flexible curriculum. You can make your own decisions about individualized interventions and strategies for the struggling readers.	Belief in the Education system		
• They've basically just been failed by the system. • I was working with the middle band group. They were being left behind because the teachers they focus on the higher body and had the interventions in place for the lower body. • Perhaps a criticism I would have of education systems everywhere is that, we have an obligation as teachers to churn out pupils who can pass exams. Spell well, read well, write well. What about pupils having moral compasses; being contributing citizens to society and things like that? • Personal, social development should have an equal footing to academic achievement too. • Anne: There's just so much on top of you in teaching. There's your curriculum, you've to meet all these targets, check all these boxes. I just want to always make sure I'm always aware of the kids in the class. To care. It's like your core values you	Critical of the Education system		

have to uphold. I think people just write that in their assignment you know what I mean? Then they don't really internalise it and live it and actually do it. Put that in to get a mark. I feel like it's grades, grades, grades. • Anne: I think in our education system if you try and make something work that goes against the system, it's not going to work. If you make something try and work, maybe like little pebbles in a pond at the start and then it gets bigger and bigger and bigger until it's like burning kindling. • Anne: I feel like there's mostly women in education. It's like a women's thing, but if you look higher up it's all men calling the shots. It kills me. In a particular school I was in for example, all the senior people in the school were male, every one of them. I was introduced to the principal, a man, I was introduced to the vice principal, a man I was introduced SENCO, a man. He's floating around the school, does an hour here and an hour there with individual children. He's not going to kill himself and they're all golfing buddies and I was thinking it's just a wee man's club. Then the teacher I was with he was actually doing his principal qualification [PQH]. He was like he had the authority for it. It just shows you that's what they want in the education systems is… Listen to tape. • Mary: Do you know what I think too? Teachers have those exams, the progress tests in English and Maths. I think the pressure teachers are under implies a lack of trust for teachers. I know my teacher, she just had so many things to think about, but in the back of the mind she was always thinking, "These children have to do these tests and I hope they're ready". Everything was just so literacy and numeracy-driven, but there's a lack of trust in teachers' ability. Everything has to be backed up with data and statistics. •			
• I know why they can't read, but what am I going to do to help? Oh wait I never got taught that. We have very few practical activities you can take out with you on teaching practice. Most of our ideas are found on teaching practice, or through trawling through the internet, or just you wake up in the middle of the night and you think of an idea, and it mightn't even work then. I would say that's a problem. • Anne: Talks about students just ticking boxes to get grades. Even when you're doing assignments, you're just wondering what's beyond the assignment. Do you know what I mean? So it's just like pointless. When you've finished your assignment, you're kind of like, "I don't really need to go to that class now." Even	Critical of teacher Education		

though you probably would've learned in that class you don't need it for your assignment. • Lynn: I think a Belfast placement should be mandatory for everyone so they can get a feel of it [teaching in a disadvantaged school]. • Lynn: I think there should be definitely more training in identifying and assessing learning needs, especially in literacy for the children who maybe don't get the help at home and who are really struggling in class.			
• Get children ready for the world. Turn them to thinkers. • Empower them. Independence is a big thing. • To help them contribute to society. In the world of work, the world of--What else is there? • Prepare them for life, living and relationships. • I think it's also meant to inspire them, just tell them that they can be what they want to be and give them every chance to get there.	Purpose of the Education system		
• I did the Volunteer Reading Tutor Programme. • I feel that teachers just need to have that real drive and purpose to go out to make a difference. If we don't stand up and do it, who will? • Schools that are the outliers in the school system, the likes of primary and secondary schools in socially deprived areas such as here in West Belfast teaches can do really really great work and really trump all the statistics. • I watched that Rita Pearson TED Talk. She talks about every kid needing a champion, and I just think that's the most important message. The lowest ones are the ones you should really, really want to help because they're the ones who really need it the most. • I learned most in the disadvantaged schools because the teachers are more motivated to enhance the lives of the pupils in every way. It was more of an awareness or something in the school, and they just were all really motivated to help the children. It was almost as if the label 'disadvantaged' motivated them to improve the status of their pupils. they were really forward thinking, like warriors. They're like the best or something. • Doria: As much as you want to motivate and inspire pupils, I think if it's not enough at home if it's not just enough, I don't think the teacher will ever achieve it. They can make some impact, but I don't think they will really plant the seed for intrinsic motivation in that child.	Agency		

• Doria: Values are really hard to change. They're intrinsic. People's values are based on their experience. It is in the child, it's internal. An external influence that is contrasting in values from home - that's hard. That's really, really tough. It takes a very strong child to be won over by a teacher's influence. • Doria: There are stigmas attached and stigmas are very hard to remove. I think it goes back to the parents, it goes back to the home, but what can you do without causing conflict? That's all it is, isn't it? Creating more of an open atmosphere. I've seen things like get caught reading. There've been ads on TV, even recently on public transport, on buses about reading with your child. • Doria: Creating a more open awareness of education and the values that can come with it, because if they don't know then they can never help if there's a lack of awareness or whatever. It's about creating an ethos to value education, having equal opportunities regardless of money and social status. It shouldn't be about that but that is the challenge. It's the money and the social status. • Doria: I would really be interested in actually finding out what their [working class] perception is because I think that's the only way we can help them. What do you think of school? What do you think of education? I think there's a lot of listening that needs to be done. Teachers are people who are employed based on their capital and where they come from. Those are the people that are probably middle class and they don't understand. I don't understand. • Anne: Teachers need to be aware of it just so they can combat it be like, "Why am I treating this child in this way, or should this child be in that ability group, or what can I do to help them progress?" Even just understanding that some children may not have access to books at home so maybe just having a library in the classroom. • Anya: As a student-teacher it's hard to influence what's happens in schools. Teachers have their timetable and you can't affect it too much. • Cora: Probably what teachers could do maybe outside school, is have support groups and stuff, maybe homework clubs or extra classes. • Mary: A P1 teacher can make such an impact by knowing that perhaps that parent is uneducated and always making an effort just to be normal and just don't say, "Hi, how high are you? What's the crack?" Just try and get on to their level and maybe try and change their perspective by building relationships. That's important, but then you could have some teachers who are just - that's not what I'm here for. I'm here for the kids. Then you could have one teacher who makes one wrong move			

and then that's it. • Lynn: You know yourself if you need to find the ones who won't necessarily have the gumption to go for it themselves, sit with them and work with them. If they get praise and reinforcement in the classroom, then obviously they'll be more self-motivated to learn.			
• Parents' involvement and parental interest is a factor. • It's in context to the home environment that affects, what happens in school as well. If they're coming from a low socioeconomic or disadvantaged background where there is not much support at home or perhaps there's some kind of broken environment or it's very disruptive, things like that. • We all know that it is more likely within the low socioeconomic family. • Doria: I think parents are a massive influence in whether children value education or not. If it's not valued at home, I honestly don't think it's valued in the people. I don't know where it would come from if it's not from the parents. As a qualified teacher, it might be easier especially if you just use those five minutes every day. • Cora: I think it's the parents' fault. It's so frustrating. • Mary: There are some very irresponsible parents. My teacher would've sent books home with this wee boy and a wee girl who were very weak. The teacher was trying her best to get them reading but the books weren't being taken out of the bag. Most times the child didn't even come to school with a school bag. She [the teacher] was doing everything she could but reading books wouldn't come back. Then you have the other extreme too, where the parents would do everything they can for their child, reading to them every night. • Mary: The parent who will do everything they can values education more and perhaps is more educated and knows the importance of education. Whereas the other parent maybe just, well you don't know what's going on in their lives. • Mary: Like one wee boy and girl never had a full uniform. He was wearing tracksuit bottoms and a top. On a lot of days there was no coat. It just breaks your heart. •	Parental role in relation to poor pupil performance		
• Kerry: I would say it's a mixture of the child not being motivated, no help from home, and maybe the teacher has almost forgot about them. The teacher with all demands placed on her doesn't have the time to sit individually with that child. It could be that the teacher doesn't have support like a classroom assistant. It could	Reasons for poor pupil performance	**Prejudicial stereotyping - relationships**	

be that the parent doesn't know where to go with it. The parent is in good communication with the school so that they know how to help their child at home. It could be just that the parent has no interest in helping in their child's education. • Anne: It could be the parents at home. Are they involved? I know a lot of parents feel that's the role of the teacher. Could be self-motivation as well. Do you know what I mean? They are just like this is boring, what's the point of doing it? If their mommies or daddies have a certain job and they're like, "I'm just going to do that when I'm older." • Anne: It can be the teacher as well I feel. You shouldn't be like, "they are not progressing because they can't, they just don't get it." You should be like why are they not doing it? Is it me? Put it on yourself. Is it the way I'm teaching? Is it the voice I'm using or is it, I'm not giving them enough attention? Are the worksheets, not the best? Should we be doing it like this? Are the books interesting? • Anya: I think teachers are looking at it from this big governmental perspective, like a universal perspective rather than the lens of the child in the classroom and their background. They are not seeing the disconnect between children and literacy. They're not thinking about what that child is going through at home. I think that if they are not practicing it at home that's a problem but I do think it should still be the teachers' responsibility. We expect parents to help but it's not a parent's job to teach them how to read. • Anya: I think teachers want to do everything for them but that bottom group, they're not going to ever get up to the rest of the class. I'd say teachers still want to try and help everyone but maybe in some individual cases, when they know they're not getting the support at home and when they accept they are fighting a losing battle. • Ruth: There's not one single cause. It could be because of class background. It could be the fact that their parents haven't supported them at home. It could be poor teaching. It could be because they have a special educational need that hasn't been recognised or was recognised but the parents didn't want their children statemented. Most of the time it comes down to the support they get at home. If the parents don't see literacy as something interesting, if they aren't educated themselves, then more than likely their children will grow up as sort of like in a circular cycle. • Cora: A major influence is going to be the parents. You have reading every night			

