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The power of one? Conditions which challenge managerial professional development practices

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This paper draws upon Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of habitus, capital and field to better understand and appreciate the conditions which encouraged the productive professional development practices of one very capable teacher working in a secondary school in the British Midlands. Rather than celebrating this teacher's practices and perspective as evidence of the capacity of the heroic individual to overcome sometimes adverse circumstances, the paper reveals how the experiences of this teacher can be understood as an instance of the socially situated self, engaged by and engaging in an alternative politics to that associated with more managerial conceptions of teacher learning. The research calls for a cautious approach to those renderings of educational practice which construe the creative potential of the habitus, without sufficient regard for the actual conditions which contribute towards this creativity. In this way, the paper is presented not as an example of how one teacher overcame significant barriers to substantive learning practices – as a morality tale for other, individual educators to emulate – but as a provocation to suggest how some teachers' access to professional/community resources help them sustain a clear focus on substantive learning.

Keywords: Teacher professional development; Bourdieu; managerialism; individualism

Introduction

This paper provides insights into the conditions which contributed to the teacher professional development practices of one teacher working in a large, established secondary school in the British Midlands. This teacher's experiences were deemed worthy of further exploration, because in many ways, they constitute an alternative to more dominant professional development experiences of teachers in the English context. The paper argues that the approach to learning adopted by this teacher tapped into a variety of peculiarly local conditions which enabled his development in a sustained way. Revealing these conditions is important for fostering substantive teacher learning experiences for student learning.

The paper explores this teacher's learning experiences in the context of how professional development is typically supported in policy, and undertaken by teachers in schooling settings, with a focus on England. As such, the selected teacher's learning experiences represent alternatives to more dominant, sporadic, and sometimes managerial

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approaches. To make sense of this teacher's socially situated learning practices as contrasting with more sporadic approaches, the paper draws suggestively upon Bourdieu's notion of social practices as undertaken within identifiable, contested social 'fields'. The paper also draws upon Reay's (2004) notion of habitus as productive of creative responses in spite of more detrimental social conditions under which it has been formed. Most importantly, while revealing these agentic possibilities, the paper cautions that it is essential not to lose sight of the nature of the conditions within which habitus is enacted, and how these conditions constitute habitus, and practice more generally.

The literature: Understanding current conditions of teacher learning

Teachers' professional development (PD)[1], or 'continuing professional development' (CPD) as it is often described in British settings, has been significantly influenced by what Day and Sachs (2004) have described as more 'managerial' influences, as well as more 'democratic' proclivities. More democratic approaches emphasise teachers taking responsibility for their learning, focusing upon more localised needs, and typically working together with school-based colleagues, and/or other educators. Managerial approaches typically treat teachers as individuals, and are often construed in terms of compliance with specific government-supported initiatives and bureaucratic conceptions of systemic requirements. Importantly, these authors note that such influences occur concurrently, and that in practice, actual position-takings reflect a variety of stances along a continuum between more extreme 'ideal' types of such phenomena, rather than clearly delineated stances at the boundaries of such continua. At the same time, under current conditions, teacher learning practices have become more reactive in response to managerial demands (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009).

More managerial approaches can be identified in some of the professional development practices of teachers in England. A recent large-scale study into the nature of CPD practices in schools in England (which had 1126 responses) found individual, isolated workshop approaches typify teachers' learning practices, many of which were associated with compliance with specific government priorities (Pedder, Storey, & Opfer, 2008). Similarly, Hustler, McNamara, Jarvis, Londra and Campbell (2003) reveal how 72% of 2259 survey respondents believed too many PD days in England were driven by national foci. While acknowledging that not all workshops are managerial in nature, more managerial approaches to professional development in western settings are a significant part of the teacher learning landscape, and tend to dominate over what Webster-Wright (2009) describes as more 'authentic learning' approaches involving learners improving practice *in situ*. Managerial iterations of these more passive approaches to teacher learning reflect changing conceptions of teacher professionalism. Under these circumstances, 'delivery' models often predominate, in which teachers become recipients of instances and examples of 'best practice' (Pickering, Daly, & Pachler, 2007, p. 193).

