

‘Field’ Trips with Bourdieu: Making Sense as Research Methodology in Teacher Education

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Abstract

How do researchers select and work with/in theoretical frameworks in their qualitative research studies? What processes are involved in coming to understand a theory and its connections to educational practices? In this paper, two teacher educators and researchers describe how they lived out these questions through a collaborative approach to reading and understanding Bourdieu's social field theory. Through regular meetings (or, field trips) the two researchers worked through a myriad of overlapping and intersecting issues, taking them on a methodological journey of discussions on the accessibility of theoretical language, the multiple readings and interpretations of Bourdieu's key concepts, and, ultimately, how meaning is made through the specific practices of social studies and mathematics teacher education. In proposing a methodology of making sense, this paper provides insight into the complex relationships between theoretical perspectives, qualitative research methodologies, and teacher education research.

Keywords: teacher education; methodology; Bourdieu; field; theory; reflexivity; collaboration

1. Introduction

In this paper, we offer an innovative qualitative research methodology grounded in the significance of theory and our efforts to make sense of it. The theory being made sense of in the storyline of this paper is French theorist Pierre Bourdieu's social field theory, but the reader should not feel compelled to have a grasp of the theory itself. Rather, the conversation excerpts we share throughout are illustrative of our research process and the emergent sense making methodology, not the substantive content of Bourdieu's theoretical concepts. Through our regular meetings (or, field trips) we work through a myriad of overlapping and intersecting issues, taking us on a methodological journey of discussions on the accessibility of theoretical language, the multiple readings and interpretations of Bourdieu's key concepts, and, ultimately, how meaning is made through the specific practices of social studies and mathematics teacher education. Making sense as research methodology necessitated relational reading, reflecting, and researching both within and beyond the scope of our 'field' trips as will be illustrated throughout this paper. Rather than an approach to research where data emerges through a dialogical, embodied encounter between researchers and participants (Finlay, 2002), making sense as research methodology involves the co-construction of meaning, not through the emergence of data but through the reading of theory. Thus, the format of the paper attempts to reflect the nature of the research process itself, acknowledging the individual contributions we each have made, while simultaneously modelling a dialogic process between us — the result being a co-constructed text that presents a mingling and interweaving of author voices. Although our initial goal was to 'simply' read Bourdieu, this paper reveals the complexities of the process and the emergent methodology of making sense as research.

2. 'Field Trips' Pre-text

[K] My current scholarship as a mathematics teacher educator and researcher involves introducing elementary and secondary pre-service teachers to inquiry-based pedagogy in mathematics. My research explores why current mathematics teacher education programs generally have a superficial and temporary impact on reforming the teaching and learning of school mathematics. Encouraging prospective mathematics teachers to make personal and professional transitions from traditional didactic teaching practices to inquiry-based approaches presents many challenges. Through my research, I have begun to realize that understanding and unpacking the transitions of pre-service teachers calls for a drastic change of script in storylines for what it means to teach and learn mathematics, so I have been (re)searching a theory that would help me understand these transitions. In my initial readings on Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, cultural capital, etc., I started making sense of my data, my work as a teacher educator, and the identity work necessary for pre-service teachers in negotiating the transitions and tensions they experience. For instance, through my initial (fairly superficial) readings of Bourdieu, I began conceptualizing the university-school transition as involving two fields of play—the field of education in K-12 schools (particularly in mathematics classrooms) and the field of university teacher education (particularly in mathematics curriculum courses). In these two fields the unwritten rules of the game interact with, and shape, the habitus and cultural capital that each social agent brings to, and forms in, the field. I also began recognizing the paradoxical nature of my role as a teacher educator, noticing my own complicity in reproducing a desire to reduce the ambiguities and complexities of teaching and teacher education (Nolan, 2010). Above all, however, I recognized my desire (and need) to dig deeper into Bourdieu's social field theory. And, if at possible, not to do it alone!

