University of Bath

Rethinking the Foundations: Towards powerful professional knowledge in teacher education in the USA and England

Brian Barrett

State University of New York College at Cortland

brian.barrett@cortland.edu

Jim Hordern

University of Bath

j.hordern@bath.ac.uk

Abstract

In this paper, we aim to outline what foundations can offer in terms of understanding education and educational practice, and thus for providing a basis for teachers' professional knowledge. We look critically at the struggle foundation disciplines often experience with coherence and integration in terms of both their relation to each other and to broader (e.g. philosophical or sociological) thought. We begin to rethink foundations more as a (strong, disciplinary and professionally-orientated) region rather than a singular or a set of singulars (to use Bernstein's terms), although one that is rather different from other regions. In doing so, we suggest that Bernstein's work, in providing a rich lens to understand curricula and pedagogic practice while holding social and political issues and implications close, is a useful exemplar of the type of educational knowledge which should be at the core of the foundations. A revitalized region of educational foundations can offer the 'powerful professional knowledge' that will enable teachers to make knowledgeable professional judgements in educational practice.

Introduction

Courses in the foundations of education have long been sidelined and continue to be at risk in many teacher education programmes across the United States (Schutz & Butin, 2013). Likewise, in England, the foundation disciplines have become increasingly marginalised (Lawn & Furlong 2009; Whitty, 2014). This is due to accreditation requirements and reforms to teacher education that privilege practice (reductively conceived) over the theory that can help teachers to think critically about the 'what' and 'why' behind it (Sadovnik, Cookson, & Semel, 2013).

The 'decline of foundations' has been happening across both countries for at least two decades. In the United States, a neoliberal educational agenda emphasising markets and accountability has resulted in outcomes-based curricula and assessments such as edTPA, alternative certification routes modeled after Teach for America and the NYC Teaching Fellows, and university based alternative programmes such as Relay Graduate School of Education that either reduce or eliminate content in foundations of education. England, meanwhile, has seen the introduction of School Direct and other forms of school-based teacher education in addition to accreditation only routes and the further development of Teach First. This has been accompanied by a barrage of criticism of university schools of education and, at least until recently, policies intent on undermining university-led teacher education (Whiting et al., 2018).

Programmes such as Teach for America and Teach First or Relay Graduate School of Education and certain forms of School Centred Initial Teacher Training are often explicitly a-theoretical and antagonistic to the foundations of education, as they perceive these as not directly preparing prospective teachers for the challenges of classroom practice. Indeed, Whitty notes that the Relay Graduate School of Education now explicitly positions itself as a response to 'a nationwide failure by most university-based teacher education programs to prepare teachers for

the realities of the 21st century classroom' (2014, p. 472). For proponents of programmes such as these, the knowledge most valuable to teacher candidates is 'evidence-based practice': that which can be linked to improved student learning outcomes, usually through a narrow range of 'approved' methodologies (see, for example, the definition of 'scientifically based research' written into law under the No Child Left Behind Act in the United States) and often as measured exclusively by students' test scores. Similarly, governments in many European countries, Australia, and elsewhere have increasingly thrown their weight behind the production of 'evidence' in forms that prioritise certain research approaches and conceptualisations of educational knowledge (Schriewer, 2017; Biesta, 2011).

Theory and practice: A false but consequential dichotomy

Often based on an intuitively appealing yet incomplete rationale that the 'know how' of prospective teachers' professional knowledge is best developed in the school – in the presence of veteran teachers, in the practice of planning, teaching, and revising lessons (Shalem & Slonimsky, 2014) – and in the absence of theory (Carr, 2006), critics and policymakers in both the USA and England have rejected the enterprise of the foundations of education and, particularly, its centrality within programmes of teacher education. Consequently, systematic study (or, for that matter, *any* study) in the foundations of education has become increasingly rare within teacher education programmes in both countries (Butin, 2007; Beck, 2012; Whitty, 2014). One consequence of the developments detailed here is that the shape of the production of educational knowledge may shift further away from the foundation disciplines of education, and thus certain traditions of inquiry may become increasingly marginalised or deemed superfluous.

This may have longer term implications for what is considered valid (or powerful) educational knowledge for educational research and for educational practice.

As Alan Sadovnik and Susan Semel (2012) have argued in a letter to the *New York Times*, these developments leave the teaching profession imperiled as, for example, an entire generation of teachers is entering classrooms without recognising who John Dewey was, never mind the importance of philosophy of education for pedagogic practice. This is more than a matter of trivia. It means that these teachers could be denied access to the theoretical and disciplinary knowledge, a sense of the internal coherence of concepts, that is a key prerequisite and resource that can be used for examining their own deep-seated beliefs and for developing rational judgment and practice (Shalem & Slonimsky, 2014). The reduction of such content removes a theoretical platform from which prospective teachers might ultimately critique the policies and ideologies underpinning its removal. Furthermore, the absence of a systematic disciplinary knowledge base weakens teacher professionalism, leaving teachers vulnerable to manipulation and control in the context of global educational reform.

In advancing our argument, we do not intend to deny practice a place in teacher education; it can and should serve as a central component there. We do, however, seek to offer a challenge to the discursive positioning (particularly that engaged in by influential policymakers such as David Steiner and Arne Duncan in the USA and Nick Gibb in England, as detailed below) of 'practice' as a superior and incompatible alternative to 'theory' and to the foundations of education as a source of it. The two are not mutually exclusive. In fact, we suggest that practice can be analysed, informed and, ultimately, improved by theory; theory to which it should be able to 'speak back' (Moore, 2013) and to refine in turn.

