Engaging the Intellectual and the Moral in Critical Literacy Education: The Four-Year Journeys of Two Teachers From Teacher Education to Classroom Practice

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ABSTRACT

As teachers are increasingly being asked and expected to teach across cultural differences and work toward social justice in their classrooms, teacher educators must seriously consider how university course work impacts students in their own classrooms. This article present a four-year qualitative case study investigating the meaning-making of two students in a graduate course focused on literacy and culture during the semester the course was taken and their subsequent entrance into the classroom to teach primary grade students. The authors use Bourdieu's constructs of habitus, field, and capital to better understand when, where, and why teachers take up critical literacy practices across time and context. The authors argue that teacher education pedagogy is merely a point of contact and a point of departure for learners and that nuanced, long-term readings of teacher education students' improvisations of habitus reveal the interplay between their formal learning and their personal, social, political, and other formal educational experiences. The impact of university course work can prompt small or significant changes in habitus and the interactions between habitus and particular fields (graduate course, life, elementary school, and literacy pedagogy) can both reinforce a critical literacy perspective and constrain that perspective.

> "When I work with teachers who teach poor and working-class children, the first thing I often encounter is their expressions of anger: *these* children whom my lessons do not reach, and who fail their proficiency tests at such high rates; *these* parents who do not support my professional work or share my values; *this* community—and so on. What has to occur for things to change is not simply an *intellectual* [italics added] shift... Rather, change also has to entail a *moral* [italics added] shift, a willingness to open oneself up to the possibility of seeing those who differ from us. This is very hard work, but work that lies at the heart of teaching."
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> —Deborah Hicks (2002, p. 152)

Hicks has argued that in addition to intellectual shifts necessary for teachers to effectively teach children who are different from themselves, it is also necessary to experience a moral shift that positions teachers as able and willing to see children differently. Seeing students differently, from Hicks's perspective, would entail recognizing children and their families as sociocultural beings who live full lives outside traditional institutional spaces, which tend to devalue their experiences. We situate Hicks's "shifting" in dispositions within Bourdieu's (1984, 1990, 1994) construct of the habitus and the theoretical and practical possibilities for improvisation and modification of the habitus through interactions with various fields. As teacher educators and researchers, Hicks's argument is one we take seriously and through which we can imagine implications for educators at all levels, preschool through

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graduate school. We extrapolate this notion to include ourselves (self-identified feminists committed to critical pedagogies) facing teacher education students who may differ from us in a variety of ways. In other words, if we are to expect graduates of our program to be willing to reconstruct their habituses to see their child-students differently, we had better be willing to engage in the same kind of revision of our own habitus to see our teacher education students differently rather than fall into deficit discourses that refer to *these* teacher education students whom our lessons do not reach and who fail at teaching diverse students; *these* teacher education students who do not share our values; *this* teacher education program filled with white middle class privileged female students.

In this article, we tell a four-year story of two teacher education students: one year of graduate school and three subsequent years of teaching in the early grades. Across the four years of this work, we engaged a number of theoretical perspectives to construct a multilayered framework. We weave together critical literacy, sociocultural, and feminist theories and a Bakhtinian moral philosophy to describe our ideal "goals" for what teachers might know and do when they leave the core research and theory course in the graduate program. To explore some of the complexities of engaging intellectually and morally with these critical pedagogies, we draw on Bourdieu's (1984, 2000; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) reflexive sociology and employ the constructs of habitus, field, and capital. Our analyses of data demonstrating participants' practices toward and away from those pedagogical goals are grounded in a Bourdieusian theory of the habitus, field, and capital interaction, which allows us to understand moral and intellectual practices as embodied and reflective of past experiences while simultaneously potentially generative of different future actions. Situated in the field of teacher education for social justice broadly—and critical literacy teacher education more specifically—we argue that longitudinal qualitative studies are imperative for gaining insights into the complicated and contradictory processes through which early career teachers become committed to issues of social justice and critical literacy and that framing teacher education pursuits through a robust understanding of Bourdieu's analytical tools could be productive. These implications could contribute to ongoing discussions about the possibilities and challenges of culturally and critically focused teacher education for social justice and to conducting research in the same field.

Habitus, Field, and Capital

Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, grounded in his ethnographic work of marginalized groups of people in Algeria and France, has produced five major concepts. We draw largely from the constructs of habitus, field, and capital (Albright, 2008; Bourdieu, 1984, 1990, 1994, 2000; Kramsch, 2008) and feminist readings of Bourdieu (Krais, 1993; Probyn, 2004; Reay, 1997), and we propose that the habitually performed actions and dispositions of teachers do not take place automatically given particular material, social, and political conditions. Rather, ways of thinking and acting are introduced through both language and observation, and thinking and acting shift across time and space. Therefore, using habitus to conceive of a "self" or encompassing multiple selves through which particular ways of being with others become less consciously performed and more consciously reflected upon (reflexive) and change in the future offers us a lens through which to imagine how teachers incorporate or take hold of critical literacy practices in their personal and professional lives.

Being structured by, and simultaneously structuring, social practices in specific sociopolitical contexts or "fields," the habitus is the embodiment of past experiences marked by present speech, actions, tastes, and dispositions that can presumably predict some future performance. The field in which such performances are enacted, however, is equally important to consider in any analysis of the embodied person entering the field. All fields are relatively stable social spaces of coexisting differing points of view that have unequally distributed capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic), therefore positioning individual actors differentially within the field. Literacy education, for example, could be considered a field with competing perspectives on what constitutes literacy, the best approaches to teaching literacy, and even what constitutes valid or "scientific" literacy research. Within the field of literacy education, scholars are positioned differentially based upon their interactions with different perspectives in the field and the corresponding capital or power that such positions carry. At the same time, scholars are active agents in the field, competing for the capital that might afford them influence over others (teachers, publishers, policymakers, accrediting organizations, test writers, parents, etc.). Those who feel marginalized by dominant (or what Bourdieu might call *doxa*) perspectives of literacy education work to reposition themselves in the field, oftentimes by attempting to change—if only in small ways—that field. Simultaneously, those who reap the benefits of unequal distribution of capital in the field, work to maintain such a distribution so that it will continue to privilege their perspectives and practices.

The habitus, field, and capital, then, are three major constructs from Bourdieu's work that are inextricably linked, making it imperative that they be used as interrelated analytic tools when attempting to research any individual person's entry into and actions within a field. And although the example above of literacy education is useful for exploring the construct of field and capital, it is also the broader sociopolitical context that is important to consider in this research. We (Stephanie Jones and Grace Enriquez) are actors within the field of literacy education, just as the focal participants in this study are actors in the same field, even though the local contexts of our daily work differed significantly depending upon how the broader field shaped the practices (language practices, materials, texts, values, beliefs, etc.) of the local sites and how local actors positioned themselves in relation to such practices. So although the habitus is sometimes privileged in work based on Bourdieu's theory of practice, it cannot be considered in isolation—and, in fact, doing so can make Bourdieu's sociology seem overly deterministic, as the habitus might be expected to quite simply reproduce its practices across time. The dialectical relationship between the habitus, different fields of practice, and unequal distribution of capital, however, provides potential for both habitus and field to change in small or significant ways. These possibilities for change are especially important for educators because they point to subjects as agents who can wield power over their actions in social situations, as well as influence various fields of practice.

Bourdieu (1984) theorized that change in the habitus was equivalent to experiencing crisis in interaction with a field—to experience something so different from one's expectation of the social world that a person must reconsider how to use his or her mind, language, and body. This crisis does not have to be one of shame or anger or fear; we want to be sure readers don't misread this as a rationale to use anger-enticing teaching pedagogies in teacher education classes that could backfire and shut down a will to reconsider oneself. The crisis is often more psychosocial and cognitive—more of a dissonance and disequilibrium rather than a necessary jolt of electrified emotion. For example, critical literacy practices may be easily integrated into one's habits of mind and body in cases where students have lived experiences of injustice, social action, or intellectual experiences with compatible theories, or they may rub up against one's habitus in ways that are uncomfortable or even hostile, which could either negatively impact one's willingness or ability to move toward integration or catapult one's desire for transformation.

When Hicks (2002) wrote of seeing those who differ from us, she was drawing on Bakhtin's (1993) moral philosophy of being with others who differ from us, responding to them in ways that are morally responsible. Seeing, being, and responding differently engage more than just the intellect; they engage matters of the heart and affect, in the sense of empathy and moral stance. And though Bakhtin has written that one can never fully understand the other's situation because then one would lose one's self or particular ways of experiencing and seeing things around oneself, he does believe that an individual must be answerable to the other within the particular context of a particular moment and that there is no way not to respond (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986, 1993; Fecho & Meacham, 2007). Therefore, response is always happening, whether it is one of silence, social action, empathy, or dismissal. We would argue that a person's response is regulated by habitus and field and that habitually positioning oneself to respond in ways that are answerable to a person and particular context would work to structure the habitus into continuing to do so in the future.

The habitus then, for the purposes of this article, structures the interplay between the intellectual and the moral within the field of literacy education and in a local context that privileges critical literacy education at the graduate level and elementary-aged level. Habitus is the embodiment of what one brings to bear on a particular moment of being with the other in life and in the classroom: all the intellectual tools, language, perspectives, social practices, and so on that one has acquired or learned. For example, as professor of the graduate course studied in this article, Stephanie Jones carried into the first class meeting substantial theoretical understandings of sociopolitical contexts of society, institutions, and possible pedagogical responses; lived experiences as an elementary school teacher in different sociopolitical contexts; and first hand knowledge of poverty and the material and symbolic violence of classism in schools and society, among other things. The embodiment of these intellectual dispositions, beliefs about what worked for her in classrooms with young children, and lived experiences of classism came together to create a sensitivity to economic struggle and a suspicion of people who had never experienced poverty or, at least, economic instability. The habitus doesn't determine everything, however, and an individual may alter, refine, shift, or even completely rework his or her habitus on the basis of his or her interactions with other various fields. In fact, through reflexive practice, Stephanie has improvised and continues to try to shift her habitus and the resulting moral and intellectual stances toward students in her classroom. The intellect informs morality, morality informs the intellect, and the habitus organizes resulting social practices and future possibilities as it interacts within different fields: Teacher education, literacy education, and critical literacy education are fields important to the purposes of this article.