[J] As a social studies educator committed to challenging the discursive production of dominant knowledge systems in and through curriculum, I have spent the better part of a decade inquiring into the intersections of curriculum, identity, knowledge and power. More recently, my focus has been on citizenship education as the primary goal of social studies and how citizenship in this context is constructed, negotiated and lived. My engagement with the ideas of French theorist Pierre Bourdieu began in the context of a research project exploring high school students' understandings and experiences of citizenship. Collaborating with researchers at the University of Alberta, and working with students in four classrooms in Regina and Edmonton, we began to see in our data, evidence of normalized citizenship practices and dispositions in the responses of our student participants to discussions of 'good citizenship,' its constitution and its enactment (Tupper, Cappello & Sevigny, 2010). More specifically, differential responses to our research questions based on students' socio-economic locations (which could be ascertained from the profiles of the neighbourhoods surrounding each school, and students' responses to particular survey items) became apparent in focus group discussions and survey responses (Tupper et al., 2010). We wondered if Bourdieu's forms of capital, and his articulation of social fields and habitus, might offer us insight into why some of the students were more easily able to imagine themselves as good citizens and more willing to consider participating in a variety of socially sanctioned citizenship activities, including voting, writing letters to elected officials, and volunteering. We also wondered if his theories could help us account for students who were able to strongly articulate indicators of good citizenship and speak about the importance of engaging in acts of good citizenship on the one hand, but then on the other hand, reject their own participation in such acts. We looked to Grenfell and James for their explanations/interpretations of Bourdieu's theories as we sought some clarity in our own understandings of these. These secondary interpretations, written in an accessible language, helped us to think through our data without actually having to directly read Bourdieu.

3. 'Field Trips' Underway

[K] Our reading/researching/making sense collaboration dates back to the 2010 conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE). Even though Jennifer and I work together on a daily basis in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, it was not until this conference, when I attended one of Jennifer's presentations that we realized we were both engaged in the work of Bourdieu. I carefully use the expression "engaged in the work of Bourdieu" because, at the time, neither one of us really wanted to put ourselves out there and say, "yeah, I know Bourdieu."

That conference room conversation turned into a field trip planning exercise, one that enabled us to establish our desire for a reading research group and to agree that the size of this reading research group would be exactly two.

At the time, I was unsure as to whether Jennifer felt the same as me in desiring a small, safe haven to share my (un) knowing and my slow emergence as a Bourdieuan theorist, but she was in agreement nonetheless.

One aspect of that conference conversation that I recall quite vividly was our confession to each other that, to this point, most of our Work of Bourdieu-ing (WBg) had been accomplished in the double hermeneutic manner; that is, we read books by people who read books by Bourdieu. For example, we read Michael Grenfell (2008) and Webb, Schirato and Danaher, G. (2002), who read and interpreted the work of Bourdieu. Through these Bourdieu Interpreters (BI), we were able to grasp accessible versions of Bourdieu's ideas and use these sources to locate specific sections of Bourdieu books where we could read more (firsthand). We both decided, during this brief conference conversation, that we were ready to start on page 1 of a book written by Pierre Bourdieu. When we consulted a text on "how to read Bourdieu" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), the authors confirmed our suspicion that "finding an entry into Bourdieu's sprawling work poses the thorny problem of where to start" (p. 261). Due to our intersecting educational interests and our poststructural lenses focussed on issues of reproduction and deconstruction, we decided that the book should be *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* by Bourdieu & Passeron (1990). We met once per month, from October 2010 to June 2011, in coffee shops, our homes, etc.

Already, one of the three research process themes that we will discuss in this paper is emerging—that of the importance of a Theory Support Group (TSG). The feeling of being safe and supported in our reading-research was part of the subtext of this entire journey, even before the journey really began. This theory support group has been an integral aspect of the research and teaching that led us to this point.

4. Making Sense as Methodology

J: The conversational aspect of the research for me has been very helpful, being able to bounce things off of you and get your take on the heavier parts of the book.

K: Well it's like anything else... we use theory in our work almost as if we've always known the theory. It goes back to that question of why we always try to erase the processes in our research' But everybody who is going to use these theories has to go through the process of learning the theory in whatever way they do, whether it's by themselves or with someone else. I think there needs to be a bit more of that learning process visible in research journals.

J: I think so too because this is hard theory. I'm not sure I could have seen it through to the end if I were reading this book by myself, so that's another aspect that's valuable, knowing that I am accountable to you as well.

[K] As the above conversation excerpt suggests, until Jennifer and I began our reading/researching field trips we held the belief that the process of grappling with theory to inform our research was not research in itself. We no longer hold this belief and, in fact, share in this paper our vision for understanding such a collaborative reading/researching process— that is, *making sense*—as qualitative research methodology.