In this paper, we thus aim to outline what foundations can offer in terms of understanding education and educational practice. We look critically at the struggle foundation disciplines often experience with coherence and integration in terms of both their relation to each other and to broader (e.g. philosophical or sociological) thought. We begin to rethink foundations more as a (strong, disciplinary and professionally orientated) region rather than a singular or a set of singulars (to use Bernstein's terms), although one that is rather different from other regions. We argue that, in the theory-practice debate outlined above, the field of foundations of education has the potential to play a pivotal bridging role in its capacity to look both 'inward' towards theory and 'outward' towards practice and to provide a conceptual language capable of translating between the two rather than treating them as mutually exclusive. In doing so, we suggest that Bernsteinian research, in providing a rich lens to understand curricula and pedagogic practice while holding social and political issues and implications close, is exactly the kind of work that should be at the core of the foundations of education. This reconsideration of the foundations also enables us to reflect on what might constitute 'powerful professional knowledge' (Furlong and Whitty 2017, 49) for educational practitioners.

The rise and decline of foundations in the USA and England

What we refer to in this paper as foundations of education has roots in discussions that began among colleagues from across a range of disciplinary backgrounds at Teachers College, Columbia University (USA) in the 1920s. A group that included, among others, George S. Counts (Sociology), William Heard Kilpatrick (Philosophy), R. Freeman Butts (History and Philosophy), Kenneth Benne (Philosophy), and Harold Rugg (Psychology, Social Studies Education and Curriculum Studies) proposed foundations as an integrated, multidisciplinary

approach to studying education and its relationship to culture and society. These discussions ultimately resulted in the development at Teachers College of the first Foundations Division and the first course (200F: Educational Foundations) in foundations of education.

After initially requiring prospective teachers to complete, alongside 200F, coursework in individual foundation disciplines such as history, philosophy and sociology of education, the Division ultimately consolidated these into two broader categories: psychological and social foundations. In colleges and universities across the USA, educational psychology is now most commonly taught out of psychology departments and faculties. This is generally true in England too, though some programmes in Educational Studies there include modules or coursework in educational psychology. Today, then, the 'foundations' most often include history, philosophy, politics and sociology of education. As detailed below, however, this list has tended to expand.

In the USA, the model for teachers' professional preparation that was established at Teachers College came to be replicated to at least some degree in every state and, by the 1950s, foundations coursework was a common requirement of teacher education programmes across the country. Today, foundations coursework is most often required of prospective teachers early in their programmes of study, typically in their first and second years and frequently as an 'introduction to education' (deMarrais, 2013, p. 122). Foundations of education enjoyed a similar rise to prominence in England, where the Society for Educational Studies was established in 1951. The publication of the first issue of its flagship journal, the *British Journal of Educational Studies* – which today continues to focus on historical, philosophical and sociological analyses of education – soon followed in 1952. The massification of higher education, the expansion of universities and the professionalisation of teacher education through the 1970s provided the foundation disciplines with a growing and receptive 'audience' (Lawn & Furlong, 2009).

In an effort to further define and establish boundaries for the field, its content and its role in teacher education (deMarrais, 2013), the American Educational Studies Association first published *Standards for Academic and Professional Instruction in Foundations of Education, Educational Studies, and Educational Policy Studies* in 1977 (AESA Task Force on Academic Standards, 1977). These have since been revised and republished, most recently in 2013, though each of the three editions centres on the aim of supporting the development of 'interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education' (e.g. Tutwiler et al., 2013, p. 109) among educators and prospective educators. In both countries, models that prioritise and include foundations of education typically stand in sharp contrast to both past and contemporary efforts to reduce teacher education to technical training. The foundations endeavour instead to equip teachers with an understanding of the social, cultural and political underpinnings of matters such as curriculum, pedagogy and policy (Tozer, Anderson, & Armbruster, 1990, pp. 293-294). They have generally also encouraged prospective teachers to adopt and apply in their practice critical perspectives and democratic values.

Foundations of education: A fragmenting field

Despite its promise, however, the field of foundations has faced challenges since its inception. Foreshadowing R.S. Peters' now-famous critique of educational theory as 'undifferentiated mush' (1967, p. 155) that had diminished its standing as an essential component of teacher education in England, by the 1950s concerns had begun to arise over the ambiguous purview and marked variety of content of coursework in foundations of education in the USA (Tozer & McAninch, 1987). Even at Teachers College, that decade saw some 'signature foundations coursework … cut due to internal and external questions about its rigor, its lack of

seeming value to the technical training of teachers, and to the seeming "un-American" attitude of critique' the courses were believed to promote (Schutz & Butin, 2013, pp. 60-61). While it remains possible to obtain both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in educational studies in the USA and England, courses in the foundations of education (perhaps especially in the USA) are typically offered as part of *other* (usually teacher education) programmes and are therefore particularly vulnerable to cuts or 'cannibalization' (Schutz & Butin, 2013). In England, Education Studies undergraduate programmes frequently consist of a combination of material from the foundation disciplines, various forms of curriculum study and additional modules focused on preparation for teaching or other forms of educational practice (Furlong, 2013). However, when an English undergraduate programme leads to qualified teacher status (QTS) it is required to pay sufficient attention to the content requirements of the government inspection agency for Initial Teacher Education (Ofsted), and this entails some constraints on the curriculum.

