

# Embodying pedagogical habitus change: A narrative-based account of a teacher's pedagogical change within a professional learning community

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(Received 19 September, 2016; 10 July 2017)

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## Abstract

Situated in the context of teaching in South Africa, this article narrates the journey of pedagogical change and adaptation of one teacher who participated in a professional learning community (PLC). It discusses the *durability* and *malleability* of this teacher's pedagogical disposition by arguing for a conceptualisation of teacher change that moves beyond a cognitivist approach, i.e. one that is driven primarily by knowledge acquisition, to one that engages the embodied practices of teachers in the light of the shifts and adaptations that they undergo when trying to establish augmented pedagogical approaches. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, bodily hexis and doxa, this article argues that sustained pedagogical change involves an engagement with the teacher's embodied pedagogical habitus which has formed over time given the educational spaces they have inhabited. The article is based on data collected over a two-year period from PLC transcripts, observational school visits and multiple in-depth interviews with the teacher. This article describes the constraints or 'hardness' of change as the teacher engages with his embodied pedagogical habitus which has developed over time. However, this article further argues that possibilities of embodied pedagogical adaptation and change exist in the reflexive, on-going dialogical space that a professional learning community offers.

## Introduction

Situated in the context of teaching within South Africa, this article focuses on the journey of pedagogical change and adaptation of one teacher within the context of his participation in a professional learning community (PLC). It discusses the *durability* and *malleability* of this teacher's pedagogical dispositions by arguing for a conceptualisation of teacher change that moves beyond a cognitivist approach. That is, an approach that is driven solely by teachers' knowledge acquisition, to one that engages the embodied practices of teachers in the light of the shifts and adaptations that they undergo when trying to establish augmented pedagogical approaches. Central to the argument is the role of PLCs in facilitating teachers' pedagogical adaptation and change in consonance with a socially just approach to teaching and learning. This pedagogical approach, informed by Fraser's (1997) conceptualisation of social justice, considers the interaction between the redistribution of the school knowledge code, recognition of student social-cultural constructions of identity and a representation within school knowledge of the lifeworld knowledges that the students bring with them to school (Fataar, 2015). Such an approach, we contend, is central to a transformative account

of educational change in South Africa in its attempt to advance an understanding of process orientated pedagogical modalities that is able to elicit optimal student engagement in their education.

Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, bodily hexis and doxa, we conceptualise teachers' pedagogical adaptation and change as a form of habitus engagement (Feldman & Fataar, 2014). We argue that sustained pedagogical change requires an engagement with teachers' embodied teaching practices, what we will call their 'pedagogical habitus', which has formed over time in the educational spaces that they inhabit. Through a presentation of Johan's narrative – the teacher whose story is at the centre of this article – we consider habitus as both a *topic* and *tool* of investigation (Wacquant, 2011; 2014). Habitus as a *tool* of investigation allows us to come to an understanding of the manner in which Johan acquired his teaching habitus and his embodied corporeal disposition. As a *topic* of investigation, habitus enables us to understand how actively engaging his embodied habitus holds the potential to effect changes in his teaching practices.

The article is based on data collected over a two-year period, transcripts of the PLC conversations, six months of weekly school observation visits and multiple in-depth interviews with Johan. We include a discussion on the 'methodo-logic' of a social justice approach that was the focus of the PLC conversations and use Bourdieu's thinking tools to conceptualise Johan's pedagogical change mediated through the PLC process. This article, exemplified by Johan's narrative, argues that changing or adapting teachers' pedagogy as central to leveraging students' engagement with their knowledge processes, is never linear or straightforward, but rather recursive, messy and deeply reflexive. Further, we suggest that teachers' pedagogical change requires a form of habitus engagement that takes into account the teachers' embodied cognitive and corporeal habitus which, we argue, is best facilitated within a reflexive and dialogical PLC process.