and then, you have your spelling and then you're going to have literacy homework a couple of times at least during the week. Even going on beyond homework, some parents will sit and do extra work with their children or read another book. One of the ones that I babysit, she loves reading and her granny has her reading and she's only eight and she's flying through all the books. She just loves it. She can't get enough, so I think the role of parents is so important. I also feel that self-esteem has a major impact. If they're almost scared to do it, they're going to fall behind and they're not even going to concentrate. If they hear the word literacy, they're just going to go into this mindset that they're scared, that they can't do it. They're like, "I can't do it, so what's the point in trying?" It's not the child's fault. • Mary: I think it comes from those crucial years when children are born. If they're not spoken to and not listened to, and they're put in front of a screen, that's going to have such a huge impact. Even essential communication skills, again I'm going back to this wee P2 class that I had and those two children. They weren't able to give you eye contact. The wee boy was a sweetheart but if you said good morning, there was just nothing. Every day I tried to get the wee girl to say good morning and respond to me. It's just a lack of support from home. They're not read to or talked to, and reading at home is so important. It's hard for those children to grasp whenever you have more able children, well not all of them are probably getting read to every night, but they're probably being spoken to a lot more. • Mary: I think, although the teacher always tries to group the children discreetly, children always know who's up here [top group] and who's down here [bottom group]. I think your less able children know that they're less able and I think sometimes they can lack confidence. When they lack confidence they just think, I can't do it anyway. They have no interest. I think that can have a big impact. I suppose you're trying to include those children with just simple tasks for them to do so they feel a sense of achievement. That can be very hard whenever they see what the more able children are doing. • **Mary:** Some parents could have bad feelings associated with school if they didn't do well themselves. Perhaps they were bullied or just didn't like it or they just didn't have positive experiences of school. That could be a problem too. • **Interviewer:** Do you think those parents still want their children to do well at school? • **Mary:** Yes. You'd have to be wicked not to want your child to do well at school. It's			

hard, isn't it? • **Interviewer:** It is. It's very complex, but it's good to try and look at it from the parents' point of view, which is what you're doing, which is really good. • **Mary:** Yes, and if the child is struggling and you approach the parent and say, "Listen, your child is not performing so well". That could just upset them even more. • **Interviewer:** Absolutely. • **Mary:** Those conversations are very difficult. Very difficult, and then the thing is some parents either they don't want to know or they fly off because how dare you make that judgment of my child even though it's an accurate assessment. Then some don't want their child to receive extra help because they don't want their child to be labelled or stigmatised that they might be like they're in denial. Yet without the help, the child isn't going to be supported. Their needs are not going to be met. That can happen. • Lynn: Parents have a lot going on, but parents cannot send their children off to school and think that's it, that's them learning, I don't have to do anything, it's all on the teacher. There's three hours in the school day. • Lynn: It's very hard because you try and get to know your children but parents are very protective of their home and their background. It's not as if you can probe, you can only guess what's going on. It is hard for a teacher to know because children are very very good at giving signs that I don't need help. Children are the trickiest people in the world because they know how to get away with what they can and slip of the radar. •			
• As teachers we want to make things as easy as we can and as comfortable for ourselves, so it's not in our priorities to reach out but of course it should be. The bottom-line is a lot of us would be comfortable enough to just help children and the families. • You imagine you would get much better support from the staff that you're working with. You'd have better resources. I suppose there's going to be more funding. If they're winning prizes, win awards, funds generally come with those. • A lot of people here would rather teach in a middle class school and that's fair enough, that's totally understandable. • Doria: I went to a Grammar school but my sister went to a secondary school. I was	Attitudes and aspirations		

like you're better than this or something. You deserve to be in a better school. • Lynn: [Referring to a working class school] Those teachers are under enormous strain. Then you look at like [names a middle class school] where I went, teachers there seem to really love their work, because they had children who wanted to learn, who were very motivated. The parents had a big impact. Obviously, there were some troublemakers in the school, but for the most part it was people who were happy to learn and who were putting the work in. I feel like if you're in a school like that your professional life is a lot smoother.			
• I think if you're seen as a teacher, the chances are you're going to come from a good comfortable, middle class, socioeconomic background. That's not a judgement, I think that's actually a fact. 95% of teachers that come out of the UK are white middle class, coming from homogeneous, especially from Ireland as well, very homogenous backgrounds and very well established groups and statuses within society. I think that's a big problem. • The state schools are under-performing. I think we'd all prefer, everybody at this table, if given the choice we'd prefer to take a job in a Catholic school rather than a State school. • I'd be happy teaching in an integrated school [one person]. • If teaching's supposed to be a vocation, I thought the ability to empathize would kind of be ingrained no matter what world you come from. Because I'd say a lot of middle class teachers probably come from backgrounds where at least one member of their close family, or as aunties or uncles, are a teacher. • I think in any kind of profession you still get bad eggs. • Doria: I would really be interested in actually finding out what their [working class] perception is because I think that's the only way we can help them. What do you think of school? What do you think of education? I think there's a lot of listening that needs to be done. Teachers are people who are employed based on their capital and where they come from. Those are the people that are probably middle class and they don't understand. I don't understand. •	Teacher identity		
• If you do make suggestions for the parents to help that child, it's up to them to actually enforce those and to implement those changes. • It's on parents as well. When a parent helps with homework but they essentially just do their homework for them and then when the child comes in to get their	Othering: them-us binary	**Prejudicial stereotyping - relationships**	

Friday test or whatever and it's like, "How can you not spell that when you could spell that for your homework?" Obviously their parents were doing it for them. They think they're helping but they're really not at all. • It's probably a really bad stereotype, but children who are from a disadvantaged home mightn't get a lot of attention at home. Then they come to school and act out, and then they get more attention than the children who are sitting quiet and being well behaved. That's one thing I always think about. • I was thinking that teachers can do everything that their parents aren't able to do. The parents are ultimately undoing all that. There's not much progression then as much as teachers may try. • They're not going to get any parental support, we'll be wasting our time and our effort. • Doria: It's largely based on how you want your professional life to be. Do you want to be riding into a nice sleepy suburb in your nice car or parking it where it's going to be smashed up or with the wheels taken off? In terms of comfort, probably middle class but in terms of challenging yourself as a professional, then the more challenging school, but as I said, I would prefer, from my experience, I would honestly prefer to work in a disadvantaged school that was motivated. I want to be there to help. It's the school itself, more than the area or even the pupils. It's the school that's important. It's much more rewarding when you're doing something and working with a great team of people. Type of school she would want to teach in that would give most job satisfaction. • Cora: I don't think it's fair for working class children because of the importance of parents in Education. I've seen it on teaching practice. You notice the children in the middle group who need to work at home. The teacher was saying to me that she has tried to emphasise the importance of this to the parents, but they don't get it. The children are coming in with no homework done. They do have the potential but they just need support at home. One girl came in and was like, "My mom said she didn't have time to do any homework last night." The Teacher got annoyed and was like, "You know what? No-one has time. You have to do it. It's not an option." • **Interviewer:** Do you think the structure of the education system, schooling, and teachers themselves have a role to play in the fact that children are failing? • **Mary:** I've heard of some schools doing parent workshops where they bring parents in and show them how to do homework with the children. Perhaps telling			

them to read with their child as much as they can. I think that's a good idea. It's probably more or less aimed at parents who aren't willing to help and who are probably not helping. They'll probably not come though. • **Interviewer:** Why? Why wouldn't they come? • **Mary:** I don't know. They've this perception maybe that the teacher's just [voice tails off]. Their idea is that they [teachers] have read a book and they think they know. I've actually heard that before. It was actually a parent that I worked with in my part-time job in the bakery. It was when her grandson started nursery. The nursery had said this kid has bad behaviour and instead of letting him come every morning they said they were going to phase him in gradually. • Mary: She's going off saying, "Just because they've read a good book or two", that's awful and I was surprised when she said that. She's uneducated and I suppose that was just her perception. I don't know. I think it's very interesting that there's a negative perception that parents might hold about teachers. Teachers by and large are well thought of and they're middle class, very educated and so when she says that, and they fit you into a box. Certainly, in most people's minds, if you're far removed from that box and you're not middle class, and you're not educated, someone else should say. It's very easy to have them and us. • Lynn: It's not a wealthy area, but I thought it would have been quite up there. When I got there, it actually wasn't at all. There's a lot of newcomer children and there's a lot of the likes of free school meals. You can just get the sense from being in the school. I actually found that those children were a delight to teach. •			
• Then there are the expectations we as schools put on our parents. • I've had a couple of very pastoral teachers. They would always kind of make more of an effort I would have felt to look after the child who didn't have such a nice home life. • Even though the parent wouldn't be on their case to do it, or the parent wouldn't necessarily care how their child is getting on, that would make the teacher work harder for that child because they think they're the only person that's looking out for him. • A lot comes down to the individual teacher. • You could be from a very comfortable middle class background and really have a sense of purpose to go out and work in those areas, so it's all your experience. It's	Good / bad teachers		