These challenges have only intensified as the foundations of education has for some time been characterised by expansion, fragmentation and segmentation among the disciplines that make up the field. Where teacher education in England had drawn most extensively on the foundation disciplines of philosophy, sociology and history of education between the 1960s and the 1980s, subsequent decades have seen fields such as literary theory and cultural studies lay claim to 'foundational' areas of investigation (Bridges, 2006). More recently, Sofia Villenas has celebrated in an article commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the American Educational Studies Association that, today:

the social foundations of education is anthropology of education; it is endarkened feminist epistemologies (Dillard, 2000); it is eco justice; it is decolonial; it is intersectional queer studies; it is critical race; and it is hopeful, loving, and revolutionary scholarship. (Villenas, 2018, p. 112)

Such an expansive definition of what foundations of education *is* and the lack of clarity about which issues the field might or might not legitimately investigate leave the foundations open to 'poaching' (Maton, 2000) from other fields. Programmes in other fields of study feel comfortable choosing simply to 'infuse' and incorporate foundations throughout their programmes rather than relying on standalone courses in foundations taught by experts in the field.

Further, from the radical social constructivism of the 1960s and 1970s to the postmodernism, post-structuralism and other critical theories of more recent years, much scholarship in the foundations of education has argued that educational knowledge merely reflects and serves to disguise the interests and experiences of dominant social groups, contributing ultimately to the reproduction of social and educational inequality (Maton & Moore, 2010). An uneasiness with knowledge within the foundations of education appears to have developed largely – and perhaps quite understandably – from the field's 'critical' orientation towards knowledge and its associated efforts to shed light upon the often unrecognised ways in which the education system has been structured to reproduce social inequality by selectively and arbitrarily valuing and rewarding the language, culture, experiences and knowledge of dominant groups in society. However, within the foundations of education, the critical, and valid, assertion that 'knowledge is inevitably socially produced under particular historical conditions and

associated in various ways with relations of power' has often come to be followed by the corollary that 'for it to be knowledge it must in some radical manner be independent of these things' (Moore, 2009, p. 2). This condition has been termed the 'epistemological dilemma' (Alexander, 1995).

Confronted with this dilemma, scholarship in foundations of education has often essentially been forced by the 'all-or-nothing' (Niiniluoto, 2002) standard it established for knowledge to turn towards relativism and a conceptualisation of knowledge that reduces it to the outcome of power relationships in society. As such, once the ideological stance of some particular piece of 'official' or 'mainstream' knowledge has been exposed through post-structural, postmodern, or other critical work in the foundations of education as that of a particular - and dominant - social group, it is often treated as if it can, in the words of Basil Bernstein, simply be 'written off' (1977, p. 168). While such approaches have ostensibly supplied teachers with an indispensable critical lens through which to view the knowledge with which they and their students work in classrooms, it has offered them much less in terms of curriculum alternatives and of understanding how best to support students in their efforts to access 'powerful knowledge' (Young & Muller, 2013).

Wolves at the door: Policy and the marginalisation of foundations

At the same time that the field was changing 'internally' in terms of its area(s) of focus, methods and epistemologies, it found itself subject to increasing critique from 'external' stakeholders. From the 'great debate' of the late 1970s in England to the publication in 1983 of the *A Nation at Risk* report in the USA, education and the preparation of the teachers most responsible for providing it became frequent targets for policymakers anxious to stem both real

and perceived social and economic decline in both countries. Characterising the excesses of the educational progressivism partially characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s as 'an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament', *A Nation at Risk* lamented 'squandered … gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge' (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 113). The report thus argued that the government must tighten control and restore standards in order to produce a workforce skilled enough to compete with 'determined, well-educated, and strongly motivated competitors' (p. 114) from around the world. Schools and teachers were called upon to become more responsive to the gritty realities of a changing economy and increased global competition. Though it is now turning its attention back towards a greater emphasis on curriculum through its new inspection framework, in England Ofsted has previously described its 'challenge' as 'expos[ing] the emptiness of education theorising that obfuscates the classroom realities that really matter (Ofsted, 2000, p. 21). This has led to the promotion of more 'practical', less 'theoretical' approaches to teaching and teacher education (McCulloch, 2002).

In both countries, these calls have manifested in an increasingly school-based and narrowly vocational model of teacher education (Labaree, 2017). In England, competence-based teacher training around skills purported to be directly linked to classroom practice gained favour in the 1990s as 'the training element became ascendant over the academic education elements' of teacher education (Burton & Bartlett, 2006, p. 386). In the USA, New Jersey created the nation's first alternative teacher certification program in 1983. Well-educated candidates – with otherwise no experience in programs of teacher education – were hired directly as classroom teachers and provided with on-the-job mentoring from experienced teachers and coursework that expressly did not include 'theory' (Finn & Petrelli, 2007). Further, the high-stakes standardised testing

regime ushered in by the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 led to a greater emphasis on preparing teachers skilled at raising their students' pass rates. This has contributed to a reduced role for foundations and an increased focus on 'content' (namely, that which will be subject to state testing in teachers' future classrooms) in teacher education programmes (Liston et al., 2009). This has been accompanied by efforts to 'limit teachers' discretion by explicitly defining what they should do in their classrooms' and to 'rein in the professional autonomy of teachers, both by prescribing much more explicit curricula and by holding teachers accountable for achieving specific learning objectives' (Tatto, 2006, p. 238).