Hodkinson (2009) reports how working in a more managerial context – with an emphasis upon performance management, classroom inspections, and schools' rankings on league tables – exacerbates time constraints, encourages PD as an 'add-on', and fosters conditions in which improved standardised test scores are most valued. The result

is an emphasis upon testing specific skills (Jacob, 2005), and a general sense in which 'what gets measured gets done' (Wilson, Croxson, & Atkinson, 2006). In the English context, this emphasis upon results currently includes a strong focus upon the proportion of students receiving passing grades (A to C) in the GCSE (Wilson et al., 2006).

However, teachers do not lack agency under these circumstances. Even under such conditions, research into the micropolitics of teacher and schooling practices reveals teachers' responses to educational reform initiatives with which they disagree, or to which they have little affiliation, result in not only emotional turmoil amongst teachers but also resistance (Kelchtermans, 2005). Hoyle and Wallace (2007) refer to 'principled infidelity' to capture how teachers and principals seek to manage policy and accountability reform and overload, by appearing to respond to policy demands without actually doing so, and, on occasions, to do so would be to disadvantage their students. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) argue that incorporating a micropolitical perspective as part of teacher learning is an essential part of understanding teachers' professional development. Such a stance reveals teachers also simultaneously engage in more ongoing, productive and substantive learning initiatives, thereby challenging narrower managerial approaches. In England, for example, a large scale review of relevant literature found that 11% of teachers undertook university accredited courses (Pedder et al., 2008). Pickering et al. (2007) also reveal how teachers' collaboration in a Master's programme offered through the University of London led to teachers being more readily able to critique their own practices. While teacher agency can be co-opted through, for example, managerial applications of democratic discourses of 'distributed' leadership (Hatcher, 2005), teachers actively interpret these various conditions and the policies which influence their work, and are not simply passive objects of more managerial policy reform (Braun, Maguire, & Ball, 2010).

Consequently, current theorising reveals that while more managerial iterations of teachers' learning exert influence, there is also evidence of alternative practices, and of teachers creating conditions productive of alternatives to managerial approaches, even as they enact and engage in such practices. Shedding further light specifically on how and why some teachers are creative and active in managing more managerial policy conditions, as well as how such foci influence teachers' work, is important for understanding the complexity of resultant practices (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011).

Theoretical resources: Comprehending contestation

To better understand how some teachers seem to be able to challenge more reductionist, managerial conditions in the context of the contestation which characterises teachers' PD practices, the paper draws suggestively upon Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) notion of the habitus as actively constituted in contested circumstances, as well as Reay's notion of the habitus as capable of self-scrutiny, self improvement and creativity (Reay, 2004; Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2009). For Bourdieu, social practices are intensely relational; that is, practices are developed *in situ* and only make sense in relation to other possible practices within any given social space, or what Bourdieu describes as a 'field'. Fields are 'historically constituted areas of activity with their specific institutions and their own

laws of functioning' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 87). These specific properties are the result of a process of contestation over the practices considered legitimate at any given time. The practices which come to dominate within fields are both reflective and productive of the particular dispositions of those who occupy them. These dispositions constitute the 'habitus' of individuals and groups who comprise the field, and are responsible for particular characteristics, or 'logics' of practice. Consequently, habitus is the product of a long process of socialisation into particular ways of being, and reflects the success (or otherwise) of the symbolic violence which attends this process. Habitus is intimately imbricated within the broader social structures within which it is located, and influences individuals' and groups' actions.

Individuals and groups are disposed to particular fields and embody a particular habitus as a result of engagement in specific fields, and a consequent process of accumulation of resources or 'capitals' available within those fields. These capitals exist in multiple forms, including in economic, social, and cultural modes (Bourdieu, 1986). The accumulation of particular capitals enables individuals and groups to exercise more or less influence within fields, depending upon the capitals most valued. Through this process of capital accumulation, habitus is produced which reflects prior experiences: 'The habitus, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 54).