Teacher Education for Social Justice

In a climate that spotlights accountability, the field of teacher education has come under politicians' and the public's scrutiny. However, a number of prominent scholars have pointed out that concerns over outcomes and teacher quality necessitate explicit discussions about social justice in teacher education (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Preparing teachers to teach across differences and work toward social justice has been a more recent pursuit in the study of teacher education as a result of the now overt acknowledgment of systemic disadvantages of particular groups of people inherent in a society where mainstream power operates through white, patriarchal, English-speaking, heterosexual, middle-classness and affluence that is explicitly and implicitly perpetuated in schools (e.g., Nieto 2005; Zeichner, 2003). What social justice means in context and enactment, however, is up for debate (McDonald & Zeichner, 2008) and not always clear in published studies of teacher education for social justice. However, Sleeter (2008) has reviewed knowledge gained from 25 years of studying preservice and inservice course work focused on culture and equity pedagogy, including "a fair amount of agreement about the kinds of concepts such coursework should include" (p. 566). Such concepts include Zeichner's (1996, as cited in Sleeter, 2008) recommendations for course work to focus on a clearer self-identity that emphasizes culture and ethnicity; critical examination of one's ethnocentrism; explicit learning about prejudice, racism, privilege, and socioeconomic oppression and the school's role in perpetuating such; multicultural curriculum development; complexities of learning styles; the interconnected nature of language, culture, and learning; and culturally appropriate teaching and assessment (Sleeter, 2008, p. 566). Although there have been some promising studies of such concepts in university classrooms where the instructor models the same sociocultural constructivist pedagogies he or she hopes the students will take up in their own classrooms (e.g., Brown, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), other studies have presented more mixed results, including little to no advancement in the use of multicultural education or gains correlated with a teacher's prior experiences with cross-cultural interactions (Sleeter, 2008).

This article aims to further complicate pursuits in the field, positing that the habitual positioning of white, female, middle class teacher education students as deficient in one way or another coupled with complex practices of becoming a different kind of person (e.g., one who uses and teaches critical literacy practices) make the lofty goals of preparing teachers to teach across differences and for social justice even more daunting. In fact, we believe that overemphasis on individual teacher education students' "dispositions" (or habitus) underemphasizes the importance of the field (teacher education or critical literacy teacher education) and the distribution of capital within that field. We do see possibilities, however, and we move next to what we see as a refreshing perspective on teacher education students and then to the field of critical literacy.

White, female, middle class teacher education students are sometimes positioned negatively in the halls of colleges of education and in the literature as being a monolithic group (or a collective habitus) that does not have the cultural experience or intellectual disposition to work in socially just ways with children from diverse cultural locations (e.g., Allen & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2004; Conklin, in press; Jones, in press; McDonald & Zeichner, 2008; Sleeter, 2008). Allen and Hermann-Wilmarth have argued that instead of questioning their own practices, teacher educators often watch their own students struggle in diverse classroom settings:

> We blame what we often generalize as their race and class privilege, socially conservative or outright bigoted family values. We question their naïveté born, we assume, of sheltered inexperience. We bemoan their unexamined Whiteness; their proud monolingualism; their sorority priorities; their "love of little children" that seems to apply mostly to clean, White, well-dressed children and only in the most patronizing way to "those poor little Black/Mexican/trailer-park kids." Most of all we rail against their resistance to multicultural teacher education. (p. 214)

Allen and Hermann-Wilmarth (2004) set up this argument for pointing to the irony in our work as teacher educators, and they highlighted the personal challenges in getting to know students from an asset perspective—a struggle, perhaps, that their teacher education students will face when they are in their own classrooms as well. Embedded in Allen and Hermann-Wilmarth's argument is the notion that we often engage in too much blaming of students for what they don't have when they come to teacher education courses or how they don't change inside the course itself, homogenizing them, in a sense, in the same way we hope to dissuade them from doing in their own teaching (e.g., see Miller's, 1996, historical analyses of teacher education in the United Kingdom).

We would argue that any teacher education course or program emphasizing social justice must work against homogenizing the students populating such spaces. Analyzing students' engagements with teacher education for social justice as dynamic processes bound up in habitus, field, and the inherent workings of power in each can provide teacher educators with tools to re-see their students. They are not a part of a collective group but, rather, are complex beings negotiating various spheres of their past, present, and future lives and trying to understand how or whether to integrate an intellectual and moral stance toward social justice.

Critical Literacy Teacher Education for Social Justice

One approach toward social justice taken by teacher education programs is through critical literacy. Critical literacies theory and practice are often derived from critical (McLaren, 2006), feminist (Arnot & Weiler, 1993; Weiler, 1988, 1994), and sociocritical theories and critical pedagogies (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987), and are most often aligned with a politicized understanding of language and literacy. A number of literacy scholars and teacher educators (e.g., Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999; Comber & Simpson, 2001; Jones, 2006a; Leland & Harste, 2000; Vasquez, 2003) have argued that although critical literacy skills are complex, even young children can learn and use them in their everyday literacy work. Freebody and Luke (1990), in fact, asserted that analyzing texts to determine the author's stance on a topic and the ways in which power is attributed to characters, representations, and perspectives is one of four essential reading practices.

Engaging teacher education students in critical literacy practices, critically reading one's world, teaching elementary children from a critical perspective, and teaching critical literacy practices to children in elementary classrooms are all quite different, however, and we want to distinguish between these for clarity. It is possible that numerous teachers have participated in teacher education programs using the term *critical literacy* in very different ways—as Zeichner and Conklin (2008) found for the term *social justice*—but it is also possible that teachers have been immersed in course work that teaches them to use critical literacy practices but doesn't convince them of the importance of teaching their own young students similar practices. This is one defining difference that we explore between the two focal participants in this study.

Graduate Program and Course Goals for Teacher Knowledge and Action

The graduate course we studied was taught by Stephanie for three consecutive years and was a core requirement for a literacy specialist master's degree. Grace served as a graduate teaching assistant for the course one year but not during the semester when the focal participants of this study were taking the course. The master's program was offered at a private, urban university in the northeast United States, and the program's tenets included a commitment to inquiry, curriculum, and social justice, especially around issues of urban education. Both pre- and inservice teachers attended the program on either a full- or part-time basis, but the majority were students with initial teacher certification and less than three years of experience as lead classroom teacher. All of the professors in the program were white women (including Stephanie) with varying degrees of commitment to social-justice-oriented research and pedagogy, and most of the instructors (who were mostly graduate students) in the program were also white, with the exception of Grace, who identifies as a woman of color and Filipina American. The master's-level students participated in required courses that were designed and enacted by professors and/or instructors who drew upon their personal strengths and sociopolitical beliefs regarding educational theory and practice in literacy. Students took courses, then, that differentially privileged progressive, sociocultural, critical, and multimodal approaches to literacy education. At times, students reported perceptions of courses contradicting one another, citing, for example, one course's focus on carefully planned series of reading or writing lessons and another course's focus on working with elementary students to identify a common social issue that would become the center of a long-term critical inquiry project. However, the professors communicated regularly and both privately and publicly supported one another's approaches to course content and pedagogy, emphasizing the similarities in their philosophies (e.g., the importance of student choice, rigorous academic work, and nontraditional teaching practices) rather than their differences in theoretical grounding.

Assuming that power relations within language construct inequities and systematically marginalize particular groups in society (Comber, 1998; Fairclough, 1995; Finn, 1999; Gee, 1996; Jones, 2006a), the graduate course we studied was a site where Stephanie and her students were immersed in socioculturally and critically focused readings and discussions (readings included Allison, 1988; Comber, 1998; Comber & Simpson, 2001; Compton-Lilly, 2003; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Gee, 2001; Hicks, 2002; Holland & Cole, 1995; hooks, 1989; Jones, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Rist, 2000; Rogers, 2003). Additionally, Stephanie aimed to pedagogically engage students in antiessentialist and democratic practices (Ellsworth, 1997; hooks, 1994; Jones, 2006b) in an attempt to construct spaces for inviting students to try on different perspectives and assume multiple identities within class meetings and through class assignments. These kinds of identity performances are always saturated with morality, or ways that a habitus enables moral responses to others in a particular field. How, when, why, and whether participants took up critical literacy practices in the university classroom and how, when, why, and whether they taught a critical stance within their own classroom depended on their individual locations, macro- and microcultural experiences, and the specific transactional relationships between a course's content and context and a researcher. Thus, the graduate course and this study are rooted in a sociocultural and sociopolitical understanding of the construction of texts of all kinds and the conviction that critical literacy is not an "add-on" to literacy practices but is an ongoing statement of politics (Comber, 1998, 2006; Jones, 2006a; Shannon, 2001) that works to construct particular kinds of identities in teachers and students and the relationships between them.

One of our hopes for the students in this course was that they would become particular kinds of people, thus drawing on Bourdieu's placement of "subject formation as a central pedagogical issue" and our belief that "[a] ll pedagogies are interventions in the lives of people and in the multiple social fields they inhabit" (Albright, 2008, p. 27). Ideally, students from our course would become people who can recognize systemic injustices in local and global contexts, in print and texts of all kinds, and in interpersonal interactions. We imagine these teachers to be the ones who openly and sensitively discuss social issues reflecting social injustices embedded in the classroom context and the curriculum with their students, develop critically focused curricula in response to students' curiosities and conversations, engage students in cross-curricular social action projects that are relevant and of high interest to them, and explicitly teach students practices of critique in text and society.

We recognize that one course—or even a well-conceived and enacted teacher education program (Dozier, Johnston, & Rogers, 2006; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005; Zeichner & Conklin, 2008)—cannot presume to meet the lofty goal of convincing students to wish to be these kinds of people, much less ensure that they have access to a repertoire of practices that will help them perform as this kind of teacher in unpredictable classroom and school contexts. Perhaps Brosio (2006) was onto something when he wrote, "The practice of critical pedagogy must be evaluated according to whether it convinces students of its value and relevance, or the lack of, to their own lives" (p. 86). We acknowledge that we are not talking about the mere *adopting* of particular theories, practices, or politics but instead are hoping to convince students to set in motion a generative trajectory that will include the *becoming* of this kind of critical literacy educator. From our perspective, it is within these goals that we locate the meaning of social justice.

This study, then, engages multiple theories to focus on both the personal and the political in moral and intellectual shifting as two graduate students transition back into early elementary school teaching. We inquire into two focal participants' practices across four years as they composed and recomposed their respective critical habituses that could enable social-justice-oriented curricular and pedagogical responses to children.

Modes of Inquiry

This article reflects our four-year inquiry into the following questions:

1. In what ways does a graduate course focused on culture, critical literacy, and social justice impact two focal students across time and context? How is the impact regulated by each participant's habitus and their interactions within different fields?
2. Under what conditions do the focal students use critical literacy practices and teach critical literacy practices to their elementary-aged students? How do these conditions reflect the interaction of habitus and field?