Indeed, the radicalism and lack of coherence that, according to Lawn and Furlong (2009, p. 548), came to constitute an 'epistemological crisis of confidence' *within* foundations of education has often been invoked by policymakers and others *outside* the field proposing to reject its enterprise and, particularly, its centrality within programmes of teacher education. If knowledge is simply an arbitrary reflection of power relations, 'then the traditional contribution of the disciplines to understanding in the field of education became increasingly open to question' (ibid). In recent decades, icons of the neoconservative/neoliberal alliance responsible for shaping much recent educational policy in the USA, including Charles Murray (2008) and Richard Vedder (2010), have questioned the importance of theory in teacher education. Former New York State Commissioner of Education David Steiner has called courses in the foundations of education 'intellectually barren' and 'too focused on [the] indoctrination' (Steiner & Rozen, 2004, p. 147) of students into what are at the very least implied to be 'highly skewed and radical ideologies' (Butin, 2004). Similarly, former United States Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, has advocated turning 'upside down' teacher education programmes which, he contends, typically overemphasise 'theoretical coursework' (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). In

England meanwhile, schools minister Nick Gibb has recently outlined his despair at the offerings of university schools of education, describing them as 'atrophied and unintellectual', and asking 'what is actually going on in these places?' (ResearchEd, 2018), while lauding recent reforms for giving schools 'what they want', which is assumed to be 'more control over teacher education' (ibid).

In lieu of courses in foundations of education, David Steiner, for example - though similar sentiments have again been expressed by Arne Duncan (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) - has long professed an explicit focus on 'transforming' teacher preparation by promoting 'evidence-based' practice and clinical experience supplemented by both live and videotaped monitoring. Steiner succeeded in pushing this vision forward when, as New York State's Commissioner of Education, he introduced (without consultation with representatives from university teacher education programs) 'graduate level clinically rich teacher preparation programs' where non-collegiate organisations can offer programs, devoid of coursework in the foundations of education, that lead to Master's degrees. Steiner was particularly enamored with the Obama administration's Race To The Top competition for reasons that have just as much to do with its neoliberal ideology (the programme rewarded the adoption of formalised standards and standardised assessment systems, tying these to teacher evaluation and tenure in a practice deemed 'data-driven decision making', and the creation of charter schools) as with the cash infusion for desperately stretched local and state education systems that was attached to success in the competition. In a report published by the Thomas Fordham Institute, an ideologically conservative American education policy think tank, Kate Walsh and Sandi Jacobs have suggested that coursework in foundations of education possesses 'little practical value' (2007, p. 27) and 'does little to help a new teacher' (2007, p. 14). Speaking particularly about fast track

alternative teacher certification programmes, they have proposed that 'coursework should focus only on those areas in which a new teacher needs to be competent (e.g., early reading instruction, grade-level seminars, methods, and classroom management)' (2007, p. 19).

As coursework in the foundations of education has been reduced, the development of 'interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education' (Tutwiler et al., 2013, p. 109), the matters of social justice and democracy, and the voices of practitioners in the foundations of education have been notably absent from policy discussion (Neumann, 2009). The implication of such trends in teacher education is that 'it is not necessary for teachers to know anything about the theoretical traditions from which their practices are derived' as educational practice and its content is removed from 'a broader and potentially critical knowledge perspective' (Moore, 1987, p. 236).

Foundations: Where to go from here?

In the context outlined above it appears that the foundations are assailed from all sides. The lack of confidence in and respect for the foundations by politicians and educational leaders is coupled with an uncertain position within the academy (Furlong, 2013). This vulnerability is compounded by internal conflict and incoherence within the field itself. Peters' (1967) call for the study of education to avoid becoming an 'undifferentiated mush' has not been heeded, as studies of educational practice that have no theoretical or disciplinary basis, or that selectively draw on aspects of the foundations, often without explaining any particular rationale for the theoretical stance, have proliferated (Lawn & Furlong, 2009; Shalem & Allais, 2019). In addition to swathes of narrow empirical studies which barely acknowledge broader educational questions, there are camps of refined sociological or philosophical work that have more in common with

their 'parent disciplines' than fundamental educational concerns. Arguments drawing primarily on the work of specific theorists or sociological traditions may well offer valuable insights for educational work, but arguably these always need to be placed within an educational arena – they must be turned to address *educational* problematics and questions.

But what does this indicate in terms of a structure for the foundation disciplines? What Peters (1967) was suggesting was that the structure, rigour and coherence of the disciplines was a route out of instability: 'education' itself had no disciplinary structure, at least in the Anglophone world, and by re-engaging with the established disciplines the study of education could achieve some authority over its subject matter. This move towards the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, history and psychology allowed educationalists to claim that their arguments were based on well-reasoned and authoritative scholarship, and in time sub-branches of the disciplines in the shape of philosophy of education, sociology of education and history of education established themselves as components of education departments (Lawn & Furlong, 2009). In both England and the USA, much psychological research on education tended to remain in psychology departments (Crozier, 2009), although elements of this work was often 'recontextualised' into educational programmes. Education could claim an institutional space in the academy, but the borrowing of the authority of the parent disciplines did not necessarily lead to greater coherence or agreement amongst the foundations. Each foundational subject derived its authority from the disciplinarity of its parent (i.e. philosophy of education from philosophy), rather than from a shared commitment to educational inquiry. While Peters' call achieved some status for the study of education in the university, it did not create the coherent disciplinary structure that was evident in some continental European countries (e.g. Germany (Schriewer, 2017)).