Before proposing *making sense* as research methodology, it seems reasonable to clarify our stance on what we deem methodology to mean. First of all, we feel that methodology needs to be clearly understood as distinct from method. Method, for us, refers predominantly to the tools or techniques that are used to collect data on a particular question or problem, whereas methodology is a philosophical stance that informs and shapes the entire research process. Denzin & Lincoln (1998) situate methodology in the context of research paradigms, describing methodology as that which helps the researcher move "from a paradigm and a research design to the collection of empirical methods" (p. xv). According to Guba & Lincoln (1994), the methodological question of "how can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?" (p. 108) is intimately connected to the ontological question of what is the nature of reality and the epistemological question of what is the relationship between knower and known.

Even with this clarification of a definition for methodology, it can still be challenging to 'label' what is and what is not a methodology. In an attempt to simplify matters, Creswell (2007) proposes there are five overarching qualitative research methodologies: case study, ethnography, phenomenology, narrative, and grounded theory. However, the field of qualitative inquiry is emergent and dynamic, and thus does not readily embrace such a simplistic categorization.

In recent years, researchers have been engaging with, and writing about, arts-based research (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2009), indigenous methodologies (Grande, 2007; Kovach, 2009; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson, 1998) and conversation as methodology (Feldman, 1998), just to name a few.

In many ways, Laurel Richardson's notion of writing as a method of inquiry closely relates to our vision for a methodology of making sense. Richardson (1998) contends that writing is both a method of inquiry—"a way of finding out about yourself and your topic" (p. 345)—and a way of knowing—"a method of discovery and analysis" (p. 345). While our making sense methodology embraces a similar image of how one comes to know in/as research, it also extends into the realm of articulating specific knowledge generation goals and actions achieved through conversation.

In reflecting on the power of conversation, Feldman (1998) offers how "[c]onversations can be a legitimate form of research because they promote the exchange of knowledge and the generation of understanding, and can be configured to be critical inquiry processes" (p. 31). He clearly distinguishes conversation as method (as an interview would be) from conversation as methodology, which he defines as an orientation or stance toward the conduct of inquiry. So as not to confuse just *any* conversation with the enactment of a research methodology, Feldman (1998) proposes that conversations "are inquiry processes when the participants enter conversations for the purposes of exchanging and generating knowledge and understanding, and when people enter into them to make defensible decisions about goals or action" (p. 31).

While making sense as methodology has several points of intersection with conversation as methodology as proposed by Feldman (1998) and writing as a method of inquiry as proposed by Richardson (1998), we firmly believe that making sense goes beyond what either one of these researchers has to offer. In addition, our 'making sense as methodology' also has points of intersection with the 'reflexive turn' in research. There is widespread recognition in qualitative research that "[t]he 'reflexive turn' in the social sciences has contributed towards demystification and greater understanding of theoretically and empirically based knowledge construction processes" (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003, p. 416). While we acknowledge a trace of this 'reflexive turn' in our research methodology, we relate more readily (and ironically) to Bourdieu's concept of epistemic reflexivity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Maton (2003) contrasts the 'usual' reflexive research practices with Bourdieu's conception of reflexivity by describing the 'usual' as "sociological, individualistic, and narcissistic" and Bourdieu's as "epistemological, collective, and objective" (p. 52). We draw on two specific aspects of Bourdieu's epistemic reflexivity, namely 1) the collective rather than the individual; with the collective, for us, being the field of academia in which we are embedded, and 2) the objectifying relation between the knower (the collective field of academia) and the known (the object of analysis in our research, that of Bourdieu's social field theory). To this end, our research methodology takes an '*epistemic* reflexive turn'; that is, rather than being reflexive on the research and data analysis processes, it is reflexive on the epistemological and theoretical framings of the research processes.

Making sense thus involves reading, reflecting, and researching. Independent of each other, we engaged in an initial reading of Bourdieu, employing particular reading strategies such as underlining, making notations in the margins, and circling or starring points of interest, uncertainty, and/or for discussion. When we came together to discuss our reading, we engaged with Bourdieu relationally, with one another and with his ideas. Following each conversation, we independently reflected upon the ideas, insights, and uncertainties raised, revisiting again, this time slightly differently, Bourdieu's theories. This process of making sense informed, and continued to be informed by, the work each of us was doing in our own research in social studies and mathematics education. These three Rs: reading, reflecting, and researching, done relationally with one another, constitute a significant aspect of making sense as research methodology.