The article's focus on pedagogical change is situated in the current South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which is described as tightly regulated, results driven and 'teacher proof' (Fataar, 2012). The PLC is motivated by a desire to generate a pedagogy that invites teachers to move beyond the mandated curriculum requirements to a more enriched notion of teaching and learning that embraces a social justice orientation. The premise of the PLC's deliberations, and the research process that we have facilitated, is that teachers' pedagogical practices are extremely difficult to shift or change. We argue therefore that conceptualising PLC work as a form of habitus engagement, provides an opportunity for the teachers to reflexively and collaboratively investigate their embodied pedagogical practices in order to consider possible adaptation and change. This article singles out Johan's story from the PLC participants as he remained in the PLC over a two-year period and actively worked to adapt and change his embodied teaching practices. By embodied teaching practices we refer to not only the teachers' mental attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about teaching, but also their corporeal teaching dispositions.

## The professional learning community as context for Johan's pedagogical habitus engagement

We first met Johan in the Bachelor of Education (BEd) Honours module *Education and Society* in our capacity as the lecturer (Fataar) and class tutor (Feldman) for the module. The Honours module focused, among others, on student learning in complex educational contexts and a consideration of the pedagogical bases on which students, in particular working class students, disengage from their learning. This is founded on an understanding that the school knowledge message system does not engage with the students' cultural knowledges that they bring from their homes and community environments. The readings and class discussion included a consideration of ways in which South African schooling can be transacted to include a more socially just approach to teaching, one that engages all students in their learning.

A group of the Honours students who taught in schools in working class communities displayed an interest in finding ways to adapt their pedagogy to incorporate the theoretical concepts discussed in the module. In response to their interest, we invited the five Honours students, at the end of the course module, to participate in a PLC process which we would establish for the purpose of engaging the teachers in pedagogical learning informed by social justice orientations. The PLC was intended as a dialogical space where participating teachers could collaboratively consider ways of adapting their pedagogy in consonance with a socially just approach to teaching. Incorporating their students' social-cultural knowledge from their homes and communities into the standardised school curriculum would be one key feature of such an approach. The PLC process included on-going reflexive conversations about pedagogical adaptation as well as the practical design and implementation of lesson units. Johan was one of the teachers who committed to the process and this article narrates his pedagogical adaptation and change driven by the PLC process over a two-year period.

## Methodo-logic of the professional learning community

In order to guide the dialogical process of the PLC conversations and practical design of lesson units by the teachers, we adopted what is called by Hattam, Brennan, Zipin and Comber (2009) a 'methodo-logic' approach for chasing socially just change through research. This approach does not refer to research methods or methodology, but to the logic of an approach that guides the decisions and activities of the process. In other words, the methodo-logic provided the logic for the unfolding dialogical engagement within the PLC process.

The methodo-logic of the PLC was premised on a Bourdieusian insight that students enter schooling from different structural positions, bringing with them to school embodied qualities, dispositions and knowledges from their families and communities (Bourdieu, 1998). These dispositions operate as 'cultural capital' which resonate and align with the school knowledge code, as is the case for most middle class students. Conversely, the

school code alienates and isolates working class students from school learning because their 'cultural capital' does not align with the 'cultural capital' codes valued by the school. Bourdieu describes this form of social stratification via education thus:

The education system . . . maintains the pre-existing order, that is, the gap between pupils endowed with unequal amounts of cultural capital. More precisely, by a series of selection operations, the system separates the holder of inherited cultural capital from those who lack it. Differences in aptitude being inseparable from social differences according to inherited capital, the system thus tends to maintain pre-existing social differences (1998, p.20).

Middle class students whose embodied cultural capital aligns with the education (school) system enables them access to the codes of schooling while at the same time operating in such a way as to deny most working class students the opportunity to achieve success at school. These students find that the curriculum makes very little connection to the capitals they bring from their community contexts and therefore they see no intrinsic value in engaging with the educational experience (see Fataar, 2012).

In order to find ways to engage the students more deeply in the learning process, the PLC conversations drew on the 'funds of knowledge' (FoK) framework (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). This approach discursively and practically mobilises community and family knowledge and resources and draws them into classroom curriculum and lesson units in a manner that moves beyond the rote-like teaching instruction that students commonly encounter in schools (Moll *et al.*, 1992). Utilising the FoK framework enables teachers to draw on the cultural capital of their students and recontextualises their lifeworld knowledge and interests into relevant and meaningful lesson units that are better able to create cultural congruence in school learning. In this manner classroom learning becomes a hybrid space where school knowledge combines with the students' FoK and cultural interests to enable the students to experience meaningful connection to, and greater intellectual engagement with, their school learning.