Importantly, and at the same time, the dispositions of those who occupy any given field are not static. Rather, through a process of socioanalysis – analysis of the particular circumstances on the part of those influenced by them – actors seek to understand, critique, and alter their practices (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu's articulation of habitus was in contrast with conceptions of 'habit', and ensured a focus upon a 'generative (if not creative) capacity inscribed in the system of dispositions as an *art*, in the strongest sense of practical mastery, and in particular as an *ars inveniendi*' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 122; emphasis original). There is also a sense in which the habitus is not fully regulated, even as it is influenced by previous experiences: 'the habitus goes hand in glove with vagueness and indeterminacy' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 77). Such a process always occurs *in situ*, cannot be readily predicted, and may not unfold in ways hoped for or anticipated by those engaging in it. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that Bourdieu's notion of habitus has been critiqued as being overly deterministic, and not sufficiently agentic in orientation (Jenkins, 2002). Some theorists are even more critical, arguing Bourdieu's efforts to overcome the structure/agency divide are inherently incoherent (LiPuma, 1993). Specific concerns have also been expressed about the way in which habitus has been operationalised in educational research (Nash, 1999); Reay (2004) has described how notions of habitus have been operationalised in superficial ways in some educational research, often 'overlaid' in research analyses rather than being employed in relation to data and empirical settings (Reay, 2004).

Nevertheless, notions of habitus 'can be made to work' (Reay, 2004, p. 431) in educational research in relation to redressing mind/body and structure/agency dualisms, and as a mechanism for productive change through a more socioanalytical process. In the context of teachers' professional development, this more productive stance could include an active and positive disposition towards teachers' learning, even under conditions which do not institutionally support such a stance. In their research on working-class

students in elite universities, for example, Reay et al. (2009) revealed how many of these 'successful' students constantly worked on themselves, even under broader social circumstances which might not readily lend themselves to challenging more dominant class dispositions. This self-conscious reflexivity entails a process in which 'self-awareness and a propensity for self-improvement become incorporated into the habitus' (p. 1105). The result is a habitus which is permeable, and subject to change as a result of new experiences. This is an active process, aided and abetted by the more agentic, socio-analytic disposition of individual actors. As Reay (2004) argues, 'while habitus reflects the social position in which it was constructed, it also carries with it the genesis of new creative responses that are capable of transcending the social conditions in which it was produced' (pp. 434-435). Such a stance implies an agentic position on the part of individuals as they actively seek alternatives to, and potentially challenge prevailing conditions. It is the nature and extent of this capacity for change which is of interest in this paper, and which is drawn upon to make sense of the PD practices of a particular teacher whose learning practices seemed at odds with the broader field of PD practices more generally. However, this argument is made on the clear understanding that the conditions within which this teacher undertook his work were themselves productive of the successes experienced. In this way, actual practice is construed as the product of the agentic capacities of the *conditioned* habitus, not the heroic individual acting alone.

Teacher learning in context: Teaching and learning at Midlands High

The paper draws upon the experiences of a full-time teacher, 'Andrew', working in a secondary school and languages college, referred to in the paper as 'Midlands High', and located in a medium-sized city in the British Midlands.[2] Midlands High is an established school with approximately 1700 students, 150 staff and a long history of academic success, including as a designated languages college. At the time of the interview, the school was engaging in a multitude of professional development practices, ranging from individual workshops at the start of the year, through to an ongoing action-research initiative, involving several teachers from across the school site, and focusing upon school and classroom specific issues. These teachers volunteered to participate, and met over a series of weekends to engage with one another to reflect upon their work and findings.

An experienced and well-regarded teacher, Andrew had worked at the school for 14 years, including nine years as Head of Chemistry. At the time of the interview, Andrew recently relinquished this role to take up a part-time position as a 'Teaching Fellow' at a neighbouring university. This involved facilitating school student involvement in university-oriented chemistry, professional development of teachers, and improving connections between A-level school chemistry teachers and students and undergraduate chemistry staff.