Foundations: A Bernsteinian analysis

Drawing on Bernstein's work we can further identify part of the problem facing the foundation disciplines, unpack the reasons for their ongoing fragmentation, and understand the accusations of irrelevance and superfluity. Bernstein (2000) distinguishes between 'singulars' (established academic disciplines with their own problematics and system of argumentation and exemplification, such as Physics, Mathematics, History, Psychology and Sociology) and 'regions', which relate to occupational fields of practice, professions such as 'medicine, engineering and architecture' or new fields of knowledge that focus on a novel problematic (e.g. cognitive science (Bernstein, 2000, p. 52)). While singulars tend to control their own work within their own internal structures, regions are usually governed through engagement with external stakeholders, which may include the state, professional bodies, other occupations and employers. Regions have a 'supervening purpose' (Muller, 2009, p. 213), (e.g. for Medicine to provide healthcare or for construction engineering to build robust, durable, and safe structures), and this purpose guides the selection and transformation of knowledge from various singulars to meet the needs of the regional knowledge base, and may be amalgamated with or used within knowledge production in the region. Some (but not all) advances in physics may be useful for engineering, and some (but not all) advances in biochemistry may be useful in medicine, and thus the stakeholders in the region must have a clear purview of which knowledge needs to be selected and how it needs to be transformed to meet the needs of engineers and doctors.

Turning back to education we can suggest that the foundation disciplines do not currently in themselves represent a singular, but neither do they represent a region. As an entity they lack the defined problematics and shared understanding that characterise both singulars and regions.

They are simultaneously both too close to their singular 'parents' and too 'distant' from each other to form a coherent disciplinary structure. Furthermore, it could be argued that their relationship with their parent singulars undermines attempts to create the types of arrangements found in regions and the requirement to negotiate their problematic within a constituency that includes other 'external' stakeholders (e.g. in this case teachers and other educational practitioners). The foundations represent a set of fragments of singulars that are in themselves coherent and rigorous when considered as part of their parents (i.e. as part of philosophy or sociology) but not when considered together as a part of 'Education' (Hordern, 2017). This fragmentation can lead to a lack of focus on specifically *educational* questions, such as the nature of pedagogic relations and the role of education in the formation of the individual within society, questions that lie at the heart of some continental European traditions (Deng, 2018; Furlong & Whitty, 2017). While the foundations may look inwards and upwards to their parent singulars, empiricist educational research is able to detach itself from the deeper educational questions that the foundations might provide and explore, and thus to produce the forms of research and 'evidence' that governments with particular visions of educational practice seek to advance.

Identifying the problematic: A way forward for foundations?

Is there a way forward for the foundations? The argument here would suggest that one avenue to explore is the development of the foundations as a type of region, drawing to some extent on the experiences of professionally-orientated medicine or engineering, but nevertheless different in terms of its structure, coherence and definitions of 'rigour'. To achieve a strong and sustainable region what is needed is the development of a distinctly *educational* modus operandi

based around some specifically *educational* questions. These educational questions and problematics, which would need to be subject to ongoing debates and exploration, would provide the 'recontextualisation principle' (Bernstein, 2000) by which knowledge would be selected and transformed from relevant singulars (e.g. philosophy, sociology, psychology, history and possibly others) to inform and enlighten the study of education and conceptualise educational practice. The argument that education is a specialised practice as fundamental to humanity as medicine, engineering or architecture needs to be made as part of this process (Carr, 2003; Hordern, 2015), as this provides the rationale for a degree of authority over the knowledge base. It also provides some resistance from the whims of politicians seeking to use education for political ends, or aiming to re-orientate education narrowly towards the needs of the economy.

But what of the teachers and other educational practitioners? The reconceptualisation of Education as a (strong, authoritative) body of 'regional' knowledge also needs to extend to the reconceptualisation of educational practice and teachers' professional knowledge. Educational knowledge is inevitably concerned with issues of judgement and value in the course of professional action, and this requires thinking about how practical action can be undertaken knowledgably and with attention to ethical concerns. Practitioners need to comprehend the contexts in which they are working, so situated understanding remains vital, but the degree and depth of understanding is transformed through engagement with and reflection on scholarly work which considers the use of principles in practice and the potential consequence of action (Winch, Oancea, & Orchard, 2015). Understandings of practice are also transformed through engagement with modes of analysis that interrelate considerations of structure and agency and seek to unpack the micro outworkings of practice in the context of broader social constructs and arrangements. By attaining a deeper and more subtle comprehension of the nature of educational practice

teachers are able to exercise more authority over their own work and their own profession, and to work with academic educationalists and others to demonstrate to the state and the public that they (as a broad group of educationalists) should control the jurisdiction of educational work, make decisions about the 'regional' knowledge base and specify what counts as acceptable competent and expert practice in areas of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The reconfiguration of the foundations is a vital part of assembling this socio-epistemic puzzle.

Some examples of material that could find a place in a revitalised region of educational foundations should be mentioned here. Bernstein's work has proved extremely powerful in explicating both the context and the outworkings of educational practice through analysis of pedagogic modalities and curricular arrangements, and continues to have considerable contemporary relevance and potency. For example, Hoadley's work (2017) uses Bernsteinian theory to address issues of inequality in schooling in South Africa through 'detailed empirical accounts of life in South African classrooms' that explore the relationship between curriculum and pedagogy in very distinctive educational contexts. Likewise, the work of Morais and colleagues (e.g. Morais & Neves, 2001, 2011) as well as those attempting to build upon it (e.g. Barrett, 2017) demonstrates the nuances of 'mixed pedagogic practice', illustrating how the sociological imagination enables us to reconsider the meaning, intent and outcome of educational activities.