your experience and your values. • There are a lot of people who have a real sense of purpose and want to make a difference in schools and with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. • One of the great teaching experiences that I had was in a very disadvantaged area. The principal said that pupils won't care what you know, until they know that you care. That's been ingrained in my head. If you're not really caring and showing your pupils that you care, every day, then don't expect them to listen to what you've got to say, and listen to what you've got to teach. It's that personal social development. • Anne: She was working at a very low level and the teacher was like "her brother was like that, and her other brother was like that". I was like – it doesn't mean to say she's not going to do better. I think because people were saying you're stupid that you believed it and she just didn't try any more. She was just like I'm not good at things like this. • Anne: [Criticising a teacher who focused on Literacy] She just loved literacy. Even like over numeracy it was just like boom boom boom. I noticed the kids were just like not trying anymore. She was doing it so often. She focused on quantity instead of quality. She thought if you do more, you get better at skills and stuff. She's got an artist [Art student] but she was like "you should do this, this way". I was like "that's not me" but you can't really argue on teaching practices, you've got to conform. • Anne: [Criticising another teacher who focused on comprehension] It was all about comprehension. I think he had OCD. I want to be more aware of the kids in the classroom - why is that child reacting like that; what can I do to make them feel better, to make them happier in school. • Mary: A lot of the times when the teacher was teaching lessons she would say to me, ''Take those letters out and go through sounds and making words and stuff,'' so that they were getting some one on one support. During a lot of my lessons the teacher would take those two wee ones out. Even when I had tutor visits when maybe I would've been teaching Music or Art or something, she had them out. That's not right either but the way she looked at it is they might not be in school tomorrow. It's very very hard. The teacher was so good, she would say, ''These kids are going into P3 now and they're still not reading proper books. It's going to be just so much harder for them".			
• If a parent is more involved then the teacher would work harder for the child.	Relationships	**Prejudicial**	**Reproduction**

• I'm coming into this class, 95% of them are on free school meals. You might think, they're not going to be paying attention and this is going to be a terrible year. Then you find out they're all really motivated learners and make a breakthrough. • People in who's care they're in. That teacher, or the parent, or whoever it was who was there when they [the child] were at the point when they should have been getting it all. Children are natural learners, so for someone to fall behind when they're already ready to learn. It's literally just help and support, so whoever's not giving that I think is to blame. Not attributing blame to the system or social mechanisms. • I blame them [the children] and the parents and the teachers. Not attributing blame to the system or social mechanisms. • I don't think it's fair to blame the teacher in a class of 32 for one child who can't read or write and the rest are like level 2 and level 3. I don't think you can blame that teacher because one kid can't make progress, because they've their hands full with 31 others, and they're not even trying to read and write. • I had one teacher who was more focused on getting the higher children further and further, I think she wanted to show off, "look what these high children can do". • Even if she did want to show off, who's to say that that's less important than having one child read than to have the others develop to their full potential? I would say if you're going to blame anything it's probably the structure or the lack of resources, and that comes down to lack of money or government. • Doria: The children I seem to work best with are probably ones who are like me, so probably the middle class just because I understand what's going on at home, the pressure from parents to do well. I wouldn't so much understand middle class pupils, just because of lack of experience. I wouldn't so much know or adopt an attitude that would help them. It's hard to envisage what the disadvantaged child is going through because I can't first-hand experience it from my own personal background. Take for example a child who's been abused. Unless you've been there it's very hard. We can know cognitively, intellectually but unless you have experience and that's why when you hear people sharing stories, when you watch programmes on television about people with very different life experiences, other than hearing from those people, it's very hard to get inside that. • Doria: They're not going to get any parental support, we'll be wasting our time and our effort. All those kind of things, like jobs it's all about the social connections you		**stereotyping - relationships**	**Misrecognition** **Symbolic violence**

have and you have the cultural capital to impress in schools and that's why you're snapped up. There will be people in our year group who don't have those capitals as we call them, and schools will choose somebody who is rich in those capitals first. You've got culture, you've got music, you've got the manners and they know how the...[unintelligible]. • Anne: Being working class doesn't generally mean that you're not going to succeed, even though the statistics show otherwise. You just you can't make this judgment based on where they come from. It's not fair. • Anne: I was in this school. There were three students in the school. One of the things the principal said to me, all three of their mothers were teachers and the principal pointed this out, "Oh, they're all great. They're all good girls." Of course they are, you know their parents are all teachers. "They come from a family of teachers. Did you know that? Did you know that?" and I was thinking, "Well, I actually did because I come from the area myself, so I actually know their parents. • Anne: When you go to a school you have to make a good impression. Sometimes I speak and I have a bit more of an accent. When I'm in schools I'm more like prim and proper if you get me. It's like, oh God they're becoming aware of where I'm from. • Anne: I know a wee girl. She's a Catholic. She went into a Protestant school and then her name didn't say she was Protestant, nothing against them if you get me. but they were asking her, "What school did you go to?" She said, "St. Catherine's". That's a Catholic school and she said she had to eat her lunch in the library and I was like, "No way." I was like, "you're joking." She was on her own. There wasn't any other student there and there weren't even proper seats in the library. They wouldn't let her in the staff-room. They never said why. They just said, "No we don't have student teachers in the staffroom." She says the previous year students were allowed in the staff-room. She thought it was because of where she was from. I think there can be a little bit of discrimination. At the same time, it depends on the person who's at the top, doesn't it, or who has the most power in the school? • Anya: Expectations of pupils. To try, to try hard and to try their best. As long as they try, that's it. You can't torture yourself about it. • Ruth: Most of the time it [underachievement] comes down to the support they get at home. If the parents don't see literacy as something interesting, if they aren't educated themselves, then more than likely their children will grow up as sort of			

like in a circular cycle. There's only so much you can do in schools, so I think a lot of it comes down to parental support. • Cora: It's not really a fair place for them, is it? They're sitting in the classroom and there are children flying ahead of them and they must ask themselves, "Why is this happening?" It's obviously going to affect their self-esteem because they don't realize that the other children's parents have such an influence on them. They're just like, "That child must be so much smarter than me. Why am I not that smart?" • Lynn: A lot of parents will put blame on the teachers. They [working class parents] feel intimidated by teachers. They kind of are know alls. • Lynn: There's a bad stigma because parents only get phoned by teachers about something bad. It's not often you have a teacher phone home to say, "Just to let you know, Bobby was absolutely brilliant today." That doesn't get relayed. It's always, "Just to let you know, your child was in a fight in the playground or he hasn't been bringing his homework in." I feel like teachers don't make the effort. I know there's not a lot of time, but it wouldn't hurt to leave a voicemail to say, "such-and-such is doing brilliantly. Thanks for putting in the effort." It's always a bad thing that they're contacted about. I think that's awful. It would be awesome to send home a weekly congrats note or, "Well done. Keep it up," once a month or something. It would just make such a difference. • Lynn: I feel like some teachers do judge parents.			
• Doria: I think some of them [parents] are just unaware. I think they're maybe just a bit oblivious to further education or what you can be or not having something to aspire to because they're just not aware. • Doria: I did the Michaela Foundation in St Mary's over the summer for a few weeks [summer camp for girls]. There were people coming from Malone Road, Falls Road, Portstewart even. The ones from Malone Road have heard of St. Mary's university. The ones from the Falls Road, who are right on the doorstep, haven't heard of it. They're asking, what is university? You're going, *"What?"* The ones from way up there, they know this is a teacher training College because my cousin went there or my auntie did or they go to university but people on the Falls Road, students from here didn't know there was such thing as university or higher education after you leave school. They're unaware. They'd be like, "Oh, I want to be a teacher," but they've no idea how to get there because it's not talked about probably at home. • Doria: I think we need a middleman type thing. Have teachers who are from that	Middle class logic…underlying assumption is that you can only have empathy with your own class. One is only capable of empathy …what does it mean to teach. Not seeing child as a whole. A w/c child is…who can only	Naïve consciousness	