This study is a qualitative case study inquiry (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) into the four-year journeys of two teachers. The study begins chronologically—and analytically—with one required graduate course on culture, critical literacy, and social justice. The first phase of the study was teacher research because the principal investigator (Stephanie) was the professor for the course and used the findings to alter course content and pedagogy for future sections. Given Stephanie's status and a concern about participants potentially responding to questions in ways that might satisfy their former professor, two doctoral students (Grace Enriquez and Gravity Goldberg) joined the project as research assistants and worked collaboratively with Stephanie to establish an interview protocol based on initial themes and analyses of students' written assignments from the course. The second phase of the research included interviews that were conducted by the research assistants six months after the end of the graduate course and at voluntary monthly meetings for students who wanted to continue their work in critical literacy.

Once interviews were transcribed and analyzed, two focal participants—Rebekkah and Brooke (all names of participants and children are pseudonyms)—were invited to take part in the third phase of the research: classroom observations and additional interviews across two years. Three factors made these two participants stand out as potentially offering insight into questions about critical literacy, moral and intellectual shifts, and socially just elementary school teaching:

(1) the participants had a strong desire to engage their primary-aged students in critical literacy practices, as demonstrated across course assignments, class discussions, follow-up interviews, and their participation in several monthly meetings about critical literacy, (2) the two participants entered the course from very different perspectives and past experiences that shaped their habitus at the beginning of the course, positioning them to interact very differently with the field of the graduate classroom space, and (3) both teachers were teaching at the same elementary school, providing researchers with a similar physical, geographic, social, and political context in which to see two different teachers at work.

Stephanie and Grace conducted classroom observations and additional interviews across one full academic year, with each focusing primarily on one of the focal participants while sharing observations and initial analyses regularly and making periodic visits to the other classroom so that each researcher had access to the physical environment for each case study and could build a relationship with the other focal participant. Stephanie continued conversations with the two focal participants over the fourth year and observed each of the focal participants' classrooms 15 times for at least two hours each time during the final year. Observations in the final year also included four consecutive days of being in each teacher's classroom from the beginning of the school day until the end and some after-school events.

Across the four years, three primary sources of data from and about the two focal participants informed the study and the representative work in this article: written documents (Hodder, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1999), interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Seidman, 1998), and classroom observations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Documents consisted of course assignments, midterm and end-of-term course reflections, and peer feedback on group presentations during the course. We conducted and audiotaped semistructured, one-hour interviews six months after the course concluded. In these interviews, we asked participants to reflect on their experiences in (a) the course, (b) their personal lives, and (c) their professional lives; further, we asked them to explore any disconnections or connections between these three experiential realms.

Observations of the focal participants' classrooms began 18 months after the course ended and lasted from October to June. During the first year of observations, Stephanie and Grace participated in the classroom settings three times a month for at least three hours each visit, focusing primarily on formal literacy instruction blocks that mostly occurred in the mornings. Due to schedule changes in the classrooms, we occasionally observed choice time, collaborative activities with other classes, morning routines, and math instruction. During observations, we wrote ethnographic field notes with an emphasis on teacher actions and interactions with children and curricula. Following the observations, we constructed analytic narratives about our visit to explore emerging themes within a particular observation, emerging themes across observations, and outlying data that pushed us to consistently look for and at counterstories to dominant themes. Field notes were supplemented by audiotaped informal conversations with the teacher participants, teacher-led conversations in the classroom, student–teacher conferences during literacy instruction, and photographs of the physical environment and children's work samples.

Researchers' Positions and Reflexivity

Because of the longitudinal nature of these case studies and the numerous informal interactions we each had with the participants across the years, supplemental data sources were also used to inform contextual descriptions and our analyses of classroom practices. E-mail correspondence, informal meetings outside the classroom setting, and numerous conversations before and after formal observations have all been merged as a part of this ongoing study of two teachers' four-year journeys, as our position of researchers became more like positions of colleagues, confidants, and even friends of Rebekkah and Brooke. We perceived our evolving relationships with, and ongoing communications about, these two focal participants as part of data generation and consciously reflected on our informal and casual comments made about the focal participants, their students, their practices in the classroom, their lives outside the classroom, and their participation in the graduate course so long ago. Whereas Stephanie was the professor of the graduate course we studied and had regular e-mail correspondence with Brooke and consistent group conversations with both Brooke and Rebekkah about their personal frustrations regarding inequities in society and schools, Grace had also established relationships with the participants beyond the scope of the research. She was a doctoral student who supervised their practicum experiences in the program, had taken an elective course in literacy staff development and school reform with them, and lived in the same neighborhood. Moreover, as a woman of color, Grace found herself discussing matters of social justice and engaging in inquiries about systematic social injustices with the participants on a personal level. This relationship not only provided us with rich amounts of informal, supplemental data from multiple sources but helped us to understand each other's individual goals and interests as educators.

Because of our commitment to reflexive sociology, we were always aware of the complicated nature of our "studying" Rebekkah and Brooke, even if we still don't completely understand the full extent to which our relationships with each of them influenced their practices across the four years. For example, although Stephanie offered to write an article or book chapter with each of the participants about their classroom practices, only Brooke pursued doing so—a pursuit that has led to Brooke being honored by a national organization and her inquiring into doctoral programs. Stephanie spent less time in Rebekkah's classroom during the first year, potentially making Rebekkah feel less comfortable with her and resulting in her reluctance to coauthor a piece of writing. Additionally, we have to consider that Rebekkah recognized some tension between Stephanie's critical approach to pedagogy and her own evolving progressive approach, which may also have influenced her decision to not pursue writing with Stephanie. Our participation in the fields of Rebekkah and Brooke's graduate education and later in their school and classrooms impacted those fields, and though this article is not the place to fully analyze such impact, we do have suspicions about our personal influences on the participants' classroom practices at the end of this study—something we raise questions about at the end of this article.

The corpus of data has undergone several layers of analysis, each informed by a slightly different theoretical perspective. One layer of analysis employed critical and feminist theories of social class and focused on the central role social class and fiction played in one participant's meaning-making in the graduate course (see Jones, 2006b), another emphasized critical and feminist approaches to social justice pedagogies to conceptualize the kind of person one of the participants became in the course of four years (see Jones, in press), and yet another layer of analysis combed through data to better understand how the participants' actions aligned—or did not—with Bakhtin's moral philosophy of being (see Jones & Enriquez, 2008). This article reflects another substantial layer of analysis that attempts to merge the prior three processes by viewing the practices of the participants across four years as a reflection of the interrelationship of habitus (and its improvisation), field, and capital in critical literacy education. To engage this analytic frame, we worked chronologically through the data and selected representative practices of each participant as a student, a person in the broader world, and as a teacher. We then considered the practice as both a response to the field in which it was performed and a reflection of past social experiences and performances—all enabled by each participant's habitus. Finally, we theorized how the habitus was being performed and when it was reproducing actions or generating new actions and considered why, given the sociopolitical contexts of the field.

Two Students-Turned-Teachers

Rebekkah Before and During Graduate School

Rebekkah entered the focal graduate course in 2004 with an intellectual and moral disposition for critique, particularly of sexism and heterosexism in society. White, female, and middle class, she fit the race/gender/class categories of most education students, but her social and educational experiences marked her with some distinction, as Bourdieu might say. She experienced life between her mother's home in the midwestern "heartland" of the United States and the Northeast roots of her father's family, majored in culture and politics at a prestigious urban university, and lived in France for a year where her sister lived and Rebekkah visited numerous times. Rebekkah knew of Midwestern folks and East Coast folks, of working-class folks and affluent folks. And after negotiating geographic boundaries and identities affiliated with each, she joined the New York City Teaching Fellows, committing to teach in the largest and most diverse school district in the United States. Brooklyn was her destination, and she reportedly found herself in classrooms with students whose lives were lived in small, urban spaces where they faced many challenges, including attending underresourced schools and living in neighborhoods with high unemployment or underemployment rates and crime. Early in the semester of the focal graduate course, Rebekkah critiqued a mainstream magazine advertisement for promoting images of beauty she believed were oppressive to all women, including those who might even fit into such narrow categories of beauty. Interestingly, Rebekkah did fit into the narrowly constructed categories of beauty in contemporary United States. Her thin frame, sculpted face, big brown eyes, carefully maintained long brown hair, and bright smile caught the attention of folks around the college. Rebekkah also had a wicked wit that made people smile and laugh out loud, particularly at her uncanny imitations of professors, principals, colleagues, and children.

Rebekkah applied to the university because of its reputation for literacy education and its connection to the local public schools through its professional development and emerging curriculum mandates in balanced literacy. Feeling harshly criticized by her colleagues and administrators because she did not hold an education degree, Rebekkah decided to pursue a master's degree at the very institution from which her school was receiving professional development. She was hoping to reposition herself as an insider in the literacy education discourse circulating in her school and largely across the school district instead of being persistently marginalized as the teaching fellow who did not know the field of education in general or balanced literacy practices, specifically. (In the context of the school and district described here, balanced literacy was conceived of as being framed by a reading/writing workshop structure incorporating whole group explicit instruction through minilessons; guided practice in reading and writing with emphasis on process, content, and conventions; independent reading and writing within particular genres and units of study; and individual conferring between teacher and student for differentiated instruction aimed toward the goals of the whole group minilesson.) She expected that her course work would revolve around balanced literacy given the emphasis of such approaches in the public school system. Not having heard the term *critical literacy*, she assumed that in the graduate course we studied, she would learn about teaching what is traditionally known as critical thinking skills, such as making inferences and synthesizing texts.

In an interview six months after the course, Rebekkah articulated that she believed she had already begun developing what she called a way of "being empathetic and...looking at things from different perspectives" before even registering for the course (interview, July 26, 2005). Some of those understandings came from her undergraduate studies in culture and politics, especially a course titled Multicultural Education; some came from her observations of everyday life, including her discomfort with popular media images that defined beauty as tall, skinny, blond women, and her questioning of hedonistic materialism as a marker of success. When Stephanie began engaging the students in feminist and critical discourses as a way of reading the "world and the word" (e.g., Freire & Macedo, 1987) from multiple perspectives, then Rebekkah found herself in familiar territory. Her habitus, reflecting her past experiences and intellectual and moral dispositions, responded in what she perceived as the "right" way in the field constructed by Stephanie in the course, and given her desire to perform well as a graduate student, she put her critical intellectual practices to work right away. In other words, Rebekkah came to the field with particular dispositions, or a "posture," that enabled her to recognize familiar privileged practices and incorporate a nomos (the vision of a social order in the field) that generated practices perceived as appropriate (Bourdieu, 2000, pp. 143–144).