## Theoretical considerations: Bourdieu's social field theory

In order to theorise the change process with regard to Johan's pedagogy, we draw on Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' of practice, habitus, bodily hexis, field and doxa. These 'tools' allow us to analyse and explore both the durability and possibility of change in Johan's teaching practices at the intersection of his classroom discourse and individual agency. In particular, we consider the manner in which Johan was able to embark on strategic action that moved him beyond his embodied teaching practices in relation to his classroom (field) context.

Habitus is fundamentally an embodied disposition that denotes not only how we think about the world, but includes a bodily system of dispositions that are physically enacted in a field. Habitus, as a system of durable transposable patterns of socio-cultural practices, is a complex amalgamation of one's past and present.

Conditioned primarily during early childhood, habitus operates largely below the level of consciousness and gives one a sense of what actions are possible (or impossible) and how to act and respond “without consciously obeying rules explicitly posed as such” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.76). One’s habitus, described as a “strategy generating principle” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.72), provides one with a way of responding to cultural rules and contexts as well as unforeseen and ever-changing situations in different ways. Bourdieu (2000, p.161) explains that,

Habitus change constantly as a function of new experiences. Dispositions are subject to a sort of permanent revision, but one that is never radical, given that it operates on the basis of premises instituted in the previous state. They are characterized by a combination of constancy and variation that fluctuates according to the individual and his degree of rigidity or flexibility.

Thus, one’s habitus is able to respond and adapt to different social experiences and circumstances and these experiences are internalised and become another layer that is added to one’s habitus.

Bourdieu expands the cognitive and dispositional focus of habitus to include an individual’s corporeality which he calls ‘bodily hexis’. Bodily hexis refers not only to our motor functions in the form of patterns and postures but includes a thinking or feeling that is inscribed in our physical being and that determines our corporeality. Bourdieu describes bodily hexis as,

a whole system of techniques involving the body and tools, and charged with a host of social meanings and values . . . a way of walking, tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech, and . . . a certain subjective experience . . . Bodily *hexis* is political mythology realized, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking, and thereby of *feeling* and *thinking* (1977, p.87, 93; italics in original).

For Bourdieu there is no separation between one’s body and one’s mind. He describes the body as a mnemonic device on which the very basics of culture are imprinted and enacted. The way we relate to our bodies reveals the very deepest dispositions of habitus,

nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and, therefore, more precious, than the values given body, *made* body by the transubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy (Bourdieu, 1977, p.94).

Hence the two concepts, habitus and bodily hexis, are inextricably linked, in that our practical beliefs are both a ‘state of mind’ and a ‘state of the body’ (Bourdieu, 1990b). One’s body, Bourdieu states, is a “living memory pad, an automaton that ‘leads the mind unconsciously along with it’” (1990b, p.68). Our dispositions that are embodied and inscribed within the unconscious formation of habitus, and through our social practices and discourses form the mediating link between our subjective and personal worlds and our cultural and social worlds (Jenkins, 1992, p.46).

Habitus does not act alone. There exists an iterative relationship between habitus and field, in that they are produced and reproduced in relation to each other through social practice.

Bourdieu uses the analogy of playing a game to give insight into the dynamic role that field and habitus play in the logic of one's practice and states that the adjustments and demands of a field require a certain 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990b). Similar to a game, a social field such as a school is assembled with specific structures and rules. The relative smoothness of playing the social game in a school field often depends on the members accepting and following the given structures and rules within the field, regardless of how arbitrary they might seem. The longer that one continues to engage in the 'game', the more the structures and rules seem natural and unquestionable. Bourdieu describes how this complicit and (re)productive role is compounded from early immersion into a field:

The earlier a player enters the game and the less he is aware of the associated learning ... the greater is his ignorance of all that is tacitly granted through his investment in the field and his interest in its very existence and perpetuation and in everything that is played for in it, and his unawareness of the unthought presuppositions that the game produces and endlessly reproduces, thereby reproducing the conditions of its own perpetuation (1990b, p.67).