background in every school, get teachers with experience of impoverished backgrounds. It's so obvious. Even in special needs education, if somebody has a relative who perhaps has Down's syndrome, autism, whatever, they understand. They know exactly how to work with the child. They just suit that area or that field of work, just like the teacher in St. Paul's who just had a passion to help them [disadvantaged children] because she knows what they're going through. I think whenever principals are looking at their staff, they need to make sure that there's a wide range of experience there, that they're not all just brilliant teachers, but they actually have lots of experience that is different, so that if there is an issue, there's a teacher there who understands and has a voice for the child. • Doria: If you're going to get the child on board, the family needs to be on board too. • Ruth: I want to have the kind of class where the children are happy in their school environment and it's not all about who gets the best grades. It's actually that they're happy where they are, they feel that they can talk to me as a teacher, they feel at ease when they come to school, that it's a happy place. Not every child is going to achieve the way you want them to. You can't expect that. You can give them the values and give them important life skills but you can't make a child academic. What I'm trying to say is, not every child will be academic and I don't see that as important. I see it as important to encourage them and give them enthusiasm but at the end of the day I want them to be happy in their education. If they are pushing themselves and they're challenging themselves, then that would make me happy. If they're not academic, that doesn't matter as long as they've learned important values like friendliness, loyalty and respect. • Cora: I really don't understand how someone can get to 16 or 17 and not know how to read and write. It just really baffles me that that can happen here. Do they go to school? It could be attendance couldn't it? Truancy would come back to your attitude towards school. Why would children not want to put the effort in to learn to read and write? Could it be that? Could it be that they don't want to? They don't care? They don't care, so they don't make the effort? Again that would come back to the parents and the values that they set for their children. • Lynn: Some children just have it in them. I've always been called a bit of an education snob. • Lynn: I think it goes back to the parents and time, and the time they put in to extra work with their child. You make the assumption that parents who are wealthy have	be taught by a …humanizing pedagogy. Disadvantage corrodes...]		

been through education and have the work ethic, that they have the, not to say the brains, but they definitely have had a good education themselves so they have a lot to pass on. Whereas lower income parents might not have had the best start with their own education. That's going to have an ongoing effect because they can't help their child that needs help.			
• Homework is stressful…when you'd rather afraid of doing it. • Anne: I'm from a working class background but I didn't really notice it because I was one of the ones that actually got through the system. But when I was reflecting back. Everyone from my secondary school went to do a sports degree or drama degree or like the ones that are non-academic. I'm the only one in my year group that went into teaching. When we were doing UCAS forms in this class, it wasn't like what are you going to apply to do, it was, you're going to apply to do this that or the other. Anne followed a vocational degree route for one year before reapplying to do teacher training. • Anne: Some of them are going home, and they're not in the happiest home environment. Then if they come into school and have no homework done, and the teacher's like, "Why haven't you got that done?" Then the kids, they don't say anything, because although it's hard for them at home, you're making it hard for them in school. I just want to make sure everybody is happy in the class. • Lynn: I think a lot of parents might be embarrassed if their child needed extra help. I almost think a lot of parents are even embarrassed asking for help and scared too - why is it my child that needs the extra help and not their child? • Lynn: Yes, you're in the deep end already because you have a child or a baby that you need to look after and you're just trying to manage yourself. [Not knowing the education system.] • Lynn: I think some student teachers and maybe even teachers are ignorant to the fact that this child isn't at fault. A lot of teachers would like say, 'he doesn't want to do this', whereas it's like he hasn't got the support he needs to do it.	Empathy		
• Lack of opportunity to pursue their interests. When pupils go home, sometimes they might not have opportunities to surf the internet or go to libraries or things like that to really pursue what they like; picking your own books and stuff like that. • Freedom to pursue what they want to do. That's not possible for some children			

especially if they are disadvantaged by a lack of resources and lack of provision. • Confidence - when a child's confidence is not good at the beginning, they're not likely to be motivated to really overcome it, especially if they're not given the support that they need. They're just left floundering and they're not going to want to pursue learning because they'll just think they're going to fail again. • There was a boy. He had Crayola pens and he was setting them out perfectly, and I said, "What does it say?" He's like, "I can't read," without even trying, it was his first automatic reaction and I was like, "Who's told him that?" Has he been told that along the line or he's just internalised it? • Doria: The wealthier child will probably have books already, but they don't show friends a marvellous book, they show them their iPad. Impoverished families are going to try to make themselves not look as if they don't have money, but look as if they are providing for their children the way you are. • Doria: I think it's the barrier between middle and working class. It's not even working class because it's a certain group. It's that tier of people that are very disaffected in a lot of ways by society. They don't feel they belong in a school, an authoritative body, middle-class values, alien concept. • Anne: Our education system is middle class, isn't it? Teachers' behaviour and attitudes are like those of the middle class. If a child doesn't conform to that, the teacher can have this perception or stereotype towards the child and might indirectly put the child into a particular ability grade. Indirectly giving someone else much praise, "oh, that's brilliant" but not realizing why. That person compares themselves, so it becomes like a self-fulfilling prophecy. • Ruth: Homework benefits the children that are getting the support of the parents. I remember in my teaching practice, they used to have to do sentences. Some children would have children would be sitting home writing reams and reams of sentences, and maybe four weeks of nothing being written at all by other children. You could get them to do something creative. One of my teachers got the children make characters out of potatoes. Every child did it, because they absolutely loved it.			
• Disadvantaged are those with free school entitlement. You start to consider that the children who through no fault of their own are disadvantaged because of their socioeconomic status, the parental status, the social status of their parents and it conjures up all sorts of ideas of what their home life is actually like.	Level of understanding of disadvantage	**Structured into ignorance**	**Misrecognition** **Symbolic violence**

• It [disadvantage] switches the other way though, because I've only ever been to disadvantaged schools around this area, and a girl I know went out further away and she said, "They're all wee spoilt rich kids." So it works both ways. • If you go to a very posh school, you'll work with really spoilt children. A lot of rich parents just do not care about them at all and that's not being mean. There's a lot of camps in America where the parents who are incredibly wealthy just leave their kids there because they can afford it, and you often find that some poor kids come from very loving backgrounds. Obviously no one is going to say they are all like that but it would be harmful where the parents are just shipping them there because they don't want to look at them over the summer. You can tell whenever they go back or whenever the parents come to visit that they just can't get away quick enough. It's very sad. I would say that's horrible and you look at the way the child is turning out and you can see that it's because nobody really cares. • Just before the Assembly elections, there was a doctor that was talking about if you live on one side of the Malone Road [middle class area] and another person lives on the other side of Malone Road, they have totally different life expectancies. Again, I guess that's what it comes down to - the area that you live in. Unfortunately, it influences so much, such as, where you get to in school and what kind of life you live. • Another aspect that could be a disadvantage in children is when the child knows that they're a high achiever. There's that pressure to remain a high achiever that could essentially lead to depression. I know there are other children that are feeling depressed because there's a lack of stimulation to the brain or they're overly stimulated but if they can't get stimulated by things in school that could, in effect, lead them to be completely disadvantaged by the education system. • Doria: I think it comes back to the capital in the home. If it's money, it would be in terms of resources. Do you know that even just books, reading your child a bedtime story. It's strange because people from impoverished homes seem to still give their children iPads for Christmas, but that seems to be, "You're getting that, but we've put a lot of money in that." I don't think it's actually educationally beneficial. I think they just need a story. Just give them a story, please. Invest less in what everyone else has, iPads and phones. • Doria: Money is a big thing and the social stigma around the families they come from, family history and family background. In response to why disadvantaged	Architecture of HE reinforces and doesn't challenge thinking		

children underperform in schooling. They're less likely to even do GCSEs. They are more likely to and to Leave school at 16. Even travel - you know traveling to different schools? They just don't have the money to go to another school.			
• It's a taboo thing, I guess. It's a very divisive term. • Teachers are generally coming from a middle-class background. So they are sort of disconnected from the disadvantaged. It's important that they get the experience of disadvantage. • The first two schools I did practice in were both were the children were from very well off families. One definitely more so than the other. Then I did two placements up here in Belfast and my eyes were opened as to what disadvantage actually is. You get to see what disadvantage really is and how schools actually cope with it; the interventions they put in place. It's fantastic and I think so many of us that actually do come from those middle-class backgrounds need to experience these things. Possibly we could do one mandatory Belfast placement. • I would love that. • Yeah, but people don't want to go to challenging schools. They think they will be too challenging, that they're going to have classroom management issues. • Yes but that's real life. It's what you are really going to experience and that's why you need to do it. • So it should be mandatory but it isn't. • It's not that they don't enjoy teaching the children, they just want an easy life for themselves. • It's a confidence thing as well. There are teachers who want to work and influence the lives of these disadvantaged pupils. • Anne: I think teachers really need to be aware of it [social class]. Particularly, like oral language because children from middle-class backgrounds are surrounded by that language at home. Whereas children from working class, although aren't surrounded by the same language, but it doesn't mean their language is inferior. They're [middle-class children] perceived as being more able because of their language. • Parents spend so much money on iPads that you're not going to go out and buy the ?books at the same time. • Mary: I think it comes from those crucial years when children are born. If they're not	Social class	**Fish in water?** **Compliance with the system?**	**Misrecognition** **Symbolic violence**