Methods and methodology

The data which informs the research were drawn from a broader project into the teacher learning practices at this school site. Data collection involved hour-long, intensive interviews with 18 teachers from across the school's principal faculties – English, Mathematics, Sciences, Social Sciences, the Arts, and Languages. Interviewees volunteered, and were asked a series of questions designed to elicit their experiences of teachers' learning and CPD under current policy conditions. This included recent professional development in which they were involved or aware, the impact of current national policy upon professional development practices, the influence of standardised testing, and testing more generally upon teacher and student learning, and the influence of performance management practices on teacher learning. All interviews were transcribed remotely, key themes distilled through repeated reading of transcripts, and responses analysed in the light of Bourdieu's understandings of habitus as socially and creatively constituted.

Of all participants, Andrew provided the most detailed elaborations of productive, context-relevant, and robust teacher learning. These responses were considered worthy of further and closer scrutiny for what they could reveal about the conditions conducive to improved teacher learning. In this way, the research is an example of what Yin (2009) describes as an 'embedded case study design' – an inquiry into a specific subunit (a particular teacher) which helps to shed light upon a broader phenonmenon under investigation (PD practices under current policy conditions, in a specific school site). Such an approach helps to provide a level of detail not otherwise possible in more holistic case study approaches (Yin, 2009). In this case, this detail refers to the agentic potential and capacities of teacher habitus and particularly the specific conditions which contribute to these capacities.

Andrew's comments help shed light onto the field of PD practices, how individuals within the field make decisions in relation to the field, and the conditions productive of more authentic, student-centred teacher learning practices. In a sense, such comments also help to construct the field of PD practices differently from how it is construed from a more dominant viewpoint. In this way, this particular participant's responses reflect a stance which challenges more dominant practices, providing evidence of the field of PD practices as contested, but still enabling more progressive, educative PD. Consequently, this particular individual's comments are illustrative of Bourdieu's concepts at the same time as they provide the clearest account of any of the participants of how PD can be 'done' differently, and the conditions which contribute to these practices.

Findings: Professional development in practice

Three broad themes were elicited from the data, and related to first, Andrew's disposition towards professional development, and how his own learning shifted and changed over time; second, the way in which Andrew recognised and valued the learning which occurred in his own faculty and school, and third, recognition of, and responses to, more managerial demands. These themes are delineated in more detail below, and then analysed in the subsequent discussion section for what they reveal about the conditions conducive to more productive learning.

Broadening horizons: Learning to learn

By his own admission, Andrew had not always conceptualised professional development as beneficial. This was particularly the case as a neophyte teacher when PD was construed as something remote from more immediate concerns:

> I used to have a sinking feeling when CPD was mentioned ... [I] was really more concerned with the day to day workings of my job ... Now obviously CPD should help make you do the job you're doing better, but I felt that I was really wanting to spend all my energy getting my behaviour sorted out in classrooms.

A more conservative habitus was evident, forged from PD experiences which were not sufficiently connected to more immediate, everyday concerns.

However, it was Andrew's exposure to professional development experiences as a member of a broader professional body, the Royal Society of Chemistry, which further shaped and shifted this initial disposition:

> Because I became involved in a wide array of Chemistry through Royal Society of Chemistry, I've realised what CPD can actually be, and that it can be really beneficial to teachers. So through the RSC, I'm involved in delivering CPD, which is a slight irony, and I realise now the value that has ... It leaves people feeling empowered to do their job.

Professional development was no longer construed as simply a problematic practice irrelevant to immediate concerns. A more active disposition was evident which valued involvement in a diverse array of activities within the broader field of PD practices.

This broader valuing of professional development could also be attributed to a habitus forged from experiences of working part-time at a neighbouring university which, in turn, contributed to teacher learning within his own Chemistry Department:

> My being at the university has created a conduit of information, equipment, facts and all that kind of stuff which the fellas at the school say have been really, really useful. I tell them all the time about undergraduate admissions and things that are required. One of our Chemists is a Head of Year in Sixth Form, so he picks up a lot of useful facts about the latest views on admissions. So it's a lot of CPD beneath the radar.

A habitus which valued professional growth and learning was evident in Andrew's decision to relinquish his role as Head of Chemistry to take on a broader professional learning role with the university:

> I resigned as Head of Chemistry last year to free me up to do more Chemistry-related outreach outside of school. One day a week I work for City University as a School Teacher Fellow. This involves me typically working with a group of 16-18 year olds conducting experimental work in a university Chemistry laboratory setting. I also work with a wide age-range of students from 10 year olds up to adults. Another aspect of my role is to advise the academic Chemistry staff on changes in school education.

