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Educational practice, student experience and the purpose of education – a critique of ‘Pedagogy in Practice’

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Educational practice, student experience and the purpose of education – a critique of 'Pedagogy in Practice'

The focus of this paper is a recent line of research concerning 'Pedagogy in Practice' (PiP) which offers a method for studying pedagogy concretely in unfolding classroom interaction – (Hadar & Hotam, 2012; Hotam & Hadar, 2013). The intent is to offer a critique that may help improve the concept for use in further research. Hadar (2009, 2011) posits that student conceptions and beliefs about 'learning' are pivotal and often missing from educational research. To capture students' perspectives, PiP research consists of analysis of group interviews with students concerning what 'learning is' and what constitutes a 'good learner'. The aim is to "tap students' actual subjective experiences" of the educational practices in which they participate (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 191).

As a strand of research, PiP shares many features with the larger field of research on 'student voice' (e.g. Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011; Thiessen & Cook-Sather, 2007) and 'pupil consultation' (e.g. Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). This is true not only in regards to the focus of research (student experiences of educational practice) and the methods used (interviews), but also concerning the belief that student experiences offer types of information not otherwise available and which is argued to be key to educational improvement. As one central researcher in 'student voice' – Cook-Sather (2002) states:

"The work of authorizing student perspectives is *essential* because of the various ways that it can improve current educational practice, re-inform existing conversations about educational reform, and point to the discussions and reform efforts yet to be undertaken." (Cook-Sather, 2002, p. 3)

School reforms are often undertaken without student involvement to the detriment of the reform efforts (Cook-Sather, 2007). Not only is the exclusion of student perspectives ethically problematic

because it means that students get little say in matters that concern them, it is also problematic because it means that reform efforts do not utilize significant avenues of information about the educational processes being reformed. Research in student voice has been aimed at developing ways in which this voice can be elicited, heard and utilized in educational improvement (McIntyre, Pedder, & Rudduck, 2005). PiP shares this aim to improve practice through inclusion of student experience.

Student voice research, however, has been criticized for being naïve regarding the use of interviews and the general concept of 'voice'. Moore and Muller (1999) argue that voice research makes little differentiation between what constitutes experience and what does not in student talk. Everything students say is interpreted as coming from and being about their experiences as opposed to being a proactive part of ongoing practice. Arnot and Reay (2007) argue that the link between what is said and what is revealed by what is said is often unclear. Tangen (2008) problematizes differences in how to interpret the mode of listening that must follow from searching for students' voice(s). Lewis (2010) questions too what should be made of 'silence' in voice research; that is, why do we feel students *must* voice their opinions and are there ethical concerns if this means that they lose the choice of silence? This is one example of the unresolved issues of power in this line of research (Noyes, 2005).

A common thread in the critique of student voice research as key to educational improvement is that it is treated as an almost exclusively empirical question, which is only occasionally discussed in relation to other lines of educational research or in relation to theoretically informed notions of voice *and* education. The danger is that the planning of educational practice becomes a process of negotiation between students and teachers without any explicit notion of what education is. It may

become an issue of ‘what we [students and/or teachers] would *like*’ with little concern for the *purpose* of education.

The research on PiP counters the critique leveled at existing voice research in two important ways.

First, PiP is explicitly discussed theoretically in relation to the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Basil Bernstein, and John Dewey. Although this paper will focus on issues concerning the use of this theoretical base, the fact that there is such a base makes a constructive discussion possible.

Secondly, PiP (re)introduces *pedagogy* into research on student experience of educational practice *and* links it explicitly with *practice*. Hadar and Hotam acknowledge the contested nature of the concept of pedagogy and also state that PiP is not meant to signify *all* of pedagogy, however they believe that PiP is the missing link between what teachers plan and act and how students perform (Hadar & Hotam, 2012).

However contested the concept of pedagogy, its use in PiP allows for discussions of the *purpose*, *content* and *relationships* in education, which is absent in much ‘voice’ research (and indeed a lot of educational research that simply takes ‘achievement’ or ‘motivation’ as universally and unquestionable educational values). Educational research and evaluation without specific notions of purpose, content and relationships run the danger of reifying unspoken and abstract notions of learning as the point of education or leaving the definition of what should be learned to measurements in national or international tests, such as PISA (Biesta, 2007). By addressing pedagogy, PiP has potential to address some of the concerns that have been raised against student voice research.