If we consider that teachers enter the game of schooling at the age of five or six, when they start formal school, it can be assumed that their embodied educational experiences include a tacit or unconscious investment in the game and rules of schooling which are acquired over a period of time given the school fields they have inhabited. We describe these embodied educational dispositions as the teachers' pedagogical habitus.

Pedagogical habitus, we suggest, can be conceptualised as a layer of habitus formation which is grafted over time onto a teachers' primary habitus. Incorporated into a teacher's habitus are embodied social and cultural messages from the field of education which organises and positions them as certain types of teachers, and which in turn structures their teaching practices in particular ways. These dispositions include different teaching repertoires which include, for example, their speech styles and patterns, their use of resources and the manner in which they both verbally and physically respond to their students. Bourdieu holds that our dispositions are preconscious and therefore not easily amenable to conscious reflection and modification – we perform them without conscious reflection, they are obvious, common sense, and in fact, we have forgotten that we even learned them. Consequently, any substantial or effective change in a teacher's embodied teaching practices has to contend with the durability of their pedagogical habitus formation over time given the various social and/or educational 'fields' they have inhabited.

It was these uncontested pedagogical beliefs, which Bourdieu describes as a form of doxa, which the PLC conversations sought to interrogate and challenge. The taken-for-granted or common sense values, discourses and practices of a social field, such as the field of education, "come to be viewed as natural, normal and inherently necessary, thus working to ensure that the arbitrary and contingent nature of these discourses are not questioned nor even recognized" (Nolan, 2012, p.349). For Johan, his doxa of schooling, which had been established on a particular worldview, which we discuss in more detail below, structured a certain form of teaching as natural and self-evident. It was this view, embodied in his pedagogical habitus and enacted in his teaching practices that the PLC conversations sought to engage in order to engender his pedagogical adaptation.



In order to come to an understanding of the constraints and possibilities of Johan's strategic action within his pedagogical adaptations, we discuss in the following section Johan's embodied habitus through key aspects of his biographical narrative (see Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013 for a more extensive discussion on biographical and experience-based narrative enquiry). This discussion highlights both the *durability* and *malleability* of his pedagogical habitus in relation to the educational fields he has occupied.

## Johan's embodied habitus

Johan is a young, white, middle class Afrikaans male who grew up in 'a very white Afrikaans farming community'. As the middle child of three children he describes his family as 'very close'. Johan displays a firm embeddedness in his family and values his parents' opinions and affirmation regarding his decisions or practices.

Johan describes his parents:

*My father is a firm, white conservative Afrikaans man who has always run his own business. He is very strict and can get very angry when people don't do what he tells them to do. You have to respect my father and speak to him properly . . . He believes that you must respect those in authority.*

*My mother is gentle and kind. She is submissive to my father, but also finds ways to do things she wants to, like when my father made the family go to the NG Kerk (an Afrikaans church). My mother didn't really want to go, she wanted to attend an English church, but she always made us go as a family to the NG Kerk with my father. Then, she would go to the English church in the evenings.*

Johan describes his family as a typical white Afrikaans family. His father was the dominant and authoritarian head of the family while his mother obeyed his authority and helped to ensure that the children were respectful and did what was expected of them. Johan's mother also played a mediating role that ameliorated the harshness of his father's authoritarian manner by providing a 'buffer' between the children and the strict manner of their father.

Johan started school in 1990 at the age of six. He attended the local white Afrikaans primary and high school. Despite schools in South Africa becoming racially integrated in 1994, Johan notes that during his time at school the schools in the rural town where he lived remained exclusively white.