What Bernstein achieves is the capacity to bring our understandings of the macro-context right into our analysis of educational practice itself: *thus our understanding of what practice is, and what it could be, is transformed* through Bernstein. For Bernstein, 'an adequate analysis requires: an empirical language of description; a theoretical language of description; and a conceptual means of translating between these two (from theory to empirical descriptions and

vice versa) in a non-tautological and non-arbitrary way' (Maton, 2000, p. 80). Concepts such as classification and framing comprise what Bernstein referred to as an 'internal language of description' (2000, p. 132), 'a theoretically grounded, conceptual language' for modeling the *generative* principles of varying forms of social practice (Moore 2004, p. 135). When these varying forms of social practice are realised in a given instance, they can then be *described* through the development of what Bernstein termed an 'external language of description' (2000, p. 132) such that 'C+' (strong classification), for example, can translate into a curriculum where individual subjects are strongly insulated from one another and 'F-' (weak framing) can be used to detail the underpinning logic of a pedagogy that appears to grant students control over matters such as classroom discipline and the pacing of the curriculum.

Concepts such as Bernstein's classification and framing can get at the principles underlying a *range* of modalities of curriculum and pedagogy. Further, included within this range are modalities of curriculum and pedagogy that both have and have not been actualised in practice. For example, we might never have experienced a classroom characterised by strong classification and weak framing (or, perhaps more specifically, a classroom with a strongly classified curriculum and a strongly classified and hierarchical relationship between teacher and pupil but a weakly framed pacing of the transmission of knowledge; the permutations here are virtually endless) but Bernstein's concepts provide a means of recognising it if or when we do. Perhaps most importantly, they provide us with a means of imagining (and ultimately developing and testing) *alternative* modalities of curriculum and pedagogy capable of supporting students' access to powerful knowledge.

Bernstein's concepts thus provide an example of a 'common technical vocabulary with which to describe the work of teaching' and of 'powerful ways of parsing teaching that provide

us with analytic tools to describe, analyze, and improve teaching' (Grossman & McDonald, 2008, p. 185): they stand as an 'effort to identify the underlying grammar of practice' that Grossman and McDonald (2008, p. 186) identify as still missing nearly a half century after Lortie's (1975) influential description of this problem. Importantly, a language that is able to 'inform both research on teaching and the improvement of professional education' should be 'agnostic with respect to various models of teaching' and 'work equally well to describe the components common to both direct instruction and more inquiry-oriented teaching while offering the flexibility required to recognize the significant differences in how such components might be enacted' (Grossman & McDonald, 2008, p. 185). Again, Bernstein's work has much to offer here in serving as 'powerful professional knowledge' for researchers and teachers. It contributes to and works to sturdy the 'enduring but unstable compromise … between theory and practice, between knowing that and knowing how, in the commitment of the academy to make both an intellectual and a practical contribution to the advancement of the field' (Furlong, 2013, p. 5). While Bernstein's work is heavily informed by sociological concerns, the central problematic is *pedagogic transmission* and thus explores the relations and purposes at the heart of education. In this respect Bernstein's work should be considered alongside theorists such as Dewey, Kerschensteiner, Klafki and Vygotsky as part of an educational corpus that addresses specifically educational or pedagogical problematics with attention to issues of individual and collective social formation.

Conclusion

The reconsideration of the foundations as a region of Education around a 'supervening purpose' that seeks to address specifically educational questions suggests a reconfiguring of the existing

foundation disciplines, with some aspects of the sociology, philosophy and psychology of education re-categorised within their 'parent disciplines', and other aspects integrated more coherently around educational problematics. This process of refocusing on what is understood by *educational* knowledge and practice also enables some progress to be made in elaborating what could constitute 'powerful professional knowledge' (Furlong & Whitty, 2017, p. 49) for teachers and educational practitioners. Regions can relate to an occupational field of practice, and this suggests that the requirements of teaching as a (professionalised) occupation offer a starting point (Hordern, 2015). In so doing, the development of the region requires ongoing negotiation amongst stakeholders, including academics, teachers, the state and professional bodies, who must share in the ownership of educational knowledge and agree its purpose (Hordern 2017). However, when explicating the supervening purpose of education it may be as important to consider the specialised normative character of educational practice (Noddings, 2003; Hordern, 2015), with its 'internal goods' generated through pedagogic relations, and its conceptualisation of individual development in the context of the collective (Alexander, 2001). Powerful professional knowledge can thus be translated as those forms of educational knowledge which enable teachers to generate these educational internal goods and make them available to their students, conscious of the social formation of mind and the relationship between (subject) knowledge, the world and the student. Powerful professional knowledge must have resonance in the special context of educational practice, in addition to possessing the characteristics of emergence and systematic revisability that Young and Muller (2013) argue for. The rethinking of the foundations is a necessary part of a process of building these characteristics, but there is no doubt that such a process is made more challenging in the context of the contemporary politics of educational research, in which disciplinary traditions have struggled to gain an audience with

policy-makers searching for answers to problems of their own definition, and where the

possibility of knowledge itself is called into question

Note

An earlier draft of this paper was prepared for the Symposium 'Can Educational Knowledge be

Powerful? Addressing the Challenges in the Sociology of Educational Knowledge and

Curriculum Theory' held at ECER 2019 in Hamburg.