[J] Our engagement with the writings and ideas of Bourdieu thus constitutes a process of co-construction of meaning, of "participating in and learning from many dialogues" (Smith, 1999, p.4) with the text, with one another, and with others' readings of Bourdieu. Together, we worked through the ambiguities, uncertainties, and complexities of 'reading' a theory of practice. Our many conversations offer up evidence of this iterative process as we continually relied on each others' readings to clarify and expand our own, moving through these not in a linear way but more circular and fluid, folding backwards and forwards often simultaneously as we came to 'know' Bourdieu (CKB).

While I cannot speak for Kathy, for me this was integral, and without it, I am not sure that I would have continued with what often felt like an overly onerous and time intensive process (Perhaps those of you who have read Bourdieu might also share this perspective!).

What our methodology facilitated for both of us was an opportunity to ‘know’ Bourdieu differently and more deeply than if we were making sense individually and in isolation. We would often dwell with concepts such as Pedagogic Action (PA) and Pedagogic Authority (PAu), offering up our ‘sense’ of these in the context of our own lived experiences and practices, past and present. For me, Kathy’s reading alongside her sharing of lived experiences in light of the theory worked to clarify and solidify my own reading. I was then better able to connect the theories and concepts to my experiences or practices in / of teacher education. Thus, our co-construction was central to this process of ‘making sense’ as research and as means of both unifying and integrating theory and practice. Without exception, throughout our conversations, efforts to unify Bourdieu’s theory with practices in/of teacher education abounded. As such, we describe this as writing *through* our conversations rather than writing *about* our conversations.

5. Research Process Themes

As we engaged in our field trips throughout the year, we audio-recorded each of our conversations. In reviewing these recordings, our making sense methodology enabled us to tease out three critical threads, or research process themes, which resurfaced time and time again throughout the audio recordings. In the section that follows, we take turns reflecting on these three themes, providing examples from the transcripts in each case to illustrate the meaning and context of the theme.

5.1 Theme 1: Theory Support Group

[J] I was struggling with Bourdieu. While I had read many secondary interpretations of his work, my reading of him was limited. I was worried that given the denseness of his writing and my own tentativeness in understanding his big T theories, it would simply be an exercise in frustration. Enter the theory support group (TSG) as a research process theme! Working collaboratively with Kathy to engage in making sense as our research process, we came to enact a theory support group. Often, in and through our conversations of reading Bourdieu, we offered each other encouragement, validation, and confirmation. In the transcripts of our numerous theory support group sessions, there are many instances in which we seek each others’ verification of our own understanding. I would often end my reflections with a tentative, ‘don’t you think?’ or ‘right?’ At one point, as I attempted to make sense of Primary and Secondary Pedagogic Action/Authority, I asked Kathy to rearticulate her earlier point as I had become “all muddled”.

In another instance, we both actually began to believe that our understanding of Bourdieu’s text had reached such a point of comfort for us that we were beginning to find his ideas repetitive. We reassured each other that this was so:

K: Either I'm missing the little nuances or it's extremely repetitive.

J: I thought it was extremely repetitive

K: He writes 40 pages on why the examination is used to perpetuate the dominant culture and to perpetuate the whole notion of legitimacy...

Much like a twelve step support group, we were there for each other as we dwelled in the midst of Bourdieu’s theories of reproduction in education, society and culture, not passing judgement on what we did not know or misunderstood, or understood simplistically; rather, we encouraged each other to deepen our engagement with and corresponding understanding of the theories through conversation and exploration.

5.2 Theme 2: Intersections of Knowledge: Describing and Translating

[K] The second research process theme noticeable throughout our conversations related to the manner in which we connected our new knowledge with prior knowledge. In our *making sense as research* process, we were drawn to connecting Bourdieu’s concepts encountered in his text with other educational concepts and ideas, and to the work of other theorists in the field of education with whom we were already more familiar. Comparing the new ideas we were encountering with the ideas of others helped us work through what we felt was inaccessible Bourdieuan language (iB1); for us, it was a necessary exercise in translation to make us feel that we understood.

Additionally, we felt that this approach of connecting and comparing aptly reflected a constructivist approach to learning—we were building on what we already knew by highlighting intersections between the new and the old. In a sense, our prior knowledge helped anchor us in our new knowledge constructions so that we did not feel like ‘blank slates’ coming into this. This process of making connections to what we already knew gave us some confidence that we were being successful in making meaning out of Bourdieu’s work, even though we knew that, at times, we were being too simplistic (maybe even reductionist) in thinking we could read Bourdieu through the lens of these ‘others.’ In other words, we made sense by highlighting knowledge intersections and translations.