During Johan's primary school years he was involved in the 'Voortrekker'<sup>1</sup> youth organisation, which he describes as playing a significant role in his life. The 'Voortrekkers'

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Voortrekker' youth movement in South Africa is the Afrikaner alternative to the international English-speaking Boy Scout movement.

is founded on a Christian Afrikaner nationalistic ideology that empowers young Afrikaans boys to be successful in their 'Afrikanerskap' (the condition of being an Afrikaner), as well as becoming positive citizens and dependable and committed Christians. Johan describes the role that his involvement in the 'Voortrekkers' played in his life,

*. . . being part of the 'Voortrekkers' was a very important part of my life and I believed in their value system. I liked the discipline that they taught us . . . we did marching and standing to attention and rituals when we hoisted the flag. We had ceremonies where we were rewarded for things we did . . . they taught us respect and discipline and they valued team work and team building . . . I always feel so proud when I talk about it . . . it was something that I really liked, especially the uniform we had to wear. I loved that uniform.*

Here Johan describes his embodied childhood corporeality, both an ideology and a physical hexis that the 'Voortrekker' organisation embedded in his early year's habitus. This corporeality is later evident in the way Johan comported himself as a teacher.

Johan's socialisation into the field of education took a more circuitous route than usual. After completing school Johan initially enrolled to study psychology at an Afrikaans university, but he did not complete the course and left before the end of the first year to work in London. Six months into his time overseas his father pressurised him to return home to work in the family business. He returned to South Africa, but did not enjoy working in the family business and decided to enrol to study Pastoral Psychology through a distant learning college. After two years he changed to an Education degree which he completed via correspondence, through the University of South African (UNISA). During his degree he was required to complete a practical teaching component and following one of his practical teaching stints he was invited to work as a substitute teacher at a high school which comprised of mostly black students with a diverse teaching staff. Johan describes this time of his life:

*I felt excited about the opportunity to teach but shortly after I started I felt confused and shocked because everything was so different. The school and the children were so different to my culture and background. I had to learn how to teach these learners because the school was very different to the schools I went to. At first it was chaos and I realised that I had to find ways to structure and control my classes.*

Here Johan is describing the disjuncture between his embodied habitus and the field context of the school. His pedagogical habitus that had been structured in a white privileged Afrikaans school context was incongruent with the students and school structure in which he was now teaching. Johan describes how he felt overwhelmed and frustrated by the unruly student behaviour, the noise, the different languages the students spoke, their attitude to school and the way they interacted with him and responded to his authority as a teacher. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of bodily hexis, Johan highlights the dissonance between the students' behaviour and outlook and his expectations of how the students should behave, show respect and respond to his authority as a teacher.



Unsure of how to respond, Johan drew on support from an older staff member who became his mentor during the two years he taught at the school. This teacher, also a white Afrikaner male, was instrumental in assisting Johan to put firm discipline structures in place to cope with the large and often times unruly classes, while at the same time encouraging him to develop a caring attitude to his students. This approach to his teaching, which was rigid and somewhat paternalistic in nature, in conjunction with his embodied corporeality which favoured a teacher-centred authoritarian style, formed the basis of Johan's teaching practices.

Johan's embodied educational ideals, consolidated by his mentor relationship with a white Afrikaner male authority figure, draws on an educational ideology adopted by the apartheid state namely Christian National Education (CNE). CNE, which was the education policy until 1994, is described by Enslin (1984) as a curriculum ideology for white Afrikaans-speaking children that "purport[s] to constitute the life- and world-view of the *Afrikanervolk*". (pp.139–140). As underpinning of curriculum policy, CNE, while advocating for a particular dominant ideology of Afrikaner education, claimed a notion of racial superiority over coloured and black African education based on the view that the Boer (Afrikaans farmer) nation is "the senior white trustee of the native", described as being in a state of "cultural infancy" (Enslin, 1984, p.140).

Based on the ideals embodied in Johan from his family and educational field contexts he moved through, Johan was positioned in a particular manner in his school. Johan describes how he initially struggled to relate to the black students which he describes as "very different, at first I didn't know how to talk to them, or physically interact with them". In order to survive in this unfamiliar schooling environment, Johan relied on the ideals and principles inscribed in his habitus, those of control, authority and discipline combined with a reward system which he used to manage the behaviour of the students. These systems formed the basis of his classroom structures and consequently came to form an integral part of his enacted pedagogy.

Johan states that his father was not happy with him teaching at a predominantly black African school. He pressurised Johan into leaving the school by offering to provide financial support for him until he found a new teaching position. After two years of teaching at the school Johan agreed and moved back home and substituted at the local primary school for a year until being offered a school governing body post at the primary school where he currently teaches.