spoken to and not listened to, and they're put in front of a screen, that's going to have such a huge impact. Even essential communication skills, again I'm going back to this wee P2 class that I had and those two children. They weren't able to give you eye contact. The wee boy was a sweetheart but if you said good morning, there was just nothing. Every day I tried to get the wee girl to say good morning and respond to me. It's just a lack of support from home. They're not read to or talked to, and reading at home is so important. It's hard for those children to grasp whenever you have more able children, well not all of them are probably getting read to every night, but they're probably being spoken to a lot more. • Lynn: The gap between children who had come from quite a wealthy background and those who hadn't was obvious, even in just work ethic. Everyone at the 'bees' table, the top group was from a wealthy background. The ones at the lower tables were from a different background. Their work ethic wasn't as good. The top table, they wanted to please, they wanted to do well. I think it is down to parental influence. [Makes the distinction that middle class parents want their child to get a good education.] Good work and good behavior gets praised in the home. It's not to say the parents of the lower income families wouldn't be doing that, but they mightn't necessarily have the time. I know a lot parents who don't have an education might have to work at bar jobs or restaurant jobs. They mightn't get to see it a lot of their child.			
• I think it depends on how you define equal. Is equal everybody performing the same, or is equal everybody being brought on to their potential, if you know what I mean. • If you have a school were somebody who is not as capable, let's say, it's a P1 who's not as capable as another P1, and by P7 they've both got a B in the eleven plus, or the transfer test, is that equal or is it unequal because the child who was better didn't do better because he wasn't brought on as much as the underachieving child. • I think it depends on how you look at what's equal, because I think a high ability child can suffer as much as a low ability child depending on the emphasis of the school. To say something's equal, or to say a school is equal, is kind of impossible to define. It's just a perfect concept and perfect's not reality. • You'd want to say that every child gets equal opportunities to learn but depending on what the teacher's strengths and values are, they don't. • Not everybody is going to get the same opportunities but you've got your after-school clubs and things like that. Extracurricular activities. • Actually after-school clubs are generally first come, first serve? What if you need	Evidence of some critical, reflexive thinking	**Emergent but constrained critical perspective**	**Misrecognition** **Symbolic violence**

the help but somebody else went ahead of you? • Also, if you need to pay for them. Especially like a camp. The parents have to pay for them. • Things like Taekwondo and all that. • Extra services and stuff. That is how it's lately. • If you do forget your money, you can't go. That's just messed up. • The funding that's available for children in schools…the actual figure is about £13 per child for the entire year. That's shocking. • Staggeringly low. Discursive conversation. The question: are schools equal playing fields for all pupils? • I think it's what every kind of civilized society should do. You look at the most vulnerable and prioritise resources and provision to disadvantaged and deprived areas. • I read something recently, about how education is only a virtue if used virtuously. That was in the context of online trolling. People being Grammar Nazis and things online. Rather than argue back the intellectual point that they're making, people just come along and correct their grammar. Putting people down for not knowing the syntax or for not knowing how to actually form a sentence. Rather than actually having an intellectual conversation with somebody. You're really missing the point of education whenever you are using it to put people down. • Assuming that children should have a good grasp of English and literacy is an unequal conception. For example, the newcomer or the minority ethnic children could come into the class and you would immediately assume that they need more help with English. Perhaps, they might have more development in bilingual or any linguistic skills than any other person in the class, but that's not taken into account sometimes. • I had one teacher who was more focused on getting the higher children further and further, I think she wanted to show off, "look what these high children can do". • Even if she did want to show off, who's to say that that's less important than having one child read than to have the others develop to their full potential? I would say if you're going to blame anything it's probably the structure or the lack of resources, and that comes down to lack of money or government. • Doria: They're all up there [policy makers, educationalists] and they're not listening to parents. They're not creating that space for them. They're saying, "Here's the			

rules, here's what we're doing here". We think we know the best way to let your child excel, but do we? Do we? They don't understand because they don't have the capitals. They're just sitting there confused. they don't they just have an inability maybe to articulate what they're trying to say and therefore, we're like, "Oh, I don't know what you're trying to say, so how am I supposed to help?" Yes, I think it's talking. [Ability to communicate effectively. Lack of linguistic capital.] • Anne: I feel like there's mostly women in education. It's like a women's thing, but if you look higher up it's all men calling the shots. It kills me. In a particular school I was in for example, all the senior people in the school were male, every one of them. I was introduced to the principal, a man, I was introduced to the vice principal, a man I was introduced SENCO, a man. He's floating around the school, does an hour here and an hour there with individual children. He's not going to kill himself and they're all golfing buddies and I was thinking it's just a wee man's club. Then the teacher I was with he was actually doing his principal qualification [PQH]. He was like he had the authority for it. It just shows you that's what they want in the education systems is… Listen to tape. Even for wee girls going through the school system, if you see that the principal and the vice principal are men, the IT coordinator is a man, the SENCO is a man. All the people that have any kind of authority in the school who make the decisions ultimately are male, what message does that keep perpetuating? It's all men at the top. I want to be taken seriously. I want to go all the way to be a principal one day…I got here (College]. •			
• Students have a narrow view and understanding of literacy. • Kerry: It's not just reading the text but finding the meaning behind the text. Then that can be a basis for discussions as there'll be meanings that you didn't think of. It's just good to talk about it, so you can get more depth of understanding. Discussion will make the children think out of their comfort zone. It's trying to make independent thinkers. • You can be brainwashed if you're just looking at things. It's looking at behind what's happening. • Anne: I don't feel like a lot of people are independent thinkers. They're all conforming but they don't realize it. • Anya: You examine the source and the purpose of the text. You're not just taking it for granted, as a passive reader. You're questioning it. That you're wondering, even	Knowledge and understanding of critical literacy	**Emergent and constrained critical perspective**	**Structured and structuring system**

question yourself, why you're reading it and why it's been written. • The purpose is that so you're active in society, that you're not just being fed information, that you've actually got control over what you take in. • Anya: It's like practice or behaviour that you can instil in the classroom. It's just a really nice way of looking at literacy rather than seeing it as just a battery of skills. Even if we are teaching the skills it's just of more everyday value. You know they are not getting judged and tested on it. It's just for their own personal worth in later life. I feel excited about it. • Ruth: Critical literacy is the way that we look at texts and how we analyse them. It gives us different ways of looking at texts and their meanings. It's about getting different viewpoints and looking at them from a critical perspective, which doesn't mean being negative but seeing it from different viewpoints. • Ruth: Critical literacy allows children to question and think, "Well, why should I actually agree with what this is saying? Why do I or should I feel this way?" It's important for them as they get older to actually have a viewpoint on the world and not be swayed by what the media says and by what people tell them. It teaches them a really valuable life lesson, that they should see the world from different point of views. • Ruth: I'd say, it is very difficult to do, especially, when they're growing up in a world when every single day so much is just coming at them from the media. If they're constantly being brought up in a world where they just see everything as a certain way, it's hard for them to go against it, because it's almost like they're going against the norms of society. Society indoctrinates them so it's finding a way to actually get them to challenge their thinking which can be hard for a teacher to do. • Ruth: It sort of taught me that it's important to show children that there isn't just one view in life, that they have to look at things from different viewpoints; to take a stance back and say, "right, what is this actually trying to say to me?" • Ruth: You look at texts for things like bias, prejudice and stereotype. Prejudices that are being perpetuated through the media and through literature can actually damage people. It's important to look at how that affects people. It's kind of teaching you to think - Right. Well, I'll look at it from this aspect, but there could be another side to the story. It teaches life skills which are a very important part of education. • Ruth: I love it [critical literacy] because it's my subject. I love the fact that we're actually teaching children those skills and then part of me is thinking. At the			

younger end it's hard because you're trying to teach them how to read. How do you bring it down to the level of younger children? • Cora: It's about making sure that the children know what the purpose of a text is, what the writer's purpose is in writing it. It's about have them making sure that there's no inequality in texts. • Cora: I didn't really know the need for it [critical literacy] up until now. You just think about, "What am I going to do in literacy?" As long as you've got your differentiation, learning intentions, just go teach it. There's so much more that can be done. Even with texts, there's so much that you can bring out of it. You can go into all these different things, like looking at different cultures or different social groups and stuff. • Mary: I think critical literacy is to help you understand texts to a deeper level. It's more what the author of the text is trying to portray. A hierarchy of thinking skills. I think it's like moving up levels of complexity. It's analysing texts, evaluating them and developing thinking skills and personal capabilities which is more than just reading between the lines. • Mary: Yes, I do, definitely but I think it can be hard to do. I think it's easier for more able children to do. I think you could maybe set a critical literacy extension task for your more able pupils; definitely it's more for them, more able children, because you're less able children are probably going to definitely find it difficult. • Mary: I remember on my teaching practice they were making a calligram and they were writing words about their mom. One boy wrote my mom is sporty and I said nothing but then I mentioned it to the teacher afterwards and she said yes, that's right, his mom is very sporty. I suppose I was just expecting what is normal and then whenever he [the child] said that I thought it was slightly unusual. • Mary: It's a mindset. It's how you look at things. Your literacy coordinator comes in on a Monday morning and says, "We've got a great new development, we're going to develop reading by introducing ta-dah, whatever." Everybody's going, "Not another one I should do, but I have to do it because that's my job," and they go along with it. If you're critically literate, you would be saying, "Okay, let's take this step back". What's the philosophy behind that? What's different about this? • Mary: What's the evidence? What does the research say? And rather than jump on the bandwagon and introduce this, no, let's research it. Let's think about it. Let's debate it. Let's explore it, and so on. Yes. I think that.			