However, not all PD was construed favourably. The field of PD practices remained heavily influenced by more traditional and managerial modes of PD, and, at times, Andrew accommodated such modes:

> Some of the stuff we have done that's been offered internally has been good, but sometimes you get – maybe it's the cynic in me – but sometimes you feel that it is being wedged in as 'filler', or to 'tick a box'. And I'd like to think I'm wrong there. Like, that's terrible to think. I'm sure the person who delivered it, didn't feel that it was that, but as the recipient, I often think, 'Yeah, let's just tick the box and then I can get some books marked.'

Conceptions of PD contrasted with other learning experiences supported by the school. For example, a trip to the US as part of an international exchange programme was seen as useful for encouraging a more reflective and reflexive stance on teaching science:

> We have partnerships with schools all around the world. And taking kids to another country and meeting staff over there, I would argue, is another very good example of CPD ... I took kids to America to a school in Georgia, and on a couple of occasions, I lived with the teachers over there ... And so our kids and staff were in a totally different education environment – in the 'bible belt'. As different as you can imagine! And, actually, I learned a lot about teaching ... by being in an environment where some of the teachers don't believe in evolution and stuff like that. So for me as a science teacher, I developed greatly ...

PD was recognised as occurring in a multiplicity of situations, and often in ways contrary to more dominant logics within the field of PD practices.

Valuing the local, the situated

For Andrew, some of the most effective professional development he experienced was that which occurred during interactions with members of the Chemistry Department in his school. These teachers had a strong knowledge base:

> We feel as a Department that most of our professional development occurs really within, between ourselves. I'd say we're very tight knit. There are six 'A level' Chemistry teachers within our Chemistry Department, and a Chemistry technician who is a PhD chemist in his 50s. And between the seven of us, we talk about Chemistry a lot, and learn a lot from each other.

A discipline-specific habitus was forged through opportunities to learn *in situ*.

There was also institutional support within the school for PD in general, albeit often of a more traditional ilk:

> I've really been encouraged to put in 'pink forms' ever since I've joined – which is basically if you've got something that you'd like to go and do, you're encouraged to go and do it ... I've actually been on quite a few of these things. I went on a 'Teaching the Talented and Gifted Chemistry' course ... The school certainly does talk about it, and encourage people to get involved in it.

However, these more traditional logics were also challenged by approaches to teachers' learning which were inclusive of not just students, but support staff and students:

> We also encourage staff and students to go to the university when lectures are on to listen – so try and go in with our technician ...

The 'we' of this particular community was not a 'dangerous pronoun' (Sennett, 1998), perhaps synonymous with exclusion as much as inclusion, but instead embraced a sense of plurality not typically associated with learning logics within the field of PD practices.

While not directly involved, a more learning oriented disposition was evident in Andrew'support for a Masters program which had been developed jointly between staff at the school, and staff from another university in the city:

> [Technology University] are the main deliverer, and I think it's delivered in 30 and 60 credit modules, so I think if people do it, it's going to be over a few years ... Which, again, gives me the feeling that this is not about 'gathering letters'. It's about genuine professional development.

While considered valuable, time pressures and a positive engagement with discipline-related professional development activities made it difficult to be involved in the Masters programme:

> I don't have the time to do that [Masters], because I've invested my time in other things, like being a Chartered Chemist and a Charted Scientist ... which is taking time [to collect] evidence ... So I think it's been useful.

However, for those teachers involved in the Masters programme, there were tangible benefits from participating:

> Yeah, absolutely, and I think it's opened quite a few people's eyes. They're trying things with kids and then telling people about it, so I think it seems to have gone quite well.

In this way, more localised PD logics, in a myriad of formats, were evident and valued within the field of PD practices, and there was at least anecdotal evidence of changes in teaching practices as a result.