Rebekkah Engaging Critical Literacy Practices

In one of her critical reading assignments (students were assigned to write two 2–3 page papers reflecting a critical reading of an oral conversation, television commercial, magazine advertisement, or children's book to begin deconstructing images and messages of power and positioning and to imagine reconstructions that work toward more socially just representations), Rebekkah incorporated her past concerns about dominant images of beauty seamlessly into the broader discourse of critical literacy practices in the course as she critiqued a magazine advertisement that included a photograph of a white woman:

> The words "Defining Beauty" appear below the photograph [in the magazine ad]. Subsequently, anyone "reading" this commercial can conclude that beauty is defined as having certain traits: wide eyes, a small nose, smooth hair, full, yet not extremely large lips, snow white teeth, a particular body weight, etc. Conversely, one can conclude that anything outside of this definition of beauty is *not* beautiful. So... *who might feel marginalized?*...wrinkly people, Asian women, overweight people, poor people—the list is endless. In effect, any woman who cannot locate herself in this definition of beauty is marginalized. (critical reading assignment, November 2, 2004)

Here Rebekkah demonstrates her attention to mainstream images of beauty and critiques the advertisement for perpetuating such ideals and continuing the systemic marginalization of women who do not fit such images. Her list of marginalizing attributes, as perpetuated by the advertisement, includes markers of skin tone, ethnicity, body image, and social class, demonstrating the narrowness of mainstream images of beauty. Rebekkah claimed to have feminist leanings during her adolescent and undergraduate years. She regularly inserted feminist notions into class discussions over the semester, suggesting that she had already structured a habitus that attended to issues of gender, sexuality, and beauty and that the course content, readings, and discussions offered opportunities for her to continue, revise, and refine such structuring of practice that engaged her intellect and positioned her as morally empathetic toward women's issues in particular.

The Importance of Language to Rebekkah

It was the unfamiliar language, or discourse, of the course that offered further intellectual engagement, however. She found specific concepts and phrases to be helpful in critically analyzing social practices she had noticed in the past but did not have the words to describe her thoughts about them:

> The single greatest impact this course has had on me as a reader is the way it has empowered me with theory and language to describe what I observe about the world. Take Freire's concept of the oppressed becoming the oppressor.... Furthermore, this social theory has been so personally powerful because of its application to the arenas of my own life. Several of my friends, for example, follow the corporate America "script" (Holland & Cole, 1995)...of "success." (written reflection, December 21, 2004)

In this written reflection at the end of the semester, Rebekkah used her personal [girl]friends as an example of how, in Freire and Macedo's (1987) words, the oppressed become oppressors, adjusting her stance from the beginning of the course when she repeatedly articulated the oppression of women. She writes above about how women who are often positioned as subordinate to men can integrate themselves into corporate-dominated ideals of success and then perpetuate the cycle of oppression as they judge others who have not followed in the same paths (personal communication, 2006).

Though she did enter the course with a critical edge, already challenging some societal inequities, Rebekkah broadened and deepened her social critique across and following the semester—adjusting her habitus and practices to more regularly consider issues such as race and class. For Rebekkah, the writings of Paulo Freire, Donald Macedo, Basil Bernstein, Dorothy Holland, and Michael Cole were particularly memorable, and she ably recontextualized their theories and concepts within her experiences and observations of society:

> I mean, [the class] definitely helped me as an individual, but I think it more or less gave me...like the *language* to describe things that I see, so I think that that's somewhat empowering.... The idea of scripts that people have. I think it's Holland and Cole or whatever, that we learned about.... What's so interesting is I see it with my friends. Like, even with my boyfriend, the idea that he has to be successful, like, earn a certain salary and make all these ends meet. He hates his job, but clearly this role or this script is very powerful because he's not willing to opt out of it...I'm able to *see things* 'cause I have learned other ways to explain it. (interview, July 26, 2005)

The ability of language to open our experiences and minds to things we had not considered before is a powerful one, and Rebekkah felt empowered as a result of her access to new ways of explaining power relations and injustices she had (or had not) noticed in the past in her immediate surroundings.

It is significant, however, that Rebekkah used the same example during an interview six months after the end of the course (script for success in the United States) as she had in her final written reflection of the course. This was likely because it was an intellectual concept that rubbed up against her habitus in ways some of the other concepts in the course did not and prompted her to adjust her disposition toward the idea of success in the United States and among her circle of friends. Rebekkah had numerous friends and a boyfriend living in the same city, working in high-status careers, and earning incomes well above her teaching salary. Holland and Cole (1995) offered Rebekkah a way to intellectually understand social constructions of expectations or scripts (what Bourdieu might refer to as doxa), giving her an opportunity to challenge people's decision making in the pursuit of work and status at the sacrifice of happiness in one's job. And although this marks a use of critical literacy practices in her personal life, it focuses the lens on a group of people in U.S. society who are typically privileged—white, middle class, young men and women earning relatively high salaries in corporate America. In one sense, Rebekkah is realizing here that the hyper capitalism of the United States produces inequities but no "winners"; even those on the high end of the economic system suffer from powerful social and economic expectations (Brantlinger, 2007). She did, however, employ a similar analytic frame when she visited the Caribbean one year later (i.e., Summer 2006) and was struck by the intensity of race and class inequities highlighted in the tourism industry by many white, middle class, American tourists.

Critical literacy practices, some catapulted by the interactions of her habitus with the field of the graduate course, were being integrated into Rebekkah's personal life across time and context. And although Rebekkah's modified critical disposition toward societal scripts informed by gender and class seemed to be sedimenting, the concept—and its integration into her habitus—was not only iterative (such as the reproduction of the example six months out of the course) but also provided intellectual and moral tools for her to critique other inequitable systems. She began to see the complexities of power and oppression as she recognized how the tourism industry simultaneously exploited the people and land, brought economic and social resources to a land with many poor people, but perpetuated symbolic and real class and race inequities (personal communication, October, 2006).

Rebekkah in a Gentrified Elementary School

Outside the walls of the elementary school, Rebekkah was regularly noticing and voicing systemic inequities and domination in local and global contexts, but to our knowledge, she was not engaged in explicit social action to change such inequities beyond the heated discussions she would have with her friends and boyfriend. Her habits of mind and body interacting with the world in a critical fashion informed by intellectual ideas and moral desires for a just society would seemingly position her to do the same inside an elementary school where she was a teacher. However, that was not necessarily the case as her habitus interacted with the particular fields of one elementary school and a particular context of literacy education. In this section, we analyze select data that are representative of Rebekkah's practices as a literacy teacher and how and why she did not use a critical literacy lens in her official literacy instruction.

During this study, Rebekkah was a first-grade teacher for two years (2005–2007) and a second-grade teacher for one year (2007–2008) at a diverse urban school situated in a traditionally working class, racially mixed neighborhood that was being rapidly gentrified. A sense of place—geographic and historic—was important in the school and reflected in Rebekkah's classroom, where tables were named after local streets, and books and photographs about the surrounding city were displayed. The students in Rebekkah's classroom always mirrored the racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and social class diversity of the community outside the school as well as many urban centers across the United States. Most children spoke English either as a first, second, or third language, and numerous children spoke other languages, such as Spanish, Mandarin, Hebrew, Italian, Arabic, and various distinct dialects of English, including African American Vernacular English and a Jamaican English dialect. Social class affiliations ranged from what Rebekkah referred to as "super wealthy" families who had purchased properties near the school in the millions of dollars to poor and working-poor families living in government housing or receiving government subsidies for housing, with a range of blue-collar working class, artistic middle class, white-collar middle class, and upper middle class families in between. Approximately one third of Rebekkah's students qualified for free or reduced lunch each year, though that number was decreasing given the gentrification of the neighborhood and skyrocketing rent and purchase prices driving working class and poor families out of the school zone.

Progressive Literacy Practices in Rebekkah's Classroom and Cultural Capital in the School

Walking into Rebekkah's classroom was an enjoyable experience for both of us because we were entering a space where children were genuinely listened to, respected, and allowed a great deal of choice in their independent reading, independent writing, open-ended social studies projects, and in their discussions during whole-group meetings. As we talked with her across her first year back in the classroom and then observed her across two subsequent years, we were regularly in awe of the enthusiasm and stamina with which her students worked at reading and writing. While children would be reading or writing quietly on their own or with partners, Rebekkah would slip on a pink and white floral lei, pull her dark hair into a ponytail, and place an enormous binder filled with pages of notes on each child's work as a reader and writer across the year on her conference table. Then she got to work as each student would come to her one at a time, and they would confer about the student's reading or writing. Whether it be Harvey who was building theories about characters across the text or Katarina who was deciding how to structure her nonfiction piece on cold-blooded animals, Rebekkah looked them seriously in the eyes and asked them real questions about their work: "Is this true, Katarina, that lizards can be born with three legs?" She also asked them real questions about what she could do with their work (e.g., "Can I put these pages in order since you don't have them stapled yet?") and engaged them in spontaneous conversations about language: "*Jest* and *just* are two different words," she said to a student who misspelled *just*, "Have you ever heard of a *jester*?" The student had, and after a sustained discussion about the meaning of jest and jester, both decided the student would not be making that spelling mistake again. When Rebekkah finished conferring with a student, she would quickly write detailed notes about the conference in the binder and write a short personal note to the student inside a small spiral notebook. She walked the small notebook across the room, kneeled down next to the student, thanked him or her for a good conference, and read her personal note about things to think of as they read or write. Her attentiveness was exceptional and her commitment to students' deep thinking through their official literacy work in her classroom was recognizable every single time we were in her classroom.

During our two years of observing what we would consider "gorgeous teaching" (borrowing from Edelsky & Cherland, 2006 in their descriptions of progressive classrooms focused on individual student choice and growth) by Rebekkah, we never observed her teaching the group or encouraging a child to question an author's perspective in their texts, challenge privileged lives portrayed in children's books, critique stereotypes of people and places represented in texts, engage in multiple readings of a text from different perspectives, or any other practices that might signify an incorporation of "critical" analysis in critical literacy. We read these practices as reflective of a complex combination of her habitus informed by desires and dispositions from the past (a deep desire to learn about balanced literacy teaching from the well-regarded institution in the city and to overcome the critiques of her former colleagues and supervisors) and her habitus interacting with a field that not only recognized her abilities in balanced literacy teaching but positioned her as an expert for others to observe and learn from—an important concept we explore next.