In one conversation, Jennifer made a link from Bourdieu’s concepts of a culture of inculcating and reproduction in education (not troubling the way things are already done) to our knowledge of the history of qualitative research, in its battle for legitimacy as an approach different from what was currently done:

J: Well, if you think of the fight that qualitative researchers had in the early days of qualitative research against the quantitative researchers – ‘well that’s not a legitimate form of research, that’s a fluffy form of research’ because they were trying to do something that was different and potentially disruptive to...

As a second example, consider the following quote where I express my pleasure with the clarity of a passage in Bourdieu’s book as a result of the reading I had previously completed in Grenfell’s (2008) book. I express a sense of confidence because it was possible for me to build directly on what I already knew about habitus, only this time I was directly using a text written by Bourdieu:

K: Some of my favourite parts in here were the three measures of the productivity of pedagogic work, on page 33-34. Basically, that the habitus is durable, transposable, and exhaustible. And probably I liked that because I remember reading it in that Grenfell book and it’s nice to see it in the context of this text. There are actually some things I can pick out as knowing already. There’s not very much of that.

The following excerpts represent the many times that Jennifer and I drew upon our knowledge of other theorists that we had already worked with in our careers as academics and graduate students. They also reflect how our conversations moved outside of Bourdieu’s theories as we sought to affirm our understanding of them.

J: That’s exactly his idea of misrecognition, right? The acceptance that this is how things *should* be because it makes sense. Like Gramsci’s ‘common sense’—it just makes *sense* that’s how it should be. And we don’t want to know what we don’t know.

K: ...while I’m intrigued by these theories I don’t always feel that I read enough to understand them and whether I should be using them piece meal. I have that feeling already from Bourdieu – I’m not talking about social class. I might be talking about the different culture of the mathematics classroom, but I’m not talking about social class so maybe I’m not even supposed to be using Bourdieu’s ideas of habitus and dispositions and the field. And then I thought let me look at Foucault because Foucault talks about these discursive codes of practice and how if they are at odds with one another... but I wrote a proposal for a conference and someone said ‘a very superficial treatment of Foucault for such a seminal piece of work’ and I thought: are you not allowed to ever begin to learn the theory or do you have to already be an expert?

My comments also elucidate our experiences of tension as we wondered how much knowledge of Bourdieu’s theories would be enough; at what point would our knowledge stop being superficial so that the theories might be applied with more depth and confidence in our own work?

At another point in one of our conversations, we attempt to support each other in rationalizing that it is ‘normal’ to gain our understanding of Bourdieu through our own subjective lenses.

J: I cannot seem to marry myself to one theory, I’m a theory shopper I guess, a consumer of theories because I think there are pieces of a variety of different theories that are very useful in making sense of a lot of the things we are concerned about in teacher education and the schools. Most recently I’ve been diving into CRT which kind of exists outside of Bourdieu and Foucault except that I can see the cross over, so one cannot be read in isolation.

K: I wonder if you see the crossovers...I compare it to critical theory and Giroux and ideology and hegemony. So is it my lens that is so limiting that that's how I see the world? Whatever theory I read I'm going to apply it, to look through that lens?

J: That's a good question but we can't *not* read through particular lenses right?

These quotes represent a few illustrative examples of this research theme, but there were many other occurrences throughout our conversations. In particular, there were several more links to Gramsci and notions of common sense; to Giroux and the concept of hegemony; to Joyce King and dysconsciousness; to Foucault and his theories of surveillance and technologies of self; to postcolonial theory and Critical Race Theory (CRT) in terms of what we deem to be accessible, yet still rigorous, theory.

5.3 Theme 3: Reframing: Connecting Bourdieu to our Lived Experiences as Teacher Educators in Mathematics and Social Studies Spaces

[J] Our final research process theme connects Bourdieu to our lived experiences as teacher educators in mathematics and social studies spaces. This is not an isolated theme and is very much embedded in our research methodology of making sense. With particularly complex concepts (for example: Pedagogic Authority, Pedagogic Action, Pedagogic Work, etc), we 'practiced' a process of reframing these in the context of particular experiences we had in our own classrooms or particular encounters with colleagues or students in teacher education spaces – the field of teacher education. Over the course of several months it became obvious that this was a necessary aspect of our making sense of Bourdieu's theories.