This paper will first provide a characterization of PiP, followed by a critique of the theories employed in its justification. I will argue that the central theorists used (Bourdieu, Bernstein, and

Dewey) all raise critical questions about the current focus of PiP research. In the second part of the paper, I question the problematic absence of discussions of *purpose* of education in PiP, leading to a reintroduction of how students' experiences can become valuable in education—not in the central way envisioned by voice research and PiP, but as a necessary way of honoring education as communicative rather than indoctrinary. This leads to the final part consisting of a brief discussion of the impact of the introduced arguments in relation to future methods to studying PiP.

Pedagogy in Practice

Turning now to the specifics of PiP, this section will briefly characterize the concept and research methods currently used to explore it. This will afford the groundwork for turning to a critique of the theoretical foundation of the concept.

PiP is conceptualized as the 'forgotten' but vital middle ground between teachers' and schools' planning and ideals (i.e. *school* pedagogy in Hadar and Hotam's terms) on the one hand and the relation between student experience and learning on the other. "Focusing on this independent sphere of interaction is a key to improving teaching and learning in schools and should occupy future pedagogic researchers aiming to improve pedagogy, schooling, education, teaching and curriculum. [PiP] could be labelled a 'black hole' in the study of pedagogy" (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 203).

PiP is conceived of as "the actual pedagogy" itself (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 203). It is the 'imprint' left on students who participate in it – i.e. "*what acts on the students* who participate in daily school activity, *from their point of view*" (Hotam & Hadar, 2013, p. 387 - my emphasis) – it is "*students' internalisation* of patterns of thought, behaviour, views and values experienced 'as is'

rather than ‘as ought to be’, subjectively rather than objectively.” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 200 - my emphasis).

The concept of PiP, then, at various times refers to the educational environment, the interaction between students and environment and the lasting ‘imprint’ of students’ interaction with the environment. What is clear is that Hadar and Hotam want to differentiate between pedagogy as part of school practice in general and focus on the interactional aspects which directly involve students. The *pedagogy* of PiP is thus separate from pedagogy as part of educational planning and school organization (Hadar & Hotam, 2012).

PiP springs from empirical work using methods carried over from previous work by Hadar (2009, 2011). Quantitative and qualitative analyses were made of group interviews with students aimed at “tap[ping] students’ actual subjective experiences” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 191). The questions were about ‘learning’ and the characteristics of ‘good learners’ (Hadar & Hotam, 2012). What students were prompted to talk about was the ‘overall’ message they got by participating in their particular school setting and not the specific (subject-matter) content or their relationship to individual teachers.

The research setting in one study was two “holistically different learning environments” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 191). One was a conventional public school and the other an ‘arts and sciences’ (A&S) school—with students comparable in religious and socio economic background between the two schools. The schools differed however in that excellence was required for admission in the A&S school. Hadar and Hotam compare this type of school with “‘magnet’ schools which are thematically organized around subject areas such as science and performing arts” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 192). By analyzing student responses, they characterize the PiP of each of the schools.

In the conventional school completing assignments, exams, and grades made up the central content of the students' PiP. In the A&S school, these aspects were present, but did not dominate. Instead "the students' view of learning is broad, deeply personal, independent and intentional in character" (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 200). Hadar and Hotam conclude that "the PiP of the A&S school appears to succeed in telling its students that learning consists of much more than grades and exams" (2012, p. 200). The PiP of the A&S school was on this basis considered better than the PiP of the conventional school in that it made students hold certain beliefs about learning and (themselves as) learners. Hadar and Hotam (2012) make this evaluation without an explicit discussion of what constitutes good education—that is, they have no explicit discussion of what the purpose of education is.

Hadar and Hotam believe that PiP is central to educational improvement and "that *any attempt* to understand, evaluate, make sense and eventually improve pedagogy or curriculum in general must examine PiP in particular" (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 202 - my emphasis). Yet the research on PiP so far has been conducted without direct reference to specific ways in which the results may be utilized for improving educational practice.