His current school is located on the outskirts of a middle class, predominantly white Afrikaans area. During apartheid the school was for white students only, however, with the desegregation of schools, the school now mostly enrolls black and coloured students and a small group of white students. The school has retained a predominantly white Afrikaans staffing component, which, by Johan's own admission, continues to perpetuate a white Afrikaans culture despite the racially diverse student group that now attends the school. Fataar argues that many schools have "made some adjustments to deracialise their reception cultures, but found ways to assimilate incoming students into their dominant cultural registers" thus retaining the existing cultural orientation of the school (Fataar, 2015, p.17).

Johan's school, therefore, by not acknowledging the diversity of its students, has created a teaching environment that likely works against the possibility of pedagogical adaptation that engages the cultural capital and everyday literacies of the students in their school learning.

Currently Johan teaches a variety of different subjects to Grade 5 and 6 students, including English home language, Geography, Maths and Life Orientation. He describes himself as a good teacher with firm structures and systems. His general demeanour could be described as someone who is affable, seeks to please others and who elicits on-going affirmation that he is liked by both students and colleagues. Being seen as a good teacher by his colleagues and liked by the students is important to Johan, and has formed the basis of many of his pedagogical decisions.

## Habitus engagement: reflexivity and strategic action

Engaging Johan in PLC discussions about changing the way in which he transmitted his content knowledge to include student engagement and participation was initially difficult. He struggled to accept that he needed to change the structures and systems, specifically those of control, order and discipline that he had worked hard to put in place. These structures were not only embodied in his dispositional corporeality and deeply embedded in his habitus but, according to Johan, it was these structures that made him a good teacher. He followed the departmental textbooks diligently and exclusively, stating that this made him feel safe, "if I did what the government wanted me to do and the students failed then I could argue that I had done what they told me to and therefore it wasn't my fault". This approach is indicative of the current 'teacher-proof' curriculum that reduces the work of teachers to technical system implementers that require them to follow departmental rules and regulations and transmit a pre-determined syllabi determined by departmental curriculum experts. This approach stands in contrast to one that treats teachers as professionals who are informed by an internal accountability system and who take responsibility for their students' learning and teaching outcomes (Fataar, 2012).

For Johan, adapting his teaching practices to include student engagement involved grappling with his embodied pedagogical habitus. During the first year of the PLC discussions Johan struggled between an adherence to the regulative forces and constraints found in the doxa of institutionalised schooling practices, and working against his embodied pedagogical habitus to shift his teaching in accordance with a socially just approach to student learning. During the PLC conversations he engaged willingly with the possibilities that this approach offered his teaching and student learning, but shifting his embodied pedagogy to engage with this approach required him to leverage a corporeal change in his teaching which he initially found extremely difficult.

For Johan the objective structures that had produced his subjectivity, his embodied worldview based on authority, discipline and respect, were deeply constraining and regulating in his teaching practices. The PLC's focus on a socially just approach to teaching and learning, was initially incongruent with Johan's tightly controlled and teacher-centered pedagogy. Reay (2004) suggests that a disjuncture between an individual's habitus and

social field holds the potential to produce a new awareness and self-questioning where the habitus finds ways to adapt or shift in alignment with the new field conditions. Throughout the first year of the PLC conversations Johan acknowledged that he struggled to shift his teaching orientation to that of a more socially just approach noting that,

*. . .it was exciting to think about teaching differently but I was still unsure how to make the changes, so I kept my structures and systems in place because they worked for me. I would try out some of the new ideas and then talk about them in the PLC, then test it a bit more . . . after each PLC I felt like I had new fresh ideas, but during the week I seemed to end up back in my comfort zone . . . insisting on a quiet class, with order and discipline and being in control.*

It was during the second year of the PLC that a number of factors came together to support his decision to adapt his pedagogy and classroom practice. Choosing to remain committed to the PLC process for a second year, Johan was joined by a new group of teachers. This positioned Johan as a supporting facilitator of the PLC conversations and required him to assist in leading the dialogue with the new teachers regarding the socially just focus of the PLC, as well as share the practical implementation possibilities from his own classroom practices. A further factor, and probably the most pivotal in supporting a more sustained adapted pedagogy, was a physical classroom change that saw him moving to a prefabricated classroom that was approximately 100 metres beyond the school building.