Rebekkah Moves Away From Critical Literacy Practices and Toward More Privileged Practices

Unlike Rebekkah's experience in her former school, where she was marginalized for not knowing the language and practices of balanced literacy, her current school hired her largely because of her graduate degree from the university she attended. Rebekkah's habitus presumably entered this field, then, with what Bourdieu would call cultural and symbolic capital that was privileged in this setting—the language and teaching methods aligned with a reading/writing workshop model of literacy instruction that incorporated all aspects of balanced literacy. Her lived experiences of social critique and the language and practices she had acquired for critical literacy were largely unknown by the school administration and was only slightly acknowledged when administrators and colleagues learned that Rebekkah had taken a course with Stephanie when she was invited to talk with the faculty about her book during the 2006–2007 school year. In other words, just as Rebekkah was well-positioned to incorporate the social order and expectations (or nomos) of the graduate course focused on critical literacy practices due to her undergraduate and life experiences, her graduate education, which included course work in progressive approaches to literacy or balanced literacy, positioned her well to incorporate the nomos of this new field she found herself in: one that privileged knowledge and practices in reading/writing workshop but did not acknowledge critical approaches to literacy education.

In fact, Rebekkah became a stellar process-approach teacher by the fourth year of this study and regularly had visitors from outside her school come to observe her as she taught minilessons, facilitated independent reading/writing, and conferred with individual readers/writers. This positive attention she received for being an exemplary literacy teacher likely reinforced the practices honed within this particular progressive approach as she was expected to perform recognizable practices (ironically, the script of a particular literacy teacher). Her past desires, practices acquired in other classes during her graduate studies, and the habitual performing of the "right" literacy practices, then, constructed a habitus that suspended claims that children needed to learn critical literacies. Such disregard was articulated through statements doubting her personal ability to teach such practices throughout the course of the study, beginning with this comment in the second year:

> I have an understanding of, you know, being empathetic and looking at things from different perspectives, but I think it is very hard to make the transition of "What does this mean in your...classroom teaching?" I wouldn't have any idea how to translate the theory of critical literacy to actual classroom texts. And I *still* think that's an area that I need a lot of work on, but at least I have some language now, whereas before, I definitely didn't have any understanding of how I could ask it. Um..."what might another ending to that book be?" I could argue very well theoretically why certain books might marginalize kids, but I wouldn't really know what to say to a child. (interview, July 26, 2005)

This was one of the first comments made by Rebekkah that signified any doubt in her ability to teach critical literacy to young children, but others followed, including the theme of the literacy block not being the appropriate place for such work: "I find social studies to be the place where I have more flexibility to do those things" (interview, Spring 2008).

We would argue, however, that given the ways Rebekkah's habitus interacted with the social and political field outside school and her ongoing conversations with us, she was capable of generating classroom practices that would engage her students in critical analysis and a social justice orientation. In fact, she was a close friend of the other participant in this study, Brooke, who integrated critical literacies into her official literacy curriculum regularly, and the two discussed their work as teachers on an ongoing basis over the course of this study. Her experience from the graduate course, the resources she had access to in the two of us as researchers and conversational partners across four years, and the resources she had access to in her colleague and friend Brooke were not enough for Rebekkah to modify her habitus as a literacy teacher in the classroom in a way that would enable her to see her students as needing a critical lens and make her capable of engaging one. She had reconstructed her habitus from one that was critiqued five years earlier to one that was idolized by many professionals and that reward was too great to risk stepping out of a balanced literacy script. Additionally, Rebekkah was consistently rewarded by the high levels of reading and writing produced by her students, something that might have seemed at risk to her if she adjusted her instructional approach in literacy. The administration's perception of Rebekkah as being different from other teachers, with "distinctive properties" aligning to the preferred methods of teaching literacy, differentially distributed cultural and symbolic capital among the teachers in the school, with Rebekkah being (mis)recognized as embodying more than the others did. Bourdieu (1984) wrote of such complexities: "The dialectic of conditions and habitus is the basis of an alchemy which transforms the distribution of capital, the balance sheet of a power relation, into a system of perceived differences, distinctive properties, that is, a distribution of symbolic capital, legitimate capital, whose objective truth is misrecognized" (p. 172). In essence, Rebekkah was willing to shed her critical disposition as she entered the field of literacy teaching as a way to ensure her own progress or symbolic upward mobility and future cultural capital as recognized by official institutional structures, ironically placing her in the same intellectual and moral dilemma for which she critiqued her friends and boyfriend. Additionally, she might have perceived her students' high levels of reading and writing as imperative for them to progress similarly in and beyond school—a perception that might have diminished any need for students to engage in critical analyses.

We want to be clear here that from our perspective, Rebekkah was indeed a stellar literacy teacher who engaged balanced literacy approaches in her classroom in ways that valued students and inspired them to be motivated, confident, and sophisticated readers and writers. In fact, from some perspectives, this might be the most important task for Rebekkah—to ensure social justice for her students in the future. What we are attempting to analyze and theorize in this article, however, is how and why teachers teach their students critical literacy practices aimed at social (in)justice in and outside of school.

Brooke Before and During Graduate School

Brooke, a blond-haired, white female student in the same literacy specialist program, was different from Rebekkah in many ways, though the two of them became good friends and colleagues across this four-year study. Brooke experienced her graduate program with her brown eyes wide open, many times shaking her head in awe at the injustices presented in readings and discussions during class. Whereas Rebekkah might be the center of attention for her realistic and caricatured imitations of people, Brooke would sit back and watch, carefully taking in everything happening around her and occasionally speaking out to reveal her naïveté in a way that did not embarrass her but seemed rather empowering for her as she named the ways she "used to" think. Unlike Rebekkah, Brooke experienced relative geographic isolation, having spent most of her memoried life in a poor county in upstate New York. She was from a small, mostly white, working class rural town and lived a modest existence, with the combined salaries of a teacher and a police officer supporting a nuclear family of five and extended family members—conditions that afforded secondhand beds, mattresses, and other furniture and appliances and infrequent trips to a mall that was an hour away from home. Brooke attended a small, Christian college where most students were representative of middle class folks like her family: white, politically conservative, and liberal with their material goods to help others. After completing an undergraduate degree in elementary education, Brooke went back to her hometown and taught kindergarten in a classroom filled with white children and a lone African American child each year. Early in the semester of this focal graduate course, Brooke admitted to a classroom full of graduate students her astonishment that a short story about poverty in the rural South was about a white family because she had always understood poverty in the United States to be connected entirely with African Americans (personal communication, fall, 2004).

Brooke also entered the course without knowing what she would experience, and she certainly did not expect that what she encountered would include critical and feminist ways of reading the world and the word to deconstruct messages of normativity, power, and positioning. Reflecting on her history with the word *critical*, Brooke said it signified the problem "in the back of the text that had like 'Critical Thinking Question' with a light bulb. And I used to *hate* that one because that was the long one!" (interview, July, 2005). Unlike the seamlessness of Rebekkah's critical perspective on mainstream images of beauty and the intellectual work she was being asked to do in the critical reading assignment (a familiarity that made it relatively easy to incorporate the nomos of the field), Brooke was positioned very differently as she "tried on" an identity of a kind of person who would critically read a magazine advertisement while still negotiating the perspectives she brought with her into the classroom space. In her first critical reading assignment, Brooke used the course-assigned short stories by Dorothy Allison, an acclaimed writer who self-identifies as being a white lesbian from a poor family in the rural South, to help her imagine critical perspectives of a magazine advertisement for diamond engagement rings (see also Jones, 2006b):

> How would a lesbian or a woman who had never been married feel about this advertisement? Would they, like Dorothy Allison, secretly long to have this picture-perfect version of "love" that the world portrays exists? (critical reading assignment, November 2, 2004)

Though she purposefully used Dorothy Allison's short stories to help her gain entry into a critical reading of marriage, love, beauty, and heteronormativity, Brooke later wrote about her initial response to reading Dorothy Allison's work:

> ...I was a little disturbed when I was reading about lesbians. I came from a small town and a religious family. Homosexuality is not accepted. I was reading this book and I kept thinking that the women in the story were wrong and that they must have been rejected by a male father figure

> to be lesbians. I am now aware of how absurd it is to pass judgment on characters I cannot identify with. (written reflection, November 9, 2004)

Brooke's complex negotiation between her habitus as embodiment of her small town, predominantly white, middle-class, conservative Christian experiences, which included homophobia, and the field of the graduate course that privileged a critically focused intellectual and moral disposition was not an easy one. But in this written reflection, Brooke demonstrates some awareness of the habitus she entered the course with as well as an improvisation on her habitus. Dressman and Wilder (2008) theorized as to what happens when people are presented with something new. Responses range from incorporating the new idea, concept, or practice into one's existence in a way that doesn't disrupt the "pre-existing organizational or cultural structures and beliefs and so preserve[s] the unity, stability, and productive function of the cultural body as a whole" to taking "up that which is new as a way of improvisationally improving his or her own conditions" (p. 132). We see the first option as fitting nicely with Bourdieu's (1984) notion of habitus as sometimes forgotten history and the second more indicative of Bourdieu's belief that the habitus can become consciously reflected upon—or reflexive—in nature, the foundation of his reflexive sociology for social change (Kramsch, 2008). Brooke's general response to the newness of the language and practices in the graduate course was to take it up in a way that changed her and her perceptions of the world around her. Whereas Rebekkah experienced minor adjustments to her already critically focused ways of being to engage successfully in the work of the graduate course, Brooke's modifications were significant and largely sustained and generative across the four years of this study.

The Importance of Language to Brooke

Brooke regularly referred to the "language" she learned in the course—a language that mediated a new way of looking at the world and word, a way that was different from before the course:

> After learning about the term discourse I began to have answers to questions that I had been searching for and never knew the answers existed. I was able to see how I didn't fit the dominant discourse of school and I am now able to see how it kept me from being recognized as an intelligent person. (written reflection, December 21, 2004)

This was the first time Brooke hinted that her experiences in school were filled with dissatisfaction and ambiguity given her consistent positioning as a student who was not as intelligent as the others. This theme, however, repeated itself in Brooke's narratives about herself as she talked about teachers and students laughing at her questions (interview, Spring 2007), her intimidation by the vocabulary used by fellow graduate students during class meetings (interview, March, 2008), and her reported assumption that she was selected for this research study as the "bad" teacher compared with her colleague Rebekkah, the "good" teacher (interview, May, 2008). But her immersion in a new and always shifting critical perspective on society and local interpersonal interactions often gave her a necessary protective layer of intellectuality, knowing to tell herself that she didn't care what others thought of her and that she was going to fight for social justice and teach her students to do the same. It could be argued then that Brooke was not driven to acquire the kind of symbolic capital Rebekkah had acquired through implementing the balanced literacy model with suggested materials. Instead, Brooke's motives were buttressed by the injustices she had seen in the world before her graduate experience but had no way of intellectualizing until her immersion in critical social theories. Her introduction to theory and reports on practice also widened and deepened her lens for seeing injustices she had not recognized before. Additionally, Brooke felt secure in the cultural capital she had acquired as being a graduate from the same institution as Rebekkah and regularly articulated the freedom such privilege gave her to make pedagogical moves that might not be acceptable from other teachers in the school building (informal conversations, 2007, 2008).