Habitus, pedagogic practice, and experience – the theoretical foundation of PiP interrogated

Having outlined the concept of PiP, I now turn to the first strand of critique with the intention of offering possible ways to improve research for education using the concept. The issue here is with the theoretical sources used – specifically Bourdieu, Bernstein, and Dewey. I argue that these sources, albeit with differences, each problematize the very idea that we can directly access or utilize the experience or voice of individual participants or groups of participants (students) because it forms only part of the total practice. That is, student experience, expressed in interviews,

cannot afford us a comprehensive understanding of practice, let alone be the primary basis of educational improvement.

Bourdieu – habitus, practice and education as selection: Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is, for Hadar and Hotam a way to conceptualize the interaction between subject and context. However, they omit the concepts with which habitus is connected—notably *field* and *capital*. Having used these concepts as the basis for interpretation of the data presented might have pointed in other directions than those presented. by Hadar and Hotam.

Discussing the concept of *practice* Hotam and Hadar (2013) argue that *habitus* is useful for two reasons. First, because it highlights the “interaction between the individual [...] and the external conditions” (p. 389). Secondly, because Bourdieu's notion of habitus offers a way to avoid “pointing to any positivistic assumptions regarding what ‘really’ happens in class” (p. 389). Therefore, “‘In practice’ is not an objective term that relates to ‘being’ in any ontological sense; it characterises rather the ongoing happenings in class, from the standpoint of the students’ learning experiences.” (Hotam & Hadar, 2013, p. 389). Habitus, they describe, is students’ internalization of patterns of thought, behavior and values and “the term ‘in practice’ therefore points to the actual acting out of pedagogy as ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu 1977)” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 190).

Hadar and Hotam's description excludes many of the features in Bourdieu's development of habitus, which he defines as “the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures (e.g. of language, economy, etc.) to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions, in the organisms [...] lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 85). Habitus is not simply an

imprint that can readily be talked about. Rather it is engrained in the bodily attitude of persons at a pre-reflective level: “Thus [...] it is not composed solely of mental attitudes and perceptions [which means that] the habitus as the social is *inscribed in the body* of the biological individual” (Reay, 2004, pp. 432–433 - my emphasis). The methods of PiP—interviewing and group interviews—may have the distinct drawback that they do not readily include the bodily dispositions that make habitus the ‘second nature’ of participants.

Hadar and Hotam’s interpretation and use of habitus is thus at odds with what Bourdieu was trying to accomplish with the creation of the concept and ignore other concepts necessary to talk about *practice* in Bourdieu’s terms. Bourdieu (2004, p. 101) expressed the relation between habitus, capital, field and practice in the following way: [(habitus) (Capital)] + field = practice. It is immediately apparent that habitus cannot stand on its own, but must be related to capital and field in order to explain practice (Nielsen, 1999) which Hadar and Hotam do not.

While Hotam and Hadar try to utilize habitus as a way to explain how students within the same school context experience this context in the same way (homogeneity)—Bourdieu’s research was aimed at understanding how education *differentiates* students on the basis of differences in habitus and capital (heterogeneity). Furthermore, education as a field does not, according to Bourdieu, *create* habitus let alone a separate educational habitus—it rather creates a *social space* in which habitus serves as generative guidelines for participants actions. Bourdieu was interested in:

“the extremely complex mechanisms through which the school institution *contributes* (I insist on this word) to the reproduction of the distribution of cultural capital and, consequently, of the structure of social space” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 19)

Using Bourdieu's theoretical standpoint would, I suggest, view the differences between the conventional and the A&S school students' answers in a different light than Hadar and Hotam (2012). Admitting that there 'may' be differences in the student population previous to and beyond the school environment the differences between the school settings is not an assumption to be made, but a central issue to be explored. The focus of an analysis more closely aligned to Bourdieu would also be more interested in how school practices strengthen a differentiation between students who are accepted as 'good students' and those who are not and how this is a matter, in part, of having their habitus *already* aligned with the social space of the school. Instead, PiP becomes the strict structural phenomenon with equalizing effects on all participants that Bourdieu worked to avoid when introducing habitus as a concept—and which Hadar and Hotam explicitly want to avoid themselves. Rather than a clarification, I suggest that the result is a distortion of the original intent which was to create tools to show how educational practice is not separate from, but an accomplice in, reproduction of social *inequalities*.