References

AESA Task Force on Academic Standards. (1977). Standards for academic and professional

instruction in foundations of education, educational studies, and educational policy studies.

Educational Studies, *8*(4), 329-342.

Alexander, J.C. (1995). *Fin-de-siècle social theory: Relativism, reduction and the problem of

reason*. London: Verso.

Alexander, R. J. (2001). Border crossings: Towards a comparative pedagogy, *Comparative

Education*. *37*(4), 507–523.

Barrett, B.D. (2017). Bernstein in the urban classroom: A case study. *British Journal of

Sociology of Education*, *38*(8), 1258-1272

Beck, J. (2012). Reinstating knowledge: Diagnoses and prescriptions for England's curriculum ills. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *22*(1), 1-18.

Bernstein, B. (1977). *Class, codes and control, volume III: Towards a theory of educational transmissions* (2nd edition). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity* (Revised edition). New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Biesta, G. (2011). Disciplines and theory in the academic study of education: A comparative analysis of the Anglo-American and Continental construction of the field. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, *19*(2), 175-192.

Burton, D. & Bartlett, S. (2006). The evolution of education studies in higher education in England. *The Curriculum Journal*, *17*(4), 383-396.

Butin, D. (2004). The foundations of preparing teachers: Are education schools really 'intellectually barren' and ideological? *Teachers College Record*. Retrieved from http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=11349.

Butin, D. (2007). Dark times indeed: NCATE, social justice, and the marginalization of multicultural foundations. *Journal of Educational Controversy*, *2*(2). Retrieved from http://www.wce.wwu. edu/Resources/CEP/eJournal.

Carr, D. (2003). Rival conceptions of practice in education and teaching. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *37*(2), 253-268.

Carr, W. (2006). Education without theory. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *54*(2), 136-159.

Crozier, W.R. (2009). The psychology of education: Achievements and challenges. *Oxford Review of Education*, 35(5), 587-600.

deMarrais, K. (2013). In defense of foundations: An open letter to deans. *Critical Questions in Education*, *4*(2), 118-129.

Deng, Z. (2018). Contemporary curriculum theorizing: Crisis and resolution. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *50*(6), 691-710

Dillard, C.B. (2000). The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: Examining an endarkened feminist epistemology in educational research and leadership. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, *13*(6), 661–681.

Finn, C.E. & Petrilli, M.J. (2007). Foreword. In K. Walsh & S. Jacobs (2007). Alternative certification isn't alternative. Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Retrieved from:

https://www.nctq.org/nctq/images/Alternative_Certification_Isnt_Alternative.pdf

Furlong, J. (2013). *Education - An anatomy of the discipline: Rescuing the university project*? London: Routledge.

Furlong, J. & Whitty, G. (2017). Knowledge traditions in the study of Education. In Whitty, G. & J. Furlong. (Eds.), *Knowledge and the study of Education* (pp. 13-57). Didcot: Symposium.

Grossman, P. & McDonald, M. (2008). Back to the future: Directions for research in teaching and teacher education. *American Educational Research Journal*, *45*(1), 184-205.

Hoadley, U. (2018). *Pedagogy in poverty: Lessons from twenty years of curriculum reform in South Africa*. London: Routledge

Hordern, J. (2015). Teaching, teacher formation, and specialised professional practice. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *38*(4), 431-444

Hordern, J. (2017). Bernstein's sociology of knowledge and education(al) studies. In Whitty, G. & J. Furlong. (Eds.), *Knowledge and the study of Education* (pp. 191-210). Didcot: Symposium.

Labaree, D. (2017). Futures of the field of education. In G. Whitty & M. Furlong (Eds.), *Knowledge and the study of education* (pp. 277-283). Didcot: Symposium.

Lawn, M. & Furlong, J. (2009). The disciplines of education in the UK: Between the ghost and the shadow. *Oxford Review of Education*, *35*(5), 541-552.

Liston, D., Whitcomb, J. & Borko, H. (2009). The end of education in teacher education: Thoughts on reclaiming the role of social foundations in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *60*(2), 107-111.

Lortie, D.C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maton, K. (2000). Recovering pedagogic discourse: A Bernsteinian approach to the sociology of knowledge. *Linguistics and Education*, *11*(1), 79-98.

Maton, K. & Moore, R. (Eds.). (2010). *Social realism, knowledge and the sociology of education: Coalitions of the mind*. New York: Continuum.

McCulloch, G. (2002). Introduction: Educational Studies and the disciplines. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *50*(1), 100-119.

Moore, R. (1987). Education and the ideology of production. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 8*(2), 227–242.

Moore, R. (1994). Professionalism, expertise and control in teacher training. In M. Wilkin & D. Sankey (Eds). *Collaboration and transition in initial teacher* training (pp. 28-41). London: Kogan Page.

Moore, R. (2004). *Education and society: Issues and explanations in the sociology of education*. Cambridge: Polity.

Moore, R. (2009). *Towards the sociology of truth*. New York: Continuum.

Moore, R. (2013). *Basil Bernstein: The thinker and the field*. London: Routledge.

Morais, A.M. & Neves, I.P. (2001). Pedagogic social contexts: Studies for a sociology of learning. In A. Morais, I. Neves, B. Davies, & H. Daniels (Eds.), *Towards a sociology of pedagogy: The contribution of Basil Bernstein to research* (pp. 185-221). New York: Peter Lang.