For example, during one meeting, Kathy offered the following lived experience as a means of reframing Bourdieu:

K: Well, on a classroom level, on a micro level, teachers who have gone through the system of the competitive, they always have the same tests for everyone, the same forms of assessment. There is only one way of knowing and that's through this testing. You know, I've had my interns in my research ask me 'well how could I give one form of assessment to Student A and another form of assessment to Student B when in the end they both get a 90; how does anyone know that one had a different type of test than another?' So in other words, you need to wear a stamp on your head that says 'I got my 90 through a research project whereas she got her 90 through a timed test' and oh, the timed test, that's more valuable.

The following exchange presents another example of when we worked to understand and contextualize the durability of Bourdieu's concept of habitus by connecting it to our experience working with pre-service teachers in challenging status quo practices:

K: I have a star beside Pedagogic Action...the idea of inculcating through the teacher, and that in turn is a relation to the institution and this in turn is a relation to the language and culture of the dominant class which is...

J: Can we say then that students have habitus because they can be successful within that system?

K: Their habitus is a good match for that whole inculcation process... that's what I would say. And the same thing with the teacher... I'd guess that the teacher is not going to find that it's to his/her advantage to not fit well with what the institution wants... you're banging your head against the wall all the time. The institution has its rules of the game and if a teacher comes into it with different rules because of a habitus formed through other actions, say in teacher ed... if that teacher felt a strong sense of agency then he/she would be able to reshape that field but what generally happens instead is that the field reshapes the teacher so the teacher goes back to the habitus that they're familiar with from that institution. And really, why would these teachers bother because they are quite happy with that comfortable habitus-field fit, right?

J: Right. And that, I think, is why it is so very challenging to disrupt dominant pedagogy... no matter what innovation is being piloted.

There are many such examples throughout our conversations, instances in which the theory of pedagogic work, in service to symbolic violence, became the ways in which the curriculum imparted particular understandings of or engagement with knowledge.

Habitus became the ease with which mathematics education students embraced traditional approaches to teaching and learning mathematics and resisted inquiry based approaches. The work of schooling became the ways in which beginning teachers became re-socialized into dominant modes of teaching and learning at play in schools, etc.

6. Making Sense in/of the Future: Concluding Thoughts

[K] I used to think that reading and making sense of a ‘strong’ theory like Bourdieu’s social field theory was the preamble or preparatory work necessary to being an academic writer and researcher— that is, one just needs to get through it quickly and get on to the things that ‘count’ as an academic (such as publications which *use* that theory). Now that Jennifer and I have spent time reflecting on *making sense as research*, I am content to give it the time that it needs and to count it as research and scholarly work.

In terms of my practices in/of mathematics teacher education, the process has enabled me to rush less through the acts of getting my students to know curriculum and the theory that informs it. My students may still want to spend more time planning lessons and developing units plans, but I want them to spend time getting to know curriculum and dwelling in their own experience of it as both learners and teachers, before just grabbing an outcome (as I would previously have grabbed a Bourdieu quote!) and running with it.

[J] This process of making sense was made possible for me because of its collaborative, relational nature. I can say without hesitation that I would not, nor could have done this work in isolation. Rather, reading relationally with Kathy facilitated my own my willingness to keep coming back to the reading/ideas/theories, my own processes of coming to understanding, my own ‘comfortability’ with Bourdieu’s theories of reproduction in a deeper, more sustained way. While I still have much work to do with respect to reading Bourdieu, I feel better positioned to do this in light of being alongside Kathy.

My own practices of/in teacher education are informed partly through this research process as I reflexively plan for teaching. I am thinking differently about the ways in which I can balance my own need to help my students consider the ways in which their work as teachers and the work of schools are implicated in larger practices of social reproduction along with their desire for exposure to ‘practical’ skills/language of teaching including planning for outcomes and indicators.

Throughout this paper we have highlighted the individual and collaborative processes involved in coming to understand a theory and its connections to educational practice. Our ‘field trips’ were reciprocal sites of support where we described and translated our engagement with Bourdieu’s theories, connected our emerging understanding to our own lived experiences as teacher educators, and grappled with the tensions of what it means to ‘know’ Bourdieu. The methodology of making sense elucidates the interplay between theoretical perspectives, qualitative research methodologies and teacher education research. Satisfied with our initial enactment of making sense (of Bourdieu’s social field theory) as methodology, we have progressed to our next selection: *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1977). As teacher educators and researchers interested in theory for theory’s sake, as well as grounding theory in our own practices in mathematics and social studies teacher education, we see the potential for a good number of ‘field trips’ in our future.

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