Bernstein – Voices and messages: Hadar and Hotam turn to Basil Bernstein to connect PiP with a theory of the transmission and translation of knowledge within education. I argue that Hadar and Hotam are not justified in the extent to which they suggest that PiP is closely related to Bernstein's theory and that they contribute by 'filling in' detail about student experience.

Like Bourdieu, Bernstein was interested in social reproduction and the role played by education herein. However, whereas Bourdieu was interested in education *as part of* the reproduction of social inequality, Bernstein was interested in the *inner workings* of education. In a comment that might well be addressed at Bourdieu, Bernstein claims that:

“General theories of culture reproduction [...] appear to be more concerned with an analysis of what is reproduced in, and by, education than with an analysis of the medium of reproduction, the nature of the specialized discourse. [...] It is as if pedagogic discourse is itself no more than a relay for power relations external to itself; a relay whose form has no consequences for what is relayed” (Bernstein, 1990, p. 166)

The issue for Bernstein is not so much what is relayed but what the *relay* is and that pedagogy has a force of its own (Apple, 2002). Bernstein’s focus was the transformation of knowledge from outside school (e.g. the sciences) into pedagogical knowledge and he was particularly interested in how differences within pedagogy were upheld.

Hadar and Hotam suggest that:

“[...] PiP could be seen as a particular expansion on Bernstein’s interest in the transmission of knowledge and the connection between student experience and pedagogy” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 191). They continue that what PiP does –as opposed to Bernstein – is to see pedagogy from the students’ perspective. “PiP is less interested in a study of the pedagogic ‘practice’, beyond the borders of the students’ interpretations” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 191). That PiP is interested only in students’ interpretations of what happens in school runs counter to Bernstein’s (1990, 2000) analysis of the relay as a means of communication:

“Bernstein saw the most powerful connections between social consciousness and the divisions in society not in the specific content of that consciousness, but in its relations. In general terms, what was ‘in’ consciousness was less important than how the ‘what’ was organized” (Apple, 2002, p. 609)

In the context of PiP, the question then should not be first and foremost the *content* of what students take 'learning' or 'a good learner' to be, but how this content is realized. Hadar and Hotam point to the 'actual pedagogy' as the 'how', but never present data to show this, since they rely exclusively on students' descriptions. They admit this when stating that "rather than seeing in the so called students' 'consciousness' [Bernstein's concept] as one, perhaps less significant, aspect of a larger framework of pedagogic 'practice', PiP *deduces* the 'practice' from 'consciousness'" (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 191 - my emphasis). To *deduce* practice from consciousness not only contradicts Bernstein, but in equal measure Bourdieu and Dewey, and is a far from innocent 'adjustment' to any theory of *practice*. This point was raised by Bernstein (1990) as the difference between *voice* and *message*.

"'Voice' referred to the limits on what could be realised if the identity was to be recognised as legitimate. The classificatory relation established 'voice' [...] However, 'voice', although a necessary condition for establishing what could be said and its context, could not determine *what* was said and *the form* of its contextual realisation; that is the 'message'" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 204).

The distinction between voice and message is nowhere explicit in the research on PiP, nor is the distinction between voice/message and practice. PiP could be said to tap student 'messages', interpreting them *as if* these messages relates directly with 'voice' and further assumes that 'voice' is the best way to elucidate practice. In this regard, the research on PiP can be criticized in the way that voice research has been—that it "erases the text that writes the world of which it speaks" (Moore & Muller, 1999, p. 203) because it omits everything but student messages.