Appropriating and mediating external pressures

A more productively conditioned habitus was also evident in how more managerial pressures were imposed. These were associated with the advent of league tables, and pressure to perform in response to Ofsted inspections, and rearticulated to serve a useful learning function. However, such pressures were also recognised as changing teaching practices in potentially problematic ways:

> I know, as Head of Chemistry for quite a few years, that getting good results out of kids for league table reasons – and obviously knock-on effects in the way Ofsted treated us based on our results – has had a positive effect, in some ways, in that teachers are much more anxious to deliver stuff well. The down-side, which, I think really is a significant one, is that we 'teach to the test' more than we've ever done before.

Such a stance also resonates with notions of 'principled infidelity' (Hoyle & Wallace, 2007) insofar as concerns were expressed about the problematic effects of current policy

pressures, although more 'principled' responses are themselves in strong tension with practices of 'teaching to the test'.

Nevertheless, even as pressure for improved test results exerted considerable influence, a learning-focused habitus was evident which valued genuine learning opportunities for teachers:

> Well I hope stuff like 'Chemistry for Non-Specialists' does allow those teachers to deliver a more rounded approach to Chemistry rather than ['teaching to the test']. I'm an intelligent person. I know what's on the exam paper. I can groom them [students] to just answer the questions! I think with the greater depth of knowledge, the teachers can give a much more robust reason [to engage with ideas presented in Chemistry than simply to do well on tests] ... So I think that type of CPD to empower teachers is really useful.

Such a stance accords with Watkins (2010) research revealing how learning about learning in the context of strong performance pressures is crucial to fostering substantive student learning, and leads to improvements in genuine student learning, as well as improvements in more standardised measures. Substantive professional development helped forge a more confident disposition amongst teachers; this enabled them to challenge managerial logics associated with testing, and to provide more substantive learning opportunities for their students.

This is not to downplay the focus on testing. As with Watkins' (2010) findings, more test-centric logics continued to dominate the field:

> There have been [PD events] to do with performance of particular cohorts. So we have targets within school, and we issue those targets for Key Stage 4/Key Stage 5 performance things. Like the percentage 'As to Cs', including maths and science. It's a real big one now. So you may have an objective that fits with the school's target in terms of a results-based objective.

In this way, more managerial logics continued to exert influence, and were recognised as doing so, even as alternative practices were enacted, and pressure to 'teach to the test' resisted.

Discussion: Powerful PD and the conditions which challenge managerial practices

The way in which this teacher challenged his own and others' practices, and narrowly conceived professional development practices more generally, reveals a habitus which both values and is forged from engagement with substantive learning opportunities. Significantly, these opportunities were a product of specific social conditions which contributed to Andrew's adopting an active stance towards his learning. In part, a more creative, responsive habitus (Reay, 2004) focused upon self-improvement (Reay et al., 2009) is evident which challenges more entrenched logics within the broader field of PD practices. PD improved this teacher's own disciplinary understandings and teaching practices, and empowered other teachers. Importantly, the PD this teacher found most beneficial is multifaceted in nature, often in contrast with more traditional approaches to teachers' learning. This teacher was a knowledgeable participant within a broader field of PD practices characterised by competing and, at times, contradictory logics, but also

assisted by his location within a field of schooling practices which affords greater autonomy to science teachers than other members of the field.

These more learning-focused logics occur under broader conditions in which more traditional, and managerial PD logics dominate. Andrew's concerns about the value of some whole-school professional development reveals the field of PD practices as a site in which individualistic workshop approaches continue to act as a default position. Reservations about whether some whole-school PD was simply designed to 'tick-the-box' reveals how managerial logics exert influence, and how pressures for compliance to immediate demands can constitute a key part of the professional development in which teachers currently engage (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009). That this teacher was conflicted about the nature of his own reservations also reveals a habitus disposed to learning from all manner of professional development experiences, even those which appear, or genuinely are, problematic. Such a disposition was also evident in how he construed pressure to do well on league tables as serving as an impetus to encourage teachers 'to deliver stuff well' more generally. Even as external pressures for improved results on league tables are evidence of managerial logics, demands around teaching and teacher standards more generally can be appropriated by educators for educative purposes (Mayer et al., 2005). However, there is also clear recognition that such conditions are also productive of a culture of 'teaching to the test', and of improved test results as the capitals most valued.