At least part of the language Brooke took hold of came from her immersion in theoretical readings (e.g., Freire & Macedo, 1987; Gee, 1996; Hankins, 1998; Hicks, 2002; Holland & Cole, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Rist, 2000) and discussions. These likely helped with that protective layering by giving Brooke a language for talking about her past and present personal experiences, readings of social relations in the world, and readings of friends and family members. This newfound comfort and confidence in theory and the language of theory echoes bell hooks's (1994) story about her initial exposure to the work of Paulo Freire: "I found a mentor and a guide, someone who understood that learning could be liberatory" (p. 6). For Brooke, some of the authors became long-term mentors as she continued to use language specific to their theories and practices six months after the end of the course and beyond. She reflected on the persistence with which she perceived the world from a new perspective, beginning with the conclusion of the course:

> I find myself now reading the world through a critical lens. For example, I am always watching commercials, reading magazines in the grocery line, looking at books that others are reading, reading window displays to see how people and cultures are displayed. I am always thinking about who

> is marginalized and why. (written reflection, December 21, 2004)

Her commitment to better seeing and understanding who is marginalized and why became the focus of her master's thesis on the shifts in discourse used by a teacher when conferring with students perceived to be more- or less-developed writers. Her project engaged theoretical constructs such as discourse, power, positioning, and literacies, while sensitively reading microsocial relations within broad macrorelations of an inequitable society. She drew on scholars in the fields of teacher education, literacy education, critical theory, and sociolinguistics and came to a number of important conclusions, including the implications of a teacher's identity. Quoting Duffy and Hoffman (1999, p. 10) in her project, Brooke wrote, "There is no one perfect method for teaching reading to all children. Teachers, policy makers, researchers, and teacher educators need to recognize that the answer is not in the method but in the teacher." Brooke used this quote to mark the importance of attending to the power and positioning embedded in language interactions between teachers and students. She insisted that once teachers became aware of such linguistic complexities, they could consciously work toward reshaping their language practices to promote student empowerment, student achievement, and ideally, social justice in educational spaces. We would argue that Brooke was unknowingly talking about habitus and its dialectical relationship with field while simultaneously revealing her own raised consciousness of language and power and her active construction of herself as a different kind of teacher as a result.

Throughout her final project, Brooke argued that although many teachers are unable to select a particular curriculum for their language classrooms, the agency of teachers lies in their power to construct social, cultural, and linguistic practices with their students. This embodied (we would say habitus) notion of the classroom teacher transcends the dividing categories set up and perpetuated by groups advocating for phonics-based reading instruction, whole language, critical literacy, or Reading First, and those advocating for research-based reading instruction and others promoting a culturally relevant pedagogy in literacy and across the curriculum. In essence, Brooke argues that the power of the teacher is in her being with students in and across defining moments of who the classroom participants are and who they might be—both an intellectual and moral stance toward curriculum, students, the self as teacher, and the purpose of education.

Brooke's Reflexive Stance in the World

In addition to looking outward at the world to critique systemic inequities, Brooke looked closely at herself, her family, and the community where she grew up and described the unfairness apparent in social, educational, and economic disparities, including the pressure for everyone to fit into a "white mindset" (interview, July, 2005). This closer and more critical look at the very people, places, and practices that enabled the formation of her habitus often created problems, however, and Brooke reported having major fights with her brothers and father when she would travel home from graduate school and, later, from her new city life (personal communication across numerous informal conversations in 2005, 2006, 2007). Brooke claimed that "this whole critical lens has helped me just change my life," (interview, July, 2005), and she could not then understand why her parents, grandparents, and siblings had not changed their habitus and thus the field of her childhood home to suit her new modifications.

This began to shift, however, when Brooke recognized that she was blaming her family for the structures of society and lecturing them about social injustices. She was more effective in getting them to at least consider an alternative perspective when she would simply have conversations with them. By the year 2007, Brooke's mother began reading articles and books recommended by Brooke and reported changing her practices as a teacher as a result (personal communication with Brooke's mother, March, 2008), her father (now a retired police officer experiencing financial concerns) was talking with Brooke about race and class discrimination in the area, her brothers were at least talking to her, and her grandmother began critically analyzing television commercials and commenting on the gender roles and race representations in them (personal communication, July, 2008). The field of her family home in upstate New York was indeed changing, all nudged along by the improvised habitus of Brooke, demonstrating the important notion that Bourdieu's social theory is not simply reproductive but also ripe for social change—at least in local contexts.

Brooke took hold of critical literacy practices in ways that significantly changed how she perceived herself, her family, her partner, and the larger world around her. Thus, she allowed critical literacy practices to take hold of her, saturating her habitus in ways of thinking and acting that were not like her habits of being up to the point of graduate school. The dramatic shifts in her thinking and social practices did not impact only her as a person; she intended for the people and spaces around her to be influenced by a critical perspective as well. Her desire for social justice manifested itself in a drawn-out battle against her landlord: the building was rodent- and lead-infested, repeatedly flooded, and had faulty locks and doors. Brooke knew that she could have simply moved out, but she had talked individually to numerous tenants who were in rent-stabilized apartments, unable to afford anything else in the city, and were afraid the landlord would cause problems for them if they complained to the Department of Housing. Brooke took it upon herself, then, to contact lawyers, research housing laws in the city, organize petitions, and eventually demand action on the part of the landlord, including payment for environment-related health issues that many tenants suffered from (personal communication, March, 2006).

Brooke Engages Critical Literacy Practices in a Gentrified Elementary School

Brooke taught in the same urban elementary school that Rebekkah did and thus found herself situated in the same sociopolitical context inside the school and with her administrators and colleagues. And like Rebekkah, Brooke always had an ethnically and racially diverse group of children in her classroom speaking various languages, living in various familial structures, and experiencing varying—and often disparate—material living conditions. With the neighborhood experiencing gentrification and an internationalization, however, fewer and fewer African American students were enrolled at the school each year, and during our two years of observation in Brooke's classroom, she had only one African American student.

Brooke's perception of what literacy was, and what literacy education was, differed significantly from Rebekkah's perception that her job as a literacy teacher was to teach children to read and write within the progressive workshop framework and was regulated by aspects of balanced literacy. Therefore, this section is written differently from Rebekkah's, which was focused primarily on the official literacy block during her daily routine. Brooke could not see a separation between the ways she read the world, word, classroom, and literacy instruction by the second year of the study. Her integration of critical literacy pedagogy into her classroom was something she could not simply rationalize as a curricular goal but articulated it as a way of being in the world, both an intellectual exercise and a moral stance—reading, writing, and speaking for the purposes of stepping "out of your own discourse" and to "recognize or challenge...everything":

> I guess literacy is reading—not reading like books, but I guess being critical—the way you're viewing the world.... And looking at literacy through writing, reading, listening, and speaking...I guess just being able to step out of your discourse or even within your own discourse, recognize or challenge every—you know, another way and everything. And I guess "literacy" meaning whether you're reading like, being open to other perspectives and other people's way of... if it's—like with the books in—I don't even know. I'm really confused now 'cause I feel it's gone way beyond literacy into, like, *life*. (interview, September 15, 2006)

The challenge Brooke faced as she attempted to respond to her own question about what literacy was offers insight into the interconnected ways in which she was practicing the intellectual and moral stances prompted by the course and generated by her both personally and professionally. Literacy had seeped its way into a way of "life" for Brooke, and as that seepage turned to saturation, she lived in the world and in the classroom space as someone who was "open to other perspectives and other people's way" as she engaged in a particular—critical—way of "viewing the world." Seeds of this recomposing of habitus were evident in the final stages of Brooke's master's program, and they began to grow deep roots as she went back into the classroom to teach young children.

Critical literacy teaching became an imperative for Brooke, whether it was working in her kindergarten (2005–2006, 2006–2007) or first-grade (2007–2008) classrooms, being a part of an adult writing group where she convinced others of kindergartners' critical abilities, chairing the diversity committee for her school, or leading "brave conversations" for groups of parents who felt increasingly marginalized by newer and more affluent parents. It was not okay for Brooke to simply be informed by a critical perspective as she moved through her professional world, she thought it was essential that others learned the tools to engage in critique of systemic injustices.

During her first year back in the classroom, Brooke positioned herself as a researcher, intent on listening to the children and their topics of conversation during independent working times. She believed that she would best know how to enter critical dialogue with them if she could try to understand what they thought about the larger social world around them. What she heard surprised her—not because children talked about things so differently from the way children talked in upstate New York but because Brooke, admittedly, had never listened to children this way. But now she felt prepared with the intellectual tools and enough creative desire for pedagogical response to help her through the "messiness" of it all. Across her two years back in the kindergarten classroom and one year in first grade, Brooke became more comfortable and confident in her power to challenge assumptions and stereotypes as she increasingly practiced being with her students, seeing them differently, and hearing them well:

> [Some of the children in my classroom] would even say, "You can't be a princess because...your skin is black." And I was having to mediate that. It probably would have hit me as a big, huge shock if I hadn't taken the class you know, and just like, we've already had these conversations, so I was really ready to step in and challenge them on those things. (interview, September 15, 2006)

Brooke was ready to step in and challenge her students, and she didn't do what she had done in the past when seemingly inappropriate comments were made, articulating a significant change in her habitus and her interactions with children on a daily basis. Bourdieu (2000) referred to this "active, constructive bodily tension towards the imminent forthcoming" as similar to a "jumper preparing to jump" (p. 144). In other words, now that Brooke's consciousness was raised, she was not only able to recognize the power relations operating in her classroom, but she was prepared to actively engage such social dynamics—a significant difference from her former teaching assignment. Brooke reported numerous times that in the past she would have said, "We do not say those things in this classroom," or something similar to stop the actions from occurring in the classroom but would not have interrogated the actions and questioned their use in other spaces as well (personal communication, 2006, 2007, 2008). Brooke reported recognizing two particular students (Taylor and Nick) in her classroom who were routinely marginalized by other students through talk and/or action and by the restrictions of the mandated curriculum and classroom materials. In her attempts to learn more about the two students she felt were most marginalized and to reconstruct the classroom to better meet their social and academic needs, Brooke recreated an environment that was richer for all the students—a strategy promoted by Kamler and Comber (2005). Because of space, we focus only on Taylor here but want to note that Brooke's pedagogical responses to Nick's particular situation as an only child of a poor, single Eastern European immigrant opened up different kinds of spaces in the classroom, including nearly an entire month devoted to fantasy writing—a genre not promoted or supported by the mandated curriculum.