When Arnot and Reay (2007) state that "Bernstein's argument suggests that researchers should focus on *how* voice is produced within classroom settings" (Arnot & Reay, 2007, p. 317 - my

emphasis) they are arguing *against* the possibility of being able to ‘deduce’ practice from ‘consciousness’ or experience. “Bernstein was aware,” comments Singh “of the dangers of authorizing educational research through recourse to personal voice or authentic experience” (2002, p. 571). Voice and message cannot be decontextualized; they are always part of a larger whole—practice. Stated otherwise –and thus leading to the exploration of the concept of experience in Dewey’s work: to understand experience one needs to go beyond individuals.

Dewey – on experience: The idea that it is possible to deduce practice from consciousness is no less problematic from Dewey’s point of view. Dewey is used by Hadar and Hotam as a theoretical source for the concept of experience. In PiP “the term ‘experience’ [is used] in a broad speculative sense to cover human intimate interaction with the surrounding world.” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 190). This is the only reference they make to Dewey’s concept in relation to PiP. However, the concept of experience plays a central part in PiP – appearing six times in the abstract in one paper (Hadar & Hotam, 2012) and four in the other (in which it also is part of the title) (Hotam & Hadar, 2013).

Experience is arguably the central concept in Dewey’s philosophy and “includes *what* men do and suffer, *what* they strive for, love, believe and endure, and also *how* men act and are acted upon, the ways in which they do and suffer, desire and enjoy, see, believe, imagine [...] It is ‘double barreled’ in that it recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in an unanalyzed totality” (Dewey, 1981, p. 18). Dewey’s concept of experience thus directly (and in line with Bourdieu and Bernstein) challenges the way in which PiP vacillates between being the structure of the practice or the ‘imprint’ of that practice on student beliefs about learning that has a suspected, but undefined effect on future student activity.

Rather than arguing that experience gives rise to a representation of the environment, Dewey observes that experience gives rise to habits—ways of engaging with the world. Although Bourdieu rejected the concept of habit, finding it too mechanistic, Dewey worked to clarify the concept of habit, while at the same time criticizing the mechanistic versions of it (Crossley, 2013). Dewey viewed habits as “the organic basis for meaning” (Biesta & Burbules, 2003, p. 36). At a very basic level, meaning is first and foremost a question not of representation or ‘imprint’, but of action. Thus, interpretations of the world are not necessarily accessible to the person through reflection and language, though it may become apparent in his or her trans-action with it.

“the crucial issue is that meaning is the outcome of social cooperation. For education this means that the collective activities of child and adult, of student and teacher, constitute the meaning of what is learned” (Biesta, 1994, p. 315).

Thus, to hold a transactional view is to argue that (educational) action is *communicative*—it is the “connection, that which happens ‘in between’” (Biesta, 2014, p. 30). A method to study experience and the way experience gives rise to habits and knowledge (knowing) must thus be focused on this process, not only the way it is talked about by students.

Summing up and pointing onwards: What I have argued above is that in coining PiP, Hadar and Hotam have identified real issues with some prevalent educational research. They seem to wish for a first-order perspective, a way to bypass what educational practice and practitioners believe or think is having an effect and what really does affect the students. They believe that access to such insight can be obtained by interviewing students about ‘learning’ and what it means to be a ‘good learner’. They *also* remain committed to the idea that PiP enables educational improvement. However, they do so without an explicit formulation of what that may entail.

PiP can be seen as an improvement over prior research in student voice as it offers theoretical links and reintroduces the concept of *pedagogy* and links pedagogy with *practice*. Yet contrary to their explicit aims and the theories they employ, Hadar and Hotam consistently divide experience and practice, person and world—divisions Bourdieu, Bernstein and Dewey explicitly worked to overcome, all maintaining the “centrality of the social in language and consciousness” (Inghilleri, 2003, p. 249). This centrality includes: emphasis on how people actively engage and contribute to the practices in which they participate; that ‘consciousness’ or experience is secondary to participation in practice in which, among other things, certain bodily habits (meanings) are created; and that language is not first and foremost a representational medium, but is part of and born from practice. The concept of PiP as presented by Hadar and Hotam and the choice of interviews as the method used to inquire into it fails to address any of these points. What Hadar and Hotam produce is less a *Pedagogy in Practice* than a *Pedagogy in Consciousness*.