Morais, A.M. & Neves, I.P. (2011). Educational texts and contexts that work: Discussing the optimization of a model of pedagogic practice. In D. Frandji & P. Vitale (Eds.), *Knowledge, pedagogy and society: International perspectives on Basil Bernstein's sociology of education* (pp. 191-211). London: Routledge.

Muller, J. (2009). Forms of knowledge and curriculum coherence. *Journal of Education and Work*, *22*(3), 205–26.

Murray, C. (2008, August 13). For most people, college is a waste of time. *Wall Street Journal*, p. A17.

National Association for Multicultural Education (2014, January 21). NAME position statement on the edTPA. Retrieved from http://nameorg.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Statement-rr-edTPA-1-21-14.pdf.

National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. *The Elementary School Journal*, *84*(2), 112-130.

Niiniluoto, I. (2002). *Critical scientific realism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Noddings, N. (2003). Is teaching a practice? *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *37* (2), 241-251.

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). (2000). *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools. Standards and Quality in Education 1998/9*. London: The Stationery Office.

Peters, R.S. (1967). The place of philosophy in the training of teachers. *Paedagogica Europea*, *3*, 152-166.

Ravitch, D. (2000). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. New York: Basic Books.

ResearchEd. (2018). ResearchEd speaks to Nick Gibb. https://researched.org.uk/tom-bennett-speaks-to-nick-gibb/

Sadovnik, A.R., Cookson, P.W., & Semel, S.F. (2013). *Exploring education: An introduction to the foundations of education* (4th ed). New York: Routledge.

Sadovnik, A.R. & Semel, S.F. (2012, August 5). Training those who guide young minds. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/opinion/training-the-teachers-who-guide-young-minds.html?_r=0.

Schriewer, J. (2017). Between the philosophy of self-cultivation and empirical research: Educational studies in Germany. In G. Whitty & J. Furlong (Eds.). *Knowledge and the study of education: An international exploration* (pp. 75-99). Didcot: Symposium.

Schutz, A. & Butin, D. (2013). Beyond dependency: Strategies for saving foundations. *Critical Questions in Education*, *4*(2), 60-71.

Shalem, Y. & Slonimsky, L. (2014). Practical knowledge of teaching: What counts? In B. Barrett & E. Rata (Eds.), *Knowledge and the future of the curriculum: International studies in social realism* (pp. 198-212). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Shalem, Y. & Allais, S. (2019). Polarity in sociology of knowledge: The relationship between disciplinarity, curriculum, and social justice. *The Curriculum Journal*, *30*(2), 144-161.

Steiner, D. (2003). Preparing teachers: Are American Schools of Education up to the task? Paper presented at the American Enterprise Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.aei.org/docLib/20031023_steiner.pdf.

Steiner, D. (2004). Preparing tomorrow's teachers: An analysis of syllabi from a sample of America's schools of education. In F. Hess, A. Rotherham, & K. Walsh (Eds.), *A qualified teacher in every classroom* (pp. 119-148). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Steiner, D.M. & Rozen, S.D. (2004). Preparing tomorrow's teachers: An analysis of syllabi from a sample of America's schools of education. In F. Hess, A. Rotherham, & K. Walsh (Eds.), *A qualified teacher in every classroom* (pp. 119-48). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Tatto, M.T. (2006). Education reform and the global regulation of teachers' education, development and work: A cross-cultural analysis. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *45*, 231-241.

Tozer, S., Anderson, T.H., & Armbruster, B.B. (1990). Psychological and social foundations in teacher education: A thematic introduction. *Teachers College Record*, *91*(3), 293-299.

Tozer, S. & McAninch, S. (1987). Four texts in social foundations of education in historical

perspective. *Educational Studies*, *18*(1), 13-33.

Tutwiler, S.W., deMarrais, K., Gabbard, D., Hyde, A., Konkol, P., Li, H., Medina, Y., Rayle, J.,

& Swain, A. (2013). Standards for academic and professional instruction in foundations of

education, educational studies, and educational policy studies, third edition. *Educational Studies*,

49(2), 107-118.

U.S. Department of Education (2010). Secretary Arne Duncan's remarks to National Council for

Accreditation of Teacher Education. Retrieved from

http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/secretary-arne-duncans-remarks-national-council-

accreditation-teacher-education.

Vedder, R. (2010, September 16). Should we abolish colleges of education? *The Chronicle of

Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/blogs/innovations/should-we-abolish-

colleges-of-education/26750.

Villenas, S.A. (2018). Here, there, and back again with the social foundations of education:

Tracing conocimientos in/toward coalitional journeys. *Educational Studies*, *54*(1), 109-113.

Walsh, K. & Jacobs, S. (2007). *Alternative certification isn't alternative*. Thomas B. Fordham

Institute. Retrieved from:

https://www.nctq.org/nctq/images/Alternative_Certification_Isnt_Alternative.pdf

Whiting, C., Whitty, G., Menter, I., Black, P., Hordern, J., Parfitt, A., Reynolds, K., Sorensen, N. (2018). Diversity and complexity: Becoming a teacher in England in 2015-16. *Review of Education*, *6*(1), 69-96.

Whitty, G. (2014). 'Recent developments in teacher training and their consequences for the 'University Project' in education. *Oxford Review of Education*, *40*(4), 466-481.

Winch, C., Oancea, A. & J. Orchard. (2015). The contribution of educational research to teachers' professional learning: Philosophical understandings. *Oxford Review of Education*, *41*(2), 202-216.

Young, M. & Muller, J. (2013). On the powers of powerful knowledge. *Review of Education 1*(3), 229-250.