However, these conditions are not the only influences. Instances when Andrew critiqued more short-term practices are in keeping with a more socioanalytical approach to sedimented social practices – practices reflective of more typical, immediate, reactive approaches to teachers' learning undertaken in schooling contexts (Choy, Chen,& Bugarin, 2006; Pedder et al., 2006). Rather than being dominated by more traditional logics, or managerial pressures, alternative conditions enabled Andrew to critique instances of more superficial PD. As a result, instead of becoming transfixed by pressures associated with testing, he endorsed and enacted a broader set of learning experiences – a significant response on the part of dedicated teachers in a broader context in which there is an increasing emphasis upon test specific skills (Jacob, 2005). Arguably, again, this capacity for critique is also likely enabled by his location in a more dominant fraction of the field of schooling as a Chemistry/science teacher. This is not a straightforward process, however, and Andrew did not always critique more limited educational stances himself, as evident in the accepting way he described how individual objectives could be linked to school targets around improving the number of As to Cs in science and maths. As in other English school settings (Wilson et al., 2006), a strong focus upon improving the proportion of students receiving passing grades (A to C) in the GCSE commanded attention. Under these circumstances, the logics evident within the field of PD practices are those oriented towards managing and manipulating teachers to achieve improved test scores.

In their more critical, proactive instantiations, Andrew's responses can be interpreted as more than simply those of a heroic individual under less than desirable circumstances. Andrew's open and fervent support for ongoing professional conversations with his colleagues in the Chemistry Department, and his acknowledgment of these conversations as the most valuable form of professional development in which he engaged, reveals evidence of the power and influence of the social capital accrued as a member of this

particular group, and again, a field position relatively high in autonomy. As in other settings and circumstances (cf. Choy et al., 2006), collaboration with colleagues on instructional issues was valued and valuable. As a result of such substantive collegiality, an inquiry-oriented habitus seems to have been cultivated within this department. In large measure, a strong sense of disciplinarity has been developed amongst a group of teachers with considerable experience, and a lab assistant with a PhD in Chemistry. The embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) cultivated and accumulated within the group constitute members of the Chemistry team as favourably disposed to ongoing interaction with one another. In short, the social conditions in which this teacher worked contributed to a more agentic stance.

That he valued the Masters programme within the school, even though he was not formally involved in it himself, further reveals the influence of a habitus reflective and productive of conditions different from those akin to more dominant, and managerial logics. Exposure to this programme, and colleagues who seemed positively disposed to it, and whose practices had changed as a result of this involvement, forged a habitus respectful of formal, site-relevant study. Although involving only a small number of teachers, the opportunity to engage in formal study was seen as conducive to improved understanding of practice. In this way, more dominant logics are challenged by conditions which enable participation in formal study, and by teachers, such as Andrew, supportive of such learning.

The conditions productive of a habitus disposed to learning also include exposure to alternative learning settings and situations. Andrew saw his involvement in the Chemistry Department of a neighbouring university as an opportunity for professional growth. Again, the social capital made possible through this work was seen as having benefits for not only his own learning, but that of colleagues in his school. This support by his colleagues as a strong 'community of practice' further supports the relative dominance of these teachers within the field of schooling practices. Representing a variation on the productive learning practices which can arise from formalised interactions between university and school-based staff (c.f. Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009), this contact was construed as valuable by Andrew's colleagues, who recognised and valued the knowledge and learning they experienced as a result of the contacts he had cultivated, and the symbolic capital associated with Andrew's work at the university. This also led to 'incidental' learning amongst colleagues within his department with other responsibilities in the school (e.g., the Sixth Form year co-ordinator). Andrew's exposure to a broader network of colleagues interested in science education/Chemistry, and his status as a Chartered Chemist/Scientist, were productive of the social, cultural and symbolic capital necessary to contest more limited and limiting PD logics. That he relinquished his former more administrative role as Head of Chemistry reveals how more genuinely educative logics can dominate over more management-focused logics.