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• Kerry: You could teach about race and different cultures and even the way different cultures operate, to show them a wider spectrum of people than they're used to from their own wee bubble. • Kerry: The ones who are hard done by, the working class, would benefit from a more socially just education system because our education system would be more fair. • Had you ever thought about social class before? Kerry: I actually hadn't. It's made me think a lot about it. Just how our system is quite a middle-class system and I never thought of it in that way until we talked about social justice. It was then that I realised the teacher can do so much to be socially just. I never thought that one child could be progressing so much outside the school in comparison to another just because of the money they can afford, or the drive from their parents. It is so unfair, but it's hard to make it socially just, but teachers in schools should definitely as far as they can in school. Kerry goes on to give the following example: Every afternoon if they were doing art or something, the classroom assistant would take that group out and give them extra support. Lack of critical perspective. • Kerry: The library in my school, it was very much suited to the children who were in the class. It wasn't anything different to what they knew. Lack of critical perspective. I think to create a library like the one you have here, one that is completely diverse and then they're learning so much through the literature and make sure that there is a lot of discussion follow reading the literature. • Anya: I think it's hard to define. Who is disadvantaged? Poor people and black people. • Who benefits? I'd say the whole class. Even if you are white and middle-class it teaches you empathy and understanding, how to get on with others, and how to be a good person. Well, I guess that's so important for us who are teaching children. • Anya: I was never taught by a male primary school teacher, but I always had two male head teachers, two male principals. It's the boys in here, they get so many more allowances. • Ruth: I would say that literacy is very, very important for social justice as well. Often you find in schools, I've seen it myself as a teacher, the differences in children who maybe come from middle-class background and have come from a wealth of literature, their vocabulary, their reading, their literacy skills in general are going	Knowledge and understanding of teaching for social justice	**Emergent but constrained critical perspective**	**Structured and structuring social conditioning**

to be very, very good. Whereas if you compare them with a child who comes from a working-class background, they may feel that well, it's not that they may fail, it's maybe that their parents haven't got the money to spend in the same way as middle-class parents do. It's not always the case, but you can see it in the classroom and how that affects the child. Literacy, and the way it's taught can really help those children overcome the challenges of their social class backgrounds. • Cora: I see the importance of having multicultural texts in the classroom. Even if there are not different cultures in your class it's important to have a range of cultural texts so that children are aware that there are many different cultures. Where I come from, Derry, it's just all the same people. We're not all the same and all the stereotypes that are there, to work at that, to get rid of it. In my primary school class, there was one Black boy and that was it. He was the only one in the whole school. It was like a big deal that he was there. • Mary: It's like having a library that may not necessarily reflect the class. You might have a class full of 30 white children, but you want to have a library that reflects the world cultures. You want to have books about black children, Afro Caribbean children, Chinese children, as well as your white children. Books that show how people in other countries live and what they like to do. The reality is you could have a child that is from that background. That will hopefully help them feel included and it's very important that they are included. It's reaching out to children from deprived backgrounds too. Recently actually on my teaching practice, the P1 teacher was telling me at Christmas time she'd bought a book for every child in the class and wrapped it up. • Mary: There was a group of six in my class that were significantly less able than the rest of the children. Nearly every Friday you might only have had three out of the six in schools. I suppose you're going to request the note. It's hard because you're asking for the note from the child, but the child is only in P2. It's not the child's fault that he or she is not in school. • Mary: I hadn't really thought about bringing in a wide range of texts before that reflect the cultures. I think maybe that's because in my class I had one child that was just slightly darker than the rest of the children. I suppose also, looking back on my time in school, everyone was white. The reality is I could be teaching in Belfast or Dungannon, even other areas where there is a higher per-centage of diversity.			

• Kerry: I think it's a great idea to get children to think outside their comfort zone. I really like the idea of developing independent, more divergent thinking rather than convergent thinking. My only concern would be you've no idea what the children will say back to you and it could be a sensitive issue. That would be my only fear about it, but I think once you're in the moment you'd know what to say and you'd know how to deal with the responses. I would have a few reservations, but that wouldn't out-weigh teaching for social justice. I think I will definitely do more critical literacy. I definitely haven't thought about it until this year. • Kerry: I think on teaching practice I'd be hesitant though because it's not my class but as a teacher, I would maybe gradually bring it in. Maybe the odd time. Obviously, I'd discuss it with the principal and staff, as well. I think would be best, then just gradually bring it in. • Mary: I think your whole class is going to benefit. I suppose it's trying to deliver those deep messages, but you'd need nearly all the teachers to be doing critical literacy for it to follow through. Going back to the social media thing, I guess it's so much more powerful than teachers. It's like you're fighting a losing battle, it can seem that way when you're trying to make an impact. • Mary: I think it's definitely something that I would want to do but I think going out as a newly qualified teacher, if I'm in a school and say you have a P4 class and there is another P4 teacher and they don't do it. Well if you are just new into the school and you're saying, I think we should do this, I wouldn't have the confidence to do that. Just because of my lack of experience coming in new to the school. I think if you're in a school with supportive staff and staff who did do critical literacy, I definitely think I would do it then.	Concerns about teaching for social justice; teaching critical literacy	**Constrained critical perspective**	**Structured and structuring social conditioning**
• What are your needs as a student teacher regards learning about the teaching of literacy? Kerry: To know what is taught in literacy in each year group and to know about the curriculum. Before I came here, I wasn't even aware of phonics, which is awful. I'd like more creative ideas on how to teach literacy because I just think of comprehensions. I want to be taught how to plan lessons that are fun rather than just a lot of writing. • Ruth: How you actually go about teaching children literacy, things like phonics, even just basic things as well like how you teach children to hold a pencil and stuff	Student teacher needs Compliance with the system	**To be fish in water**	**Habitus** **Misrecognition** **Symbolic violence**

like that. Theory too. The theory about how to do it, but it's the pedagogy seems to be the most important thing because that's what it's all about. • Mary: I loved practical ideas. Just ideas that you can use that will hopefully then spark off other lesson ideas.			

Appendix 6: Extract from Field Notes

BEd3 Literacy Week Two: Literacy Changes Lives

Thursday 4th October 2018

Impact of resources and learning materials

The documentary *Can't Read, Can't Write* had a powerful and profound impact on the students who all found the film emotional to watch. It certainly seemed to raise the students' awareness of the pain of living everyday life with poor literacy skills. I was pleased to see how the students responded. There was obvious empathy, and a heightened sense of responsibility and professional duty. This was designed to be a perspective taking exercise and to that end, I think it worked very well.

Impact and response to the pedagogic approach

The documentary provided an excellent stimulus for reflection and discussion. The students talked a lot about their role and their heightened sense of responsibility to teach *all* learners to read. One of the students commented on how we take being able to read for granted. This led to us discussing the concept of privilege, a topic that will be explored in depth in the next session.

Verbatim student comments

Kerry: *It saddened me to see how the people in the film struggled with life.*

Ailish: *My heart was breaking for the people who couldn't read*.

Ruth: *The film was a real eye opener…so emotional to watch.*

Denise: *It evokes emotion witnessing an adult becoming so excited over being able to read the word ham. Watching the film shocked me. It makes me worried, as I want to be able to teach all my pupils to read and write.*

Louise: *Such an emotional and powerful documentary. I feel quite scared because of the responsibility. Not teaching a child properly could have such a negative impact on their life.*

Orla: I never realised the impact not being able to read would have on a person. I feel responsible for making sure I prevent any child from living a life without words.

Self-reflective commentary (which included my emotions and responses to the students)

I worried that the film might make the students feel overwhelmed or despondent. However, their responses though emotive were mature and reasoned. I took care to develop the session towards more positive thinking. For example, we talked about how a good teacher can make a good difference, about the concept of excellence that we concluded to be, for example, caring, having a vision, having high expectations for all learners, and being fair. I also shared a story about a school that had I visited, one in which 83% of pupils were on free school meals, where the teachers were working with pupils in a transformative way.

At the end of the session, one of the students (not participating in the study) confided in me that her mum had taught her father to read. Another, works in a shop, shared a story about a man who hands her his shopping list for her to get the items and she thinks it is because he can't read it. These revelations were unexpected. I had assumed that the students' experience of illiteracy would be negligible. It was a lesson for me about not making assumptions. In general however, there was a sense of the students being distanced from such difficulties as illiteracy. This was reflected in their shocked responses. I am keen to see how their awareness and understanding might develop over the duration of the course.

Overall, I was delighted at the students' engagement, response and attitude. I think this has been a highly valuable learning experience for them, one that at some level will remain a part of them in the years to come.

Spontaneous thoughts such as tentative links to literature and ideas for the next teaching session

Chubbuck (2010) makes a point about emotions being reserved for certain groups. I am curious to see what the students' emotions, as well as their beliefs, values and attitudes (Shor, 1991) towards the disadvantaged are in the coming weeks.