Taylor was the only African American child in the classroom. She was eager to participate, insightful in her comments, powerful in her opinions, and taller than all of the other children; she lived with her mother and grandmother: "My mom is my mom *and* my dad," she told Stephanie during the spring of 2007. Comments such as "You can't be a princess because your skin is black," happened more than once, including some students' comments leading Brooke to believe that they equated homelessness and the inability to read with black skin. Taylor began to respond, "I am not black!" and to withdraw or cry in class. Brooke responded pedagogically by foregrounding books with powerful African American characters, books that explicitly discussed different skin tones, and science/arts-based activities on melanin (October 2006–January 2007). Brooke was using a critical lens in this response, but she wasn't yet teaching her students to engage with a critical perspective—that came at other times, such as during whole-group discussions when she would ask students to close their eyes and make a picture of the character she was reading about in a book and then describe that image. Did they imagine a girl or a boy (or man or woman)? What color skin did they have? How were they dressed? Where did they live? Who did they live with? And—perhaps the most important question—why did they think this picture came to their minds?

For example, when Brooke was reading *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952) in December of 2006, she asked students to do this exercise for the character of the doctor (among others in the book), then asked students why E.B. White might have created the doctor as a white man instead of an African American man or woman, for example. And why were many pictures of doctors in today's society also of white men? This kind of spontaneous critical inquiry was supported by longer, more systemic inquiries, including an economic inequalities study that lasted almost the entire academic year of 2006–2007 that prompted questions about who might get hired for certain jobs and why—and why people who work hard still might not have enough money to have a place to live and food to eat. Other long-term inquiries included one on gender stereotypes and representations of gender in books, gendered practices in the school, and social action aimed at disrupting stereotypes and expectations (Spring 2007); the civil rights movement and the importance of speaking out when one recognizes an injustice (Winter 2007); and (dis) ability issues (Spring 2008). The civil rights inquiry, however, created more challenges for Brooke when she heard students talking about how glad they were to be white after reading books written about Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and the civil rights movement in general. She then critically analyzed the discourse in such books written for children and felt they were positioning African American people as always in need of something from white people—and therefore, from her perspective, were perpetuating a racist imagination and the privilege of whiteness to bestow goodness on others. She knew that from then on she would search for different material to read but also read these "classic" books differently with her students, just as she was reading the more typical white, middle class, nuclear family structure books differently with them.

Brooke's constant attention to openings for engaging students critically was palpable. She did not need a special book, a special unit of study, or a special topic to draw in her students; she was purposely guiding her students to recognize multiple perspectives and critiques across everything they did in the classroom. One example was when students could barely contain their excitement when Brooke brought out a class favorite, *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems (2004), during read-aloud time. Students shouted, gestured, and moved their bodies to the content of the story. For example, when Trixie cried at having lost Knuffle Bunny, some students pretended to cry too. When she read about finding Knuffle Bunny in the washing machine, students immediately recalled another book Brooke had read to them—*Mrs. Wishy Washy* (Cowley, 1999)—and began singing and dancing a response together. After a weak attempt at asking them to settle their bodies down, Brooke switched gears and capitalized on their intertextual skills. She not only called their attention to another story, *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting (1991), that they had read during a long-term and ongoing study of economic inequities but also asked them to consider how the main characters in those stories washed their clothes. For the remainder of read-aloud time, Brooke continued working with them not only on their intertextual reading work but also on their morally situated readings of injustices in the world, evoking both her intellectual and moral commitment to helping students construct a lens for reading the word and the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987) and to thinking toward social justice (field notes, November 27, 2006).

Brooke's Critical Reading of Curriculum

Brooke's critical work did not end with her students; she constantly critiqued the materials she was provided with to teach young children as well as the restrictions she perceived inherent in the genre-based units of study on students' interests and long-term projects. One example of this was when Brooke rushed to the door with wide eyes to greet Stephanie when she arrived for an observation in the fourth year of the study. Brooke had "looped" with her class from kindergarten to first grade and was appalled at the lack of diversity represented in the books her students were reading now that they were interested in early chapter books: "I mean there's *Little Bill* (e.g., Cosby, 1997) but even *that* is so middle class!" (field notes, March, 2008; *Little Bill* is a series of books about an African American boy who lives with his mother and father, both represented as professionals). Brooke was also consistently critical of the mandated literacy curriculum, claiming it restricted possible connections between students' lives outside of school, and suggested reading materials for lessons and independent reading that did not promote multiple ways of living or alternative perspectives on the world. But she also seamlessly incorporated a way of being in the classroom that was always attuned to the social and political positionings of students by one another, themselves, and the literacy curriculum, and this enabled her to see fissures in the curriculum (she selected her own texts rather than using the suggested ones most of the time), in which she would weave critical lessons with her young students.

Brooke's past experiences within various fields of education, such as her belief that she was marginalized in school because she didn't fit the discourse of school and her memories of being laughed at by fellow students and her teachers because of the questions she asked, might be an aspect of Brooke's habitus that enabled her to embrace critical literacy practices. She reported being laughed at as a young student for asking the question no one else would ask in school, but as a teacher in the three final years of this study, Brooke made a habit of asking questions others may not have dared to ask kindergartners and first graders. The intellectual theories and reports of critical practice she read in the course, then, might have offered Brooke the validation she needed for continuing to ask questions—even when those questions didn't fit the discourse or the script of what teachers presumably do with young children. Brooke seemed to struggle across time and space to incorporate the nomos of educational fields—something that may have better positioned her to be critical of such fields.

Brooke's orientation toward social justice continued to be improvised across the four years of this study as she recognized more injustices and deeper inequities, demonstrating some evidence that her changing habitus was indeed generative rather than simply reproductive of the specific things she had learned from the graduate course. Additionally, because the graduate course was not specifically focused on elementary classroom practice, Brooke's evolving practice in her own classroom informed by students' experiences and critical theories offers insight into how embodied intellectual and moral dispositions toward critical literacies might produce situated pedagogical practices in response to children.

And what about capital? Whereas Rebekkah used the cultural capital of being a graduate of a well-respected university to generate practices that distinguished herself as an exemplary balanced literacy teacher, Brooke used the same capital she had access to as a way to suspend scrutiny of her practice and open space for critical practices that were outside the mandated curriculum. Brooke mentioned several times that "knowing the discourse of balanced literacy" allowed her to perform that discourse when necessary, such as when an administrator entered the classroom or when student teachers asked specific questions about her use of the curriculum (personal communication, Spring 2007, Spring 2008). This is political action on a local level, for sure, but Brooke also acted more globally, aligning with Edelsky and Cherland's (2006) characterization of a critical literacy teacher:

> ...believing that the first step toward changing systems is to understand what they are, critical emancipatory educators begin by working locally, but then they work globally, to take on the larger world. Critical literacy instruction is about taking on the larger world, by understanding systems of injustice, and then arming individuals to challenge those systems of privilege and power. (p. 31)

To act beyond her classroom, Brooke exchanged her symbolic capital within the market of the school for the right to speak out against the marginalizing practices promoted in the mandated curriculum and schoolwide practices, such as in after-school activities and in family–school interactions. Brooke also shared her teacher research and critical inquiry framework with her administrators and other teachers inside and beyond the school, including at two separate national research conferences (2007 and 2008), demonstrating a willingness to disrupt discourses of mainstream literacy education beyond her classroom as well—another attempt to influence a field through the reconstruction of her habitus.

Engaging Critical Literacy Practices Through Habitus, Field, and Capital

These two teacher participants entered their master's programs embodying different perspectives, each informed by different personal, social, political, and psychological experiences, as well as different desires for their futures as educators—desires that shifted some across time. Rebekkah entered the graduate course with what we called a preexisting *critical edge*, having already been introduced to and engaged with critical social theories, including feminist analyses of social structures. Brooke entered the course from a much more "naïve" perspective, often voicing disbelief when reading about systemic inequalities that marginalized particular groups of people and disadvantaged them in both school and mainstream, powerful society. Both participants improvised upon their habituses—to different degrees—throughout the four years of this study. However, the two participants embodied and performed these shifts very differently in their classroom pedagogies with children.

To be frank, we were surprised to find that Brooke, the participant who entered the course as presumably more naïve than the other, experienced dramatic shifts—both intellectually and morally—across the four years. Additionally her pedagogies in a kindergarten and first grade classroom regularly demonstrated and aligned with these shifts, including the explicit teaching of critical literacy practices to her students and long-term critical inquiries into social issues that lasted more than one month each and typically were carried out as threads across the entire school year. We argue that she began to consciously construct herself as a kind of person who no longer viewed life in society and life in the classroom as different spheres for living but rather as constantly informing one another—Brooke's critical habitus would not recognize traditional boundaries between life and pedagogy. Brooke developed a strong desire to disrupt social injustices and to teach others to do the same; this desire led her to use the capital she had access to in the field of the school and literacy education, in particular, in a way that enabled critical practices to be generated.

Rebekkah continued to experience intellectual and moral shifts often articulated and performed in a variety of settings, but she approached classroom literacy pedagogy from a different perspective than her colleague in this study did. Rather than being answerable to the lives and language practices in her classroom as a way to engage students in critical literacy practices, Rebekkah viewed the social analysis that she did outside the classroom (and even about the classroom) as one activity and the literacy teaching she did inside the classroom as something different. She regularly leaned on the literacy instruction requirements of the school as reason for not teaching critical literacy practices, and we would argue that her commitment to the mandated curriculum helped to generate her exceptional practices in the workshop approach, winning her praise and distinction—and likely further removing the possibility for her to change her practice. Though Rebekkah was becoming somebody different outside the classroom as a result of her work with critical theories and critical-literacy practices, she largely kept the spheres of social analysis and literacy pedagogy separate.