Finally, participation in an overseas exchange programme constitutes another set of conditions which can contribute towards a more reflective habitus. Having contact with teachers and students whose religious beliefs influenced their approach to science teaching led to consideration and reflection upon this teacher's own values and understandings of science in ways which would not have occurred without such contact. Recognition of such experience as valuable professional development does reveal the

socio-analytic capacities of a creative, responsive teacher habitus (Reay et al., 2009) not in keeping with more traditional logics. Importantly, however, this response is the product of partnerships between this school and other schools throughout the world, and did not simply transpire in response to individual capacity or desire alone. Again, the conditions within which teachers work and learn are important enabling features.

Conclusion

Active involvement in a variety of initiatives, within and beyond this teacher's school, served as a crucial stimulus to this teacher's learning. However, this learning did not simply arise in a context-free way. Rather, teacher learning of most value is closely associated with exposure to particular experiences and influences in the immediate and extended environment. This suggests that teacher professional development is deeply influenced by opportunities for educators to engage with others within individual school settings, and professional networks beyond these settings. Teachers' learning does not occur in a vacuum, devoid of contact with colleagues or others. Rather, teachers' learning is facilitated by rich sets of social experiences and opportunities which foster deep thought about everyday practices.

For this reason, it is important to be cognisant of the nature of conditions which enhance teacher learning, and the broader pressures and demands which can limit such learning. Many of the learning practices undertaken by Andrew do not conform to 'typical' professional development. A focused inquiry into the practices of an overtly learning-focused teacher reveals effective professional development is not simply a product of the individual acting alone, of a creative, responsive teacher habitus in isolation (Reay, 2004). While, as in study by Reay et al. (2009), the individual was indeed working on him/herself, a proactive work environment in which PD was valued in general, in which institutional support was provided for teachers to engage in substantive PD – including teacher exchanges, and flexible working arrangements – contributed to productive PD practices.

Working in a context which overtly valued academic work, being a member of the Royal Society of Chemistry, having access to a university Chemistry Department (and a working environment supportive of his work at the university), and having the opportunity to experience very different approaches to teaching his discipline all contributed to substantive PD practices. The findings also suggest Chemistry teachers more generally may possess a strong collective identity or 'community of practice'. This contributes to the relatively strong positioning of science in the field of schooling (and secondary education more generally); in Bourdieuian terms, this teacher has a field position which (so long as basic exam results are 'delivered') is high in autonomy. Collectively, such position-taking further reinforces that an overemphasis upon individual agency under limiting conditions does not readily capture the complexity of the structures and supports which contribute to teachers' productive practices. In light of the research reported, such conditions clearly contribute to the production of habitus able to resist the cruder forms of managerialism, and maintain an alternative vision of professional development.

While certainly not the only means of interpreting this teacher's practices, and while acknowledging the limitations of critiquing approaches to teachers as monadic actors on the basis of a single teacher's practices, a Bourdieuian analysis does enable a focus upon the social conditions which help shape individual and collective action, and as a contribution to efforts to redress Cartesian dualisms of mind/body. Even as recognising the limitations of making claims on the basis of individual teachers' practices, developing better understandings of the economic, social and cultural conditions productive of such instances of a more educative habitus contributes, at least symbolically, towards challenging more managerial logics. Productive PD is not simply the product of individual actions, of the 'power of one,' but is an intrinsically social process requiring considered support and development.

Notes

[1] I acknowledge that the term 'professional development' is deeply contested. Well-recognized bodies of literature exist which challenge more traditional conceptions of teacher professional development (PD) as a set of formalised experiences undertaken in schooling settings, typically at the instigation of individual schools and education systems. This paper adopts a broad-based rather than narrow approach to the term, employing it to refer to all instances and experiences in which learning is undertaken by teachers. This is akin to Muijs, Day, Harris and Lindsay's (2004) understanding of professional development as more than 'in-service' or 'on-the-job' learning, which are seen as narrowly focused upon specific workplaces, and the much broader term 'lifelong learning', but as encompassing a wide variety of learning approaches and settings throughout a lifetime. The term 'professional development' is also used interchangeably with the term 'continuing professional development' – the more common term for PD in England.

[2] All names are pseudonyms.

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