One way to further the development of PiP would be to integrate the above critiques and develop a concept and method that more accurately captures the practice in which students participate. That is, one that conceptualizes educational practice as transaction (e.g. Dewey) and one that offers the possibility to include student background as more than a matter of socio-economic status (e.g. Bourdieu). I will return to this question at the end of the paper. The concept of PiP, however, can also be further developed by incorporating discussions of the *purpose* of education. In the remainder of the paper, I will utilize Biesta’s (Biesta, 2010, 2015b) work, defining educational purpose as qualification; socialization; and subjectification. By including the purpose of education, I argue, it is possible to strengthen the concept of PiP, making it a tool for research that is *for* rather than just *in* education (cf. Biesta & Burbules, 2003) – while still retaining the strength of PiP, which is the intent to study pedagogy as relational and do so *empirically*.

Reintroducing a (possible) language of education

Hadar and Hotam do not present a clear concept of what education or pedagogy (as a whole) *is*. Instead, they focus on ‘learning’, implying that this is what education is fundamentally about. This, I would suggest, is a gross oversimplification. Biesta argues that “the point of education is never that children or students [simply] learn, but that they learn *something*, that they learn this for particular *purposes*, and that they learn this from *someone*.” (Biesta, 2012, p. 36). In other words, what is demanded of educational research is to pay attention to the *purpose(s)* of education, the *content* of education and the *relationships* between the participants in educational practice.

Pedagogy is a historically contested term with different connotations in Anglo-American or German (or Northern European) settings (Künzli, 2000). In the former, education has been viewed primarily as a field of practice that may utilize the methods and general knowledge from other scientific disciplines. In the Northern European tradition, education—more specifically ‘Bildungstheoretische Didaktik’—was grounded in a university discipline of its own, Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik. Didaktik is very generally concerned with the *content* taught, the *progress* of the student and *teaching* in which *both* the content and the student must be taken into account – often illustrated with the didactical triangle of teacher, student and content. Pädagogik afforded Didaktik with a (normative humanistic) science of its own (Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000). What this division offers is a way to conceptualize the planning, execution and evaluation of teaching (Didaktik) in relation to ongoing, and perhaps conflictual, discussions of what the *purpose* of education is or could be—that is, what constitutes *good* education (Biesta, 2011; Künzli, 2000). Central to such a science are normative discussions of what is and should be the purpose of education, which are in partial

seclusion from political decisions and trends for evaluation or concepts from other fields of research (e.g. learning as it is discussed in psychology) (Biesta, 2007, 2010).

In line with the Anglo-American use of the term pedagogy, Hadar and Hotam hardly mention the content of education (although it does play part in the distinction between the regular school and the A&S school). The absence of a discussion of purpose and the use instead of 'learning' is not uncommon and part of what Biesta has coined 'learnification' of educational discourse which is "the transformation of an educational vocabulary into a language of learning" (Biesta, 2009).

Learnification refers to:

"the relatively recent tendency to express much if not all there is to say about education in terms of a language of learning. [...] for example, in the tendency to refer to students, pupils, children and adults as 'learners,' to refer to schools as 'learning environments' or 'places for learning,' and to see teachers as 'facilitators of learning.' [...] I would also say that the suggestion that the point of education is that students learn is part of this development" (Biesta, 2015a - no page).

Part of learnification is a shift in ideas about teacher's role vis-a-vis the student—a change from teaching to someone who supplies support for students' learning (Biesta, 2012). To the extent that Hadar and Hotam are concerned with the teacher's role (and that of the school), they are concerned with how teachers might support students in developing the 'right' concept of learning and themselves as learners.

Adopting a concept of pedagogy, and centrally the concept of the purpose of education, may help to restate an *educational* language rather than a language of *learning*.

Biesta points to the multifaceted purposes that we can (and should) have for students. They are presented as three functions of education: qualification, socialization and subjectification.