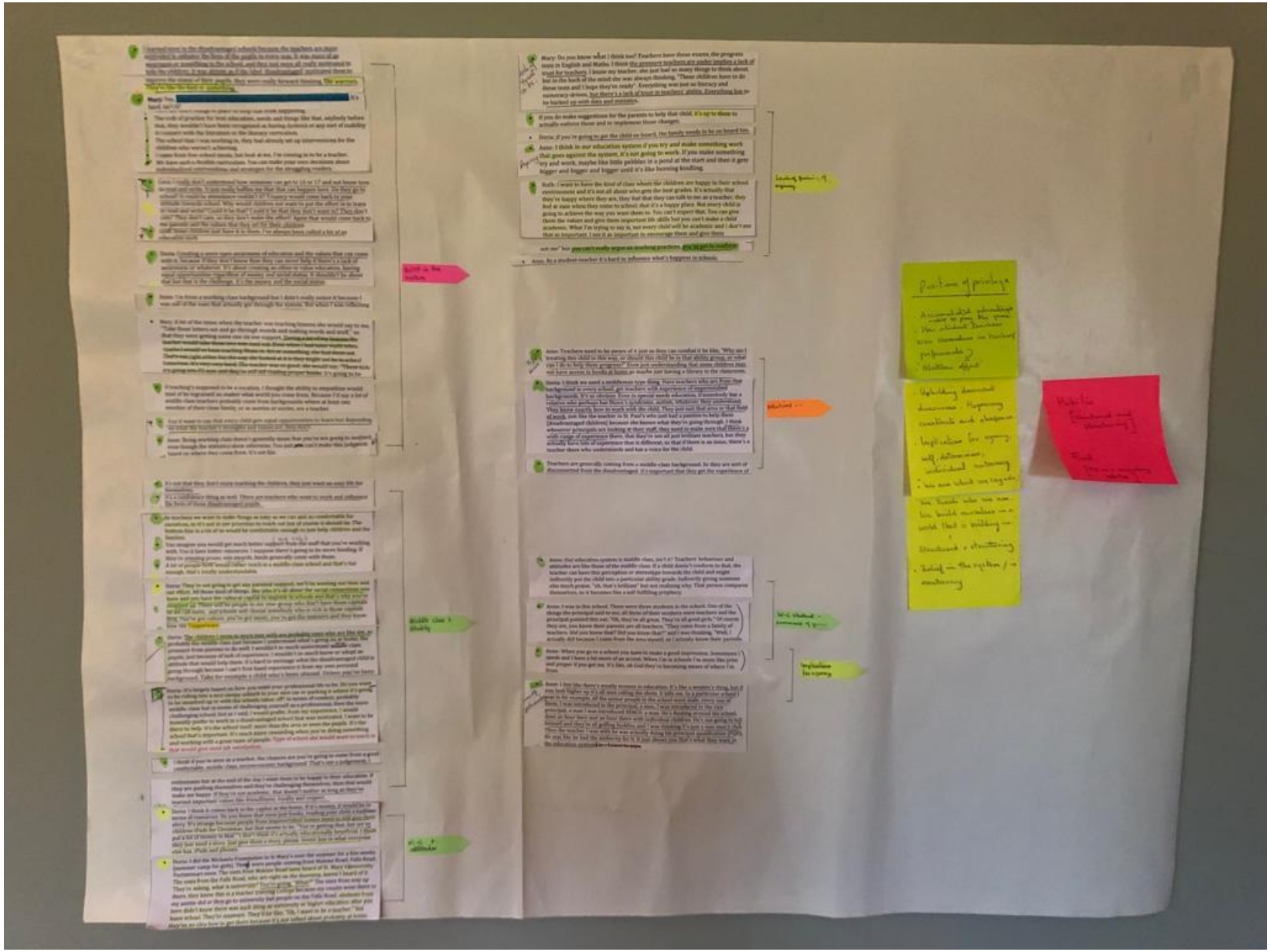
I am keen to see whether or not the impact of this learning experience endures. Will the students remember the pain Linda, Teresa and the other adults experienced in the coming weeks?

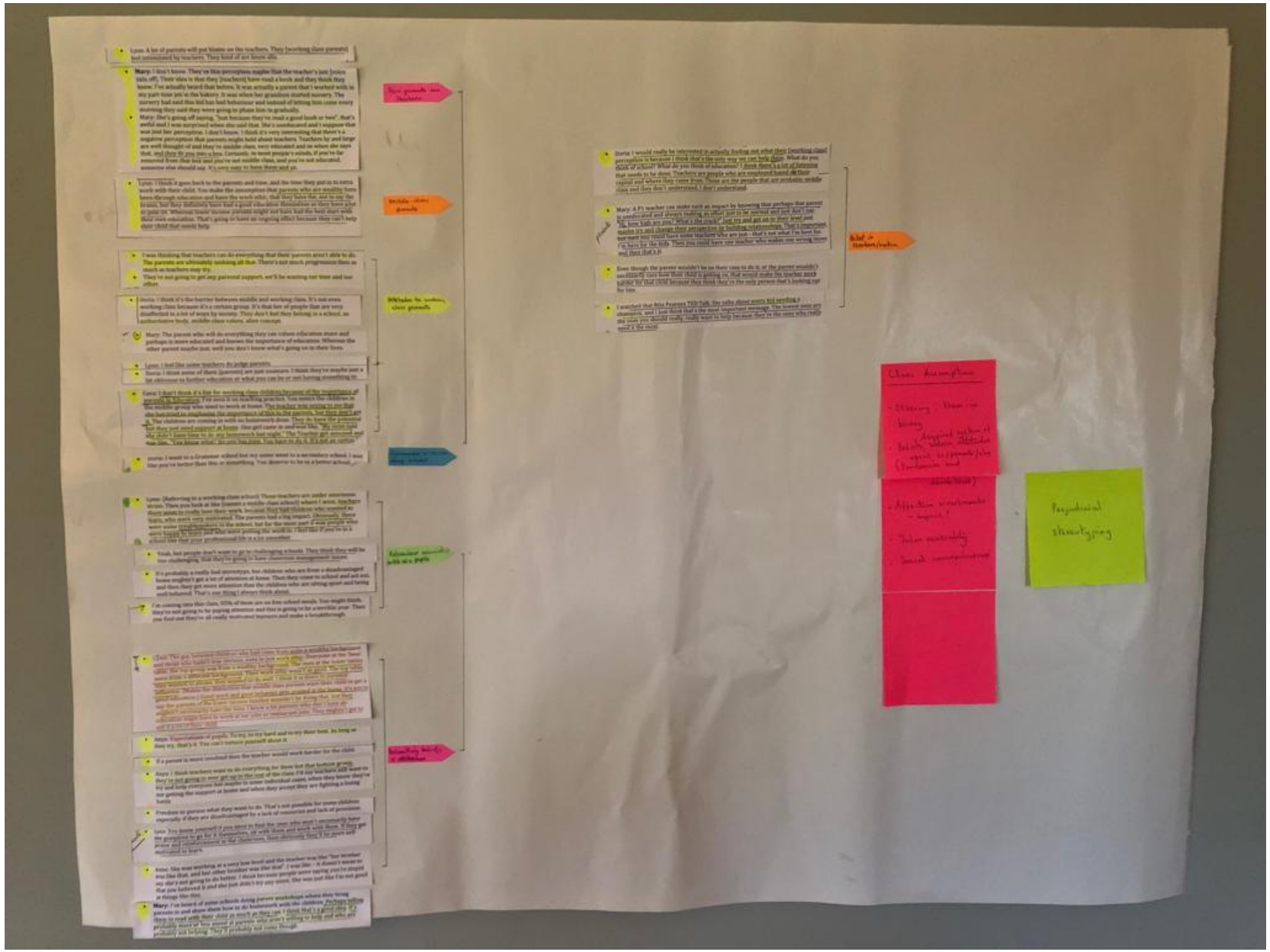
Being able to read was not perceived as a privilege initially. It was as one student said something taken for granted. The concept of structural privilege needs to be much better understood. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977)