Johan's new classroom was positioned at a distance from the rest of the school building. This move signalled a substantial change in the way in which he managed his physical classroom space, which was directly related to his own growing awareness of his embodied pedagogical dispositions that he wanted to adapt and change. Johan acknowledges that relinquishing control over his students' behaviour within the classroom space had been one of the most difficult aspects to adjust to. He had previously been vocal among his colleagues about the importance of a quiet disciplined class, and thus, foregoing these structures that were observable by his colleagues acted as a constraining factor within the school environment. Johan explained:

*I knew that changing my teaching was right, but I needed time to try it out before I felt confident that I could show my colleagues that teaching that looks uncontrolled and allows the students to talk and become noisy, can actually change the way the students learn.*

From the start of the new year the new, more isolated, classroom space acted as an enabling environment which facilitated Johan beginning to shift his corporeality in relation to his teaching and students. He allowed his students to negotiate how the classroom environment was organised and encouraged the students to take ownership of their learning environment. With amusement Johan describes how he discovered that the prefabricated classroom walls allowed him to write on them with whiteboard pens and wipe them clean again as one would a whiteboard. To the delight of his students the entire classroom wall space became a large whiteboard which they could write and paste their work on. The wall space, which framed the classroom environment, became a continuation of their learning and written

work and became a continuation of their learning and written work and provided a space where they could share their ideas and drafts of work with one another and display their group projects.

The changed classroom environment instigated a more open disposition in both the manner in which Johan engaged with his students and the way in which his students involved themselves in the learning environment. This openness coincided with Johan's use of the 'funds of knowledge' (FoK) framework to inform his teaching. This approach utilises the students' lifeworld knowledge from their homes and communities to design and implement lessons that connect the students into the school knowledge. At the start of the second year Johan and the PLC teachers discussed the possibility of using this framework in their classes and during the PLC meetings the teachers collaboratively discussed the design of lesson units using aspects of the FoK framework. When Johan presented the lesson units to his class, the enthusiasm with which the students involved themselves in the new lesson approach exceeded his expectations.

His two Grade 6 English classes chose 'music and drama' as the overarching theme for the term and together Johan and the students decided on the written tasks and assessments based on the CAPS requirements for the term's work. He divided the students in each class into groups and each group of students took responsibility for creating their own drama production which included a written story, an oral, prepared reading, and a newspaper article to mention but a few of the curricula tasks that this theme easily encompassed. The students' story ideas were unique and some, particularly the boys, enacted real world scenarios such as violence, gangs and drugs, while others, mostly the girls, chose stories about singing contests, beauty competitions or broken friendships that were restored through a tragic event. Their English lesson units revolved around a combination of their ideas, the CAPS requirements for the term and the students' lifeworld knowledge from their homes and communities. The excitement and enthusiasm of the students for their English learning through the negotiated lesson units provided a creative impetus in Johan's pedagogy which he shared with enthusiasm in the PLC meetings.

How the physical classroom space was claimed by the students for their use, was significant in forcing a shift in Johan's corporeality. Initially he tried to control what the students displayed or how they displayed their artefacts, however the students, once invited into the physical learning space in this manner took ownership of the space and, as the items on display were theirs, they began to take control of the classroom space and would daily change or add to their display. They also negotiated how the desks were configured in the classroom in order that each group was closer to their display space on the classroom wall. The weekly collaborative PLC discussions also played a significant role in Johan's pedagogical adaptations. The PLC teachers had agreed to work on similar pedagogical themes, and PLC teachers both affirmed and critiqued Johan's (and each other's) pedagogical adaptations, providing suggestions and possibilities emanating from their own pedagogical adaptations.

The final point which Johan describes as being instrumental in consolidating his belief in his adapted pedagogy was the results from his mid-year assessments. The results from the formal school assessments positioned his class as making such significant improvements in

English that only four students were placed on the ‘at risk’ school list, whereas previously more than half of the same class were considered ‘at risk’ for not achieving the basic requirements in English. In conjunction with this, some students who had been failing English before were now in his top ten students.