Qualification is about becoming skillful in something; it provides students “with the knowledge, skills and understanding and often also with the dispositions and forms of judgment that allow them to ‘do something’” (Biesta, 2009a, p. 39-40). Socialization is about being introduced to different moral orders. In mathematics, for instance it is “seeing it as an engagement with the social practice of ‘mathematising’ rather than as the acquisition of a body of knowledge and skills” (Biesta, 2009a, p. 43). Subjectification “is precisely not about the insertion of ‘newcomers’ into existing orders, but about ways of being that hint at independence from such orders; ways of being in which the individual is not simply a ‘specimen’ of a more encompassing order” (Biesta, 2009a, p. 40). The three functions each have a particular focus but cannot be easily separated. Practices aimed at ‘only qualifying’ implicitly carries with them notions about what a person can be (socialization) while perhaps neglecting a focus on students’ reactions to what is taught. What is needed then for *good* education is that all three functions, even when one or the other takes front seat, are included in the planning and execution of educational practice.

The *purpose* of education, as promoted in PiP, is vague, or perhaps more apt: what Hadar and Hotam are interested in and *ipso facto* claim as the central (or primary) goal of education is that students develop particular conceptions of learning. For instance, when Hotam and Hadar make the clearly normative judgment that the A&S school is better because it “succeed[s] in telling its students that learning consists of much more than grades and exams” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 200 - my emphasis) and the students in this school “learn and interpret information, rather than merely accumulate data and facts” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 198 - my emphasis). Content is completely absent from this discussion— what is talked about is educational practice in its most

abstract form and learning without any reference to content or subject matter – at least as the results are analyzed and presented.

Moreover, almost nothing is reported on the way in which educational *relationships* are experienced by the students. In one place, they observe that the students attending the A&S school did not mention teachers much (but it is unclear to what extent teachers were noted by the students in the regular school). This silence about teachers is interpreted not in relation to the questions asked in the interview, but as a direct effect of that school's PiP: "We suggest that this underrepresentation of the teachers' role in the learning process fleshes out the A&S school's messages about student-centered learning, where students' own progress, development, growth and emotional world constitute the hub of the learning process and where learners are encouraged to take charge of their own motivations, and thus develop autonomy as learners." (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 200).

Redefining pedagogy instead in line with the Northern European notion of *Pädagogik*, offers a more encompassing framework for understanding education. It allows researchers a more nuanced departure for interview guides and interpretation for the interviews, and further suggests that interviews may not be the most important or useful method (see below). By drawing more heavily from pragmatism – notably of Dewey and Mead (e.g. Biesta, 1994, 2014) and reincorporating the main insights from Bourdieu and Bernstein, including the importance of capital and field in relation to habitus and the distinction between voice and message, the concept of and methodology behind PiP can be strengthened.

Biesta writes that "To my mind one of the most important insights of Dewey's [...] position lies in his contention that identity of meaning or interpretation between two actors is not a question of the

identity of their subjective experiences. The only criterion for sufficient identity of meaning is *agreement in action*.” (1994, p. 315).

In critiquing the learnification of the language of education Biesta’s aim is to make room for an educational language about the normative purposes that we (should) have with education. What he does not offer (much of) is how we, as empirical researchers can contribute and how we can reframe a research focus on “agreement in action” (however, see Biesta & Burbules, 2003). What could become a central focus of PiP research is how students ‘take up’ what the teacher offers through teaching. This would have to be done within a chosen language and understanding of the purpose of education—as in the present example that of qualification, socialization and subjectification.

A possible future for research in PiP – about methods and the improvement of practice

The discussion of what those aims should be is outside the scope of this paper though the argument has been made that ‘learning’ is not sufficient. Having made arguments for the improvement of PiP by way of including an explicit theory of education in the research process, this final part of the paper is intended as a brief reflection on two related issues that have received less attention in the paper so far. The first is what consequences the critique of PiP has on the choice of methods to use when inquiring into PiP in the future. The second is related to the question of how PiP may be useful for teachers (and students) in ongoing classroom practice – that is, how practice may perhaps improve as a result of research into PiP. The core points are that a number of qualitative research methods lend themselves specifically to exploring students’ experiences as they happen in interaction, in ways that can supplement interviews. Secondly, that the research into PiP can perhaps (also) be conducted much closer to, or even in direct cooperation with,

teachers themselves thereby ensuring that results are available to them for improving their own educational practices.