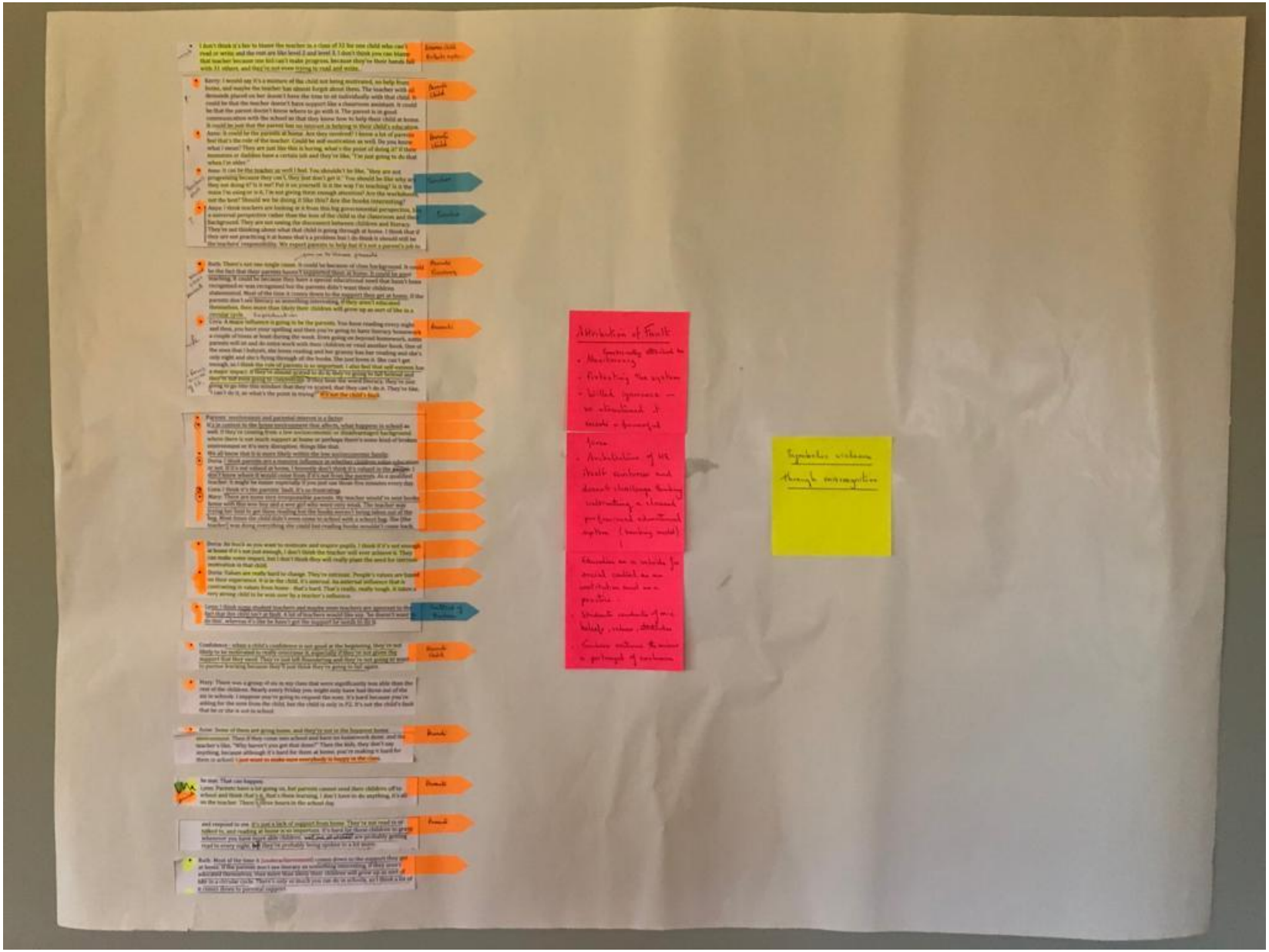
There was surprise at how likable and intelligent the adult literacy learners were. Is this because the students don't read or have not read the books Linda (in the film) wanted to read, Hemingway and Shakespeare's Sonnets for example.

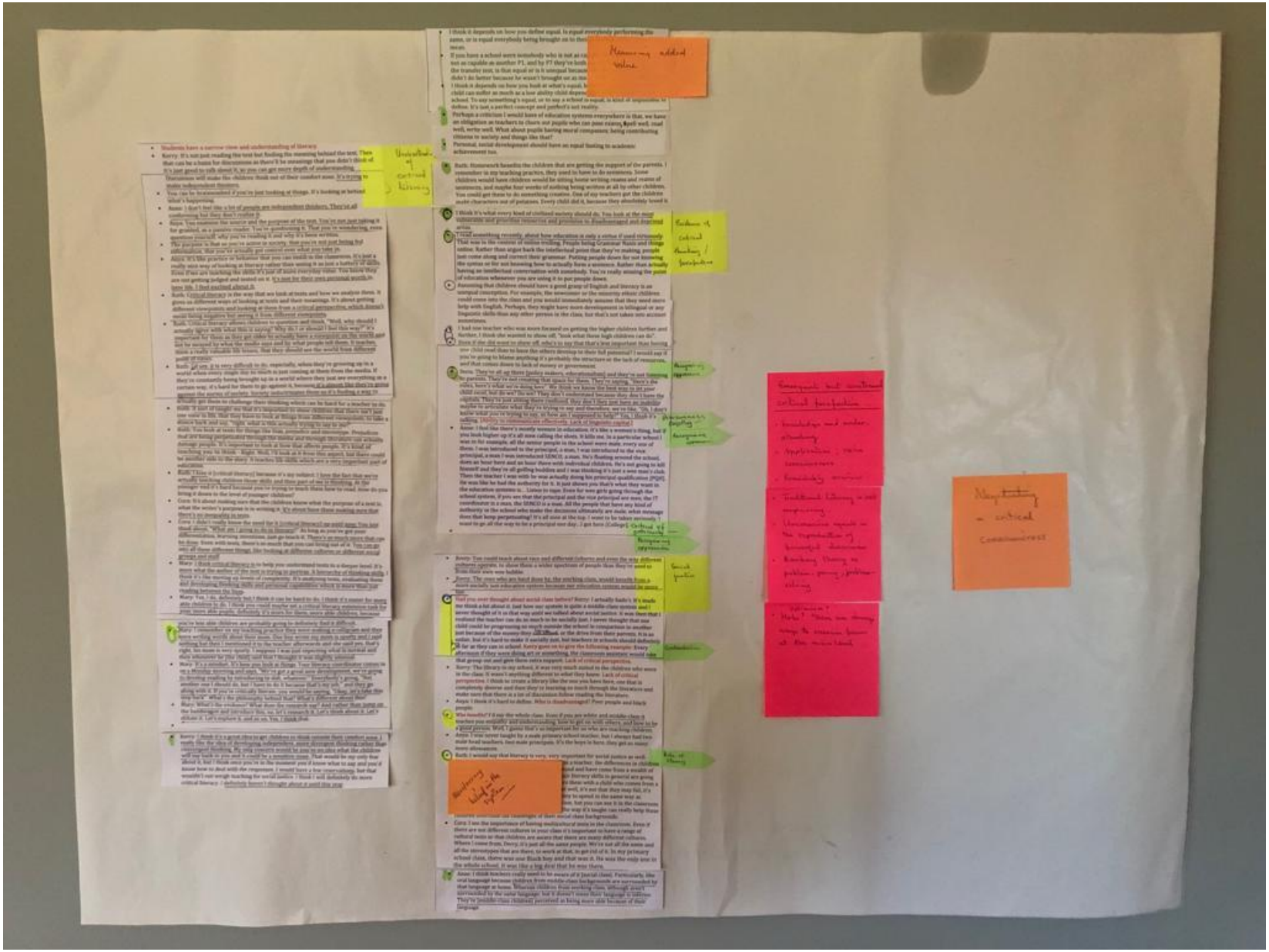
This session drew on a superb resource. It provided context and a rationale for the work to follow which I am feeling very optimistic and hopeful about.

Appendix 7: Thematic Matrices




Class Assumptions
Prejudicial stereotyping


Attribution of Fault
Symbolic violence through assumptions



Appendix 8: Interview Questions

Focus Group Questions

1. As a student teacher, what is it that you expect from your literacy lectures? What are your needs and priorities?
2. Have you heard the term 'critical literacy'? What do you think it is?
3. Have you heard the term 'social justice? What do you think it means?
4. Do you think education is an equal playing field for all pupils?
    a. Is traditional schooling good for all pupils?
    b. In your opinion does the education framework advantage/disadvantage some pupils more than others?
5. What factors contribute to some children leaving school with a low level of literacy?
    a. What are the reasons for children failing in literacy?
    b. What factors contribute to low progress in literacy?
6. We often use the term 'disadvantaged' to describe certain groups of pupils. Who would you describe as the 'disadvantaged' in our society?
7. To what extent do you think teachers can positively influence disadvantaged children's lives?
8. Do you think *all* teachers want to work with and influence the lives of disadvantaged pupils?
9. How confident do you feel in your ability to influence disadvantaged children's lives? In other words, do you feel well enough trained to support the most disadvantaged children?

Individual Interview Questions

1. What is your understanding of critical literacy?
2. What is the purpose of critical literacy?
3. Do you think there is a need to develop pupils' critical literacy skills?
4. What is your understanding of social justice and the concept of good and just teaching?
5. Who stands to benefit from socially just teaching?
6. What do you think you might have gained from the critical literacy work we did this year?
    a. What will you take away from your literacy course this year?
    b. Has it made you look at the role of literacy teaching and learning any differently?
    c. Is there anything you were encouraged to think about this year that that maybe you haven't had to before?

7. Would you have any reservations or concerns about teaching critical literacy? Is it something you feel enthusiastic about or something you have reservations about?
8. As a student teacher, what is it that you expect from your literacy lectures? What are your needs and priorities?
9. What factors contribute to some children leaving school with a low level of literacy?
    a. What are the reasons for children failing in literacy?
    b. What factors contribute to low progress in literacy?

Appendix 9: Copyright Permission

From: Archives Photo Library <ArchivesPhotoLibrary@bbc.co.uk>
Sent: Thursday, January 2, 2020 11:55 PM
To: Donna Hazzard <d.hazzard@stmarys-belfast.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: Permissions request

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Kate