Johan describes the role that the PLC played as central in him engaging in reflexive pedagogical adaptations thus,

*. . . besides the PLC providing a form of accountability, motivation and guidance, it was also the intellectual support that really helped . . . if it wasn’t for the academic based discussions and the literature and readings provided each week to support our PLC conversations, I don’t think I would have been so successful in thinking about my teaching differently. During the first year I thought a lot about changing and tried some things, but it was hard to change what I had been doing. In my second year I decided to take action. It really helped that all the PLC teachers were doing it together.*

The role of the PLC process in the teachers’ adaptations and changes cannot be over-emphasised. The collaborative and reflexive weekly PLC environment provided a safe space for the teachers to share and challenge one another regarding their pedagogical adaptations, and, as Johan notes, it also provided a form of accountability. He also highlights the importance of the cognitive input and the manner in which this supported his thinking about his adaptations as well as providing practical support and guidance. Johan’s own description of how hard it is to change is indicative of how a cognitivist or knowledge-driven approach is unable to work in isolation of one’s embodied habitus to effect adaptation and change.

## Conclusion

This article has provided a narrative account of Johan’s pedagogical adaptation and change facilitated through his involvement in the PLC process over a two-year period. Central to our discussion we offer an understanding of pedagogical change and adaptation as a form of bodily hexis and habitus engagement. Exemplified by Johan’s story, the article demonstrated both the durability of his embodied pedagogical habitus that needs to contend with his deeply held educational beliefs and values, and the possibility of change capacitated by the on-going reflexive PLC dialogue.

Acknowledging the doxa of his schooling context is described through Johan’s storytelling as a necessary consideration within his adaptation and change in pedagogy. The PLC conversations did not encourage the teachers to move out of the CAPS framing but placed an emphasis on finding ways for the teachers to design and implement lessons that generated a richer notion of student engagement and participation by connecting to the students’ lifeworlds and lifeworld knowledge. Johan’s narrative highlights how, despite the seemingly intractable nature of the CAPS framing, there exists a gap, which can be widened

and enriched, allowing teachers to invite students into curriculum work that is participatory, engaging and richly related to their own cultural lifeworld knowledges.

Johan's story reveals a cycle of pedagogical adaptation and change, that we have argued, needs to move beyond cognitive learning to involve a teachers' corporeality and embodied habitus. This cycle of change is neither predictable nor smooth, but rather recursive, chaotic and often discordant with one's embodied habitus and taken-for-granted doxa of schooling. Wacquant reminds us that "practice is engendered in the *mutual solicitation of position and disposition*, in the now-harmonious, now-discordant encounter between 'social structures and mental structures', history 'objectified' as fields and history 'embodied' in the form of this socially patterned matrix of preferences and propensities that constitute habitus." (Wacquant in Bourdieu, 1984, p.xvi) The body therefore, as a 'memory pad', perceives and enacts embodied structures, both cognitive thoughts and physical behaviour that is expressed in the systematic functioning of one's socialised body within a particular field structure.

Thus, adaptation and change, facilitated via dialogical PLC engagement, requires a deep reflexivity with one's inveterate embodied pedagogical habitus, which is read on and through one's bodily hexis. For teachers, therefore, adherence to the social school field, and a submission to the existing school conventions, can be seen as a 'bodily dressage' which is visible in one's hexis and enacted in one's pedagogy. It was therefore the re-ordering of thoughts and marshalling of the teachers' bodily dispositions, emotions and practices as well as "deep-rooted linguistic and muscular patterns of behaviour" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.69) that the PLC sought to bring to consciousness and interrogate in order to engage with the constructs of a more socially just pedagogy and incorporation of the FoK approach. This corporeal engagement, we argue, must interact with what has been 'learned by the body', as this knowing "is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is." (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.73) Thus, as Johan's story of adaptation and change has highlighted, it is the on-going dialogical engagement in a PLC that supports pedagogical learning through engagement with one's corporeality and dispositions that have shaped one's social identity, that hold the potential for embodied pedagogical change.

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