Additionally, we believe it is significant that Brooke articulated a history of not fitting the discourse of school, thus making it more difficult for her to incorporate a nomos (i.e., social order and appropriateness of practices) within educational fields to generate the privileged practices perceived to be right by herself and others. Rebekkah, on the other hand, had a history of being a successful student and, even in a critically focused graduate course, she found it relatively easy to not only recognize the social order of the course but to incorporate such into her habitus that she then used to generate practices that would help her to acquire social and cultural capital within the field. Bourdieu might say that Rebekkah had a history, then, of perceiving the rules of the game of school and playing that game to benefit herself with respect to capital (something she did across time and fields). Brooke had a history of struggling to perceive those rules and playing the game of school in a way that benefited her in the dominant sense of the field. This history of aligning oneself, or struggling, with scholastic reason (Bourdieu, 2000) rather than with perceived theoretical dispositions toward the world and injustice at the beginning of a graduate course or program may very well be something the field can turn its attention to in teacher education. It certainly appears in this longitudinal study to have played a significant role in how the two participants interacted differently with the fields of critical literacy education in the course and literacy education in their elementary school as well as the broader sociopolitical field of society.

Implications

Teachers and teacher educators are being asked and expected to teach across cultural differences and work toward social justice in primary, elementary, middle, and high school as well as at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Yet, how do we know how content and pedagogy within university-based courses impact teachers' practices with their students? As critics of teacher education continuously question how course work influences practice, many teacher educators argue that examining course content alone is insufficient for determining answers (Barone & Morrell, 2007; Hoffman, 2004; Hoffman & Pearson, 2000). We don't believe in causal relationships between pedagogy, content, and moral and intellectual dispositions. Rather, we see pedagogy in a university teacher education course as a point of contact and a point of departure, as something that may prompt a learner's willingness to adjust his or her habitus—and thus his or her trajectory as a person and pedagogue. Where that trajectory goes and where it ends up in the classroom, however, may be impossible to predict, as any experience in any one course becomes intertwined with personal, social, political, and other formal educational experiences. This is what causes trajectories to shift, to narrow and expand, to alter entirely. Brooke and Rebekkah entered the course with different social, historical, and political experiences, and every time they left our Tuesday evening class together, their experiences with the readings and social and political dynamics in the class ricocheted into their lived realities outside the official university pedagogical world, prompting them to improvise their habituses. Such experiences were not unidirectional, as Probyn (2004) reminds us:

> The habitus as a description of lived realities is that which generates practices, frames for positioning oneself in the world, and indeed ways of inhabiting the world. And analytically it acts as an optic into that world. These two sides come together in his catchy phrasing of the habitus as a "metaphor of the world of object, which is itself an endless circle of metaphors that mirror each other ad infinitum." (p. 229)

Formal educational experiences, then, were refracted through experiences from outside the formal boundaries of schooling and then carried back with them into those formal boundaries. The constant interplay between formal pedagogy in a university classroom and life outside academia works to construct new habituses between those spaces. Next, we outline some of the implications we believe are generated by this longitudinal qualitative study.

Merging the Intellectual and Moral/Life and Critical Pedagogy

Our findings offer particular insights about a particular course but also open up possibilities for thinking theoretically and pedagogically about the interweaving of the intellectual (discourse, theory, research) with one's life outside academia and one's moral stances toward the work of a teacher—both of which inform pedagogical decisions in the classroom. Merging the personal and the professional through a lens of moral and intellectual work toward critical literacies and social justice means examining the disconnections and connections that teachers bring to those stances through habitus. Through the use of habitus and field, we can begin to explore how pedagogies cross borders—physical, personal, geographic, political, and pedagogical—and take root in teachers' practices as they improvise upon their habituses and thus their interactions with different fields. In this study specifically, Brooke's blurring of her critical perspectives in her everyday life in society and the work she felt compelled to do with her young students in the classroom produced teaching/learning practices that were not only informed by a critical perspective but explicitly taught young children how to read social issues from multiple perspectives and to critique practices that perpetuate injustice.

Bourdieu's Reflexive Sociology Is Generative in Pedagogy and Longitudinal Research

Bourdieu's analytic constructs of habitus, field, and capital are useful in analyses of teacher education students'—and teachers'—practices across time and context. We argue that nuanced readings of improvisational moves in habitus, dialectical interactions with various fields, and the acquisition and exchange of capital can open up ways of thinking about how, when, where, and why teachers teach critical literacy practices to young children. Such Bourdieusian insights can also offer teacher educators pedagogical tools with which to work, for example, having teacher education students reflexively consider how different sociopolitical contexts in different fields might encourage or hinder critical literacy practices—and what they might do as practitioners in those situations. And we cannot forget about teacher education students' desires as they enter courses or programs: Desire figured significantly in the analyses of this study—for Rebekkah in the sense that she wanted to be perceived as a good balanced literacy teacher and for Brooke in the sense that she wanted to challenge practices that marginalized particular tudents (including herself)—influencing their respecive literacy pedagogies, and yet Stephanie did not unlerstand the complexities of such desire until the fourth year of the study. Surely there might be a way to get t those desires during teacher education courses and work through what such desires afford and constrain within pedagogical possibilities.

Reengage Field and Capital n Studies of Teacher Education

Much of the literature we incorporated in the beginning of this article emphasizes the seemingly homognous cultural experiences and perceived dispositions f teacher education students (white, female, Christian, middle class), placing a focus on a surface-level version f Bourdieu's habitus. It is imperative, however, that edagogues and researchers critically examine the fields f teacher education into which these students enter, where capital is unequally distributed and where habius, field, and capital interact in highly complex ways, roducing particularized practices in local contexts that ave an impact on individuals and their interactions with other fields. For example, Rebekkah entered the raduate course with the cultural and social capital necessary to perform well as a student of critical literacy. his often positioned her in a privileged position in the assroom by her peers as well as by Stephanie, who was er professor. However, it was Brooke, who was relative- marginalized in the course for her perceived naïveté, who became openly critical of classroom practices that ositioned some people as right and others as wrong (or ood/bad and smart/dumb) and who produced classroom practices that enabled her students to engage in milar critiques.

Consider Disposition Toward Schooling n Addition to General Dispositions Toward Diversity

o critique school, schooling, and scholastic reason withn an educational institution is a daunting task—and to ctively recruit students who have experienced struggles ithin schooling and scholastic reason may seem counrintuitive in the field of education. However, Brooke ight have been excluded from a teacher education proram attempting to discern levels of social critique and verse lived experiences (just as Rebekkah might have een at the top of the acceptance list), but it was her hisry of struggle with schooling and fitting in that may ery well have positioned her to be the more committed acher to social justice and teaching critical practices. ourdieu (2000) outlined a brilliant critique of scholasc reason that might prove helpful to educators trying literally change the field of education through the roduction of practices that are at odds with traditional schooling and the reproduction of power relations in educational institutions. It might be very difficult indeed to expect that highly successful students in high school, undergraduate, and graduate education will discontinue their work of incorporating the nomos—or social order and academic expectations—of an educational field into their habituses that will then generate practices that reproduce their own privilege in such settings. This seems to us to be a fruitful venture in future research as well as in reconsidering preferences in admissions criteria for teacher education programs.

Lingering Questions and Other Considerations

We have learned a great deal across this four-year study, including lessons that might seem self-evident and those less so:

1. Don't make assumptions about teacher education students' backgrounds and their potential for being critically focused social justice educators; a seemingly critically focused student may or may not be better positioned to be a social justice-focused educator with a classroom of diverse children, just as a seemingly naïve student may or may not be less positioned to do so.
2. Intellectual shifts don't automatically transfer into moral shifts that will infuse classroom literacy pedagogies but instead seem to manifest through various interplays among intellectual work in the course and in life and both of those spheres intermingling with the classroom context. More simply, blurring the fields of life and literacy pedagogy seemed important to Brooke's improvised habitus, just as the nearly complete separation of the two seemed to be an obstacle for Rebekkah's.
3. Nuanced readings of intellectual and moral adjustments to practices across time are more productive than short-term inquiries into teacher education students' growth and development (or, as often represented, resistances).

But a number of questions around what teacher educators can do continue to linger: How could Stephanie, as the professor of the course, have helped Rebekkah to more fully integrate the longstanding (and enhanced in the course) intellectual dispositions that marked her habitus with her moral stance and pedagogical responses in the classroom? If, as Bourdieu (1984) explained, "inevitably inscribed within the dispositions of the habitus is the whole structure of the system of conditions, as it presents itself in the experience of a life-condition occupying a particular position within that structure" (p. 172), what systems of conditions or forces came together and catapulted Brooke into a space where she was willing and able to perform as a different kind of person in life and pedagogy? How was the university-based pedagogy perceived by students, given that the professor was a white, middle class (albeit from a poor family) woman? What impact did the ethnicity and gender of the research assistant have on the interview contexts? These questions will have to be pursued in other places and at other times.

Additional questions linger as well, and these have more to do with the transactional nature of conducting research (e.g., Fecho & Meacham, 2007). How did their selection and invitation as focal participants position Brooke and Rebekkah? Did it matter that Stephanie (being the professor of the course) focused primarily on Brooke's classroom during the first year of classroom observations and less so on Rebekkah's classroom due to time constraints and the division of labor for the two researchers? Did her consistent presence remind Brooke of critical theories and critically focused pedagogies, influencing her spontaneous responses to children in the classroom and her more formal planning for the next time Stephanie would be in the classroom? And what influence did Grace's relationship with a professional development organization that emphasized progressive approaches but not critical approaches have on Rebekkah's classroom pedagogies? Would Rebekkah have incorporated more critically focused practices had Stephanie observed her classroom the first year? How has this longitudinal research shaped the way we, as researchers, are in the world, in pedagogical relationships, and in the writing about literacy education? We feel these are provocative questions to be pursued and regret that we cannot represent our explorations of them here because of limited space. However, it seems imperative that as researchers study others' engagements with critical sociocultural theories and practices in the name of social justice, we should be turning the spotlight back on ourselves. As Fecho and Meacham wrote about our work as researchers, "...researchers who enter any research site transact with the participants, issues, and contexts of that site and emerge as newly authored texts as the research progresses" (p. 183). The two of us have, indeed, emerged as newly authored texts from this four-year experience.

We fully believe that practicing the kinds of pedagogies that reflect the intellectual and moral stances we hope teachers enact in their classrooms while in the university can lead us to reading students in more nuanced ways, being in each moment with them, and responding in morally responsive ways. As we have learned, habitus can—and likely will—be improvised across time in the field of a teacher education program. What we must understand are our students' particular social locations and their desires, what it is they came to the field looking for, to ensure that we address how it is they can come to terms with the disequilibrium they may experience in the program itself and in the schools where they will teach. This brings our focus more closely to the students in front of us so that we might see them differently rather than always thinking of the students who they will be teaching—a change in focus that may harness and shift our pedagogies in ways that are more intellectually and morally answerable to teacher education students.

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