Starting with the issue of methods, we may not have to look beyond the frameworks chosen by Hadar and Hotam to get guidelines for how research in PiP could be further enriched. As stated above, a central and shared assumption by Bourdieu, Bernstein and Dewey is that the formation of meaning in ongoing practice is both intersubjective in nature and builds upon a pre-reflective basis of habits. That habits are pre-reflective means that they are not readily accessible through language. Interviews, even if both informative and helpful, cannot therefore be the sole source of empirical data. What is needed are methods that inquire into the very formation of habits – into how the social is ‘inscribed’ in the body of students. To Dewey, Bourdieu and Bernstein this formation, or inscription, of habits, is a fundamentally *intersubjective* process, which occurs over time. I would therefore suggest that methods that make it possible to pay close attention to how habits are formed in social practice would be appropriate. Which specific methods are chosen may vary between different circumstances. Ethnographic fieldwork, with a focus on observation and participation over time, could serve as a valuable method, or set of methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Pedersen, Klitmøller, & Nielsen, 2012; Spradley, 1980). In this type of research, care is taken by the researcher to allow the field or practice to unfold by participating and observing ongoing interaction. Classic examples of research in this tradition are Jackson’s (1990) ‘Life in Classrooms’ or Willis’ (1977) ‘Learning to Labour’ both of which is based on extensive observation and participation in the school context. It seems that Hadar and Hotam are sensitive to this when they write that they did “an extensive ethnographic study in both schools prior to the group conversations that comprised the current study” (Hadar & Hotam, 2012, p. 193). It is further research along this line that I would suggest could help reorient the concept of PiP.

The issue of methods also open up the question of *who* should be doing that research and how classroom practice might benefit from researching it. Hadar and Hotam have only little to say about how PiP may help improve educational practice. However, they appear to be of the persuasion that the context-bound PiP of a given school is an important issue for the specific schools in their efforts to improve education. This raises the issue of the relation between research and practice. Drawing on Biesta and Burbules' (2003) explication of a pragmatist empirical research agenda the point could be made that "the relationship between educational research and practice is [...] not one of application but of cooperation and coordination" (Biesta & Burbules, 2003, p. 108). Again, such intended alignment between research and practice could be realized in different ways. One way would be to frame the research as action research by for instance inviting teachers to be an active part in the research process (e.g. Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Action research has been developed precisely to take into account that research and practice may benefit each other without having identical goals. Research may have more general interests concerning PiP whereas specific teachers or schools may be more interested in local conditions. Within the student voice research community some have argued for making the *students* co-researchers of the educational practices that they part-take in (e.g. Bland & Atweh, 2007; Messiou, 2013).

Both the issue of methods and of the ways PiP can be used to improve practice have been given too little attention in this paper to be considered thorough. As with the choice of Biesta as representative of an educational theory, the point is not to suggest that action research or ethnographic methods are the only viable methods for studying PiP. The intention was to highlight that there are methods that are more conducive with regard to studying how meaning via habits are formed in practice.

In conclusion

The point of this paper has been to take what I believe to be a promising new line of empirical research, which explicitly reintroduces the concept of *pedagogy* and directly relates it to *practice*, and make a critique of it in the hope that such a critique might help to further develop and strengthen it. In the course of the critique, I aimed to show a contradiction between the sources used by Hadar and Hotam and the way that those sources are used. A concept of PiP that takes seriously both pedagogy *and* practice makes two adjustments to the concept crucial. First and foremost, PiP needs to be developed with explicit attention to (an) educational theory – a theory concerning the *purpose* of education, a Pädagogik. I have suggested one version developed by Biesta, but the point is not that it be *this one*, but that there needs to be an overall (in Hadar and Hotam's words, a holistic) formulation of what good education *is* in order for research to be *for*, rather than simply *on*, education. Secondly and following from the theoretical sources already used by Hadar and Hotam, I suggest that *practice* and *action* rather than student *talk*, *perspectives* or *voice* must take center stage. To this end a brief description of some methods available for the ongoing empirical exploration of PiP has been outlined. Methods that share the potential for understanding the 'agreement in action' over time between teachers and students.

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