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Taking subject knowledge out and putting it back in again? A journey in the company of Michael Young

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Abstract

This paper begins with an account of the author's positive experiences as a student of Michael Young at the Institute of Education in the late-1960s and early-1970s, when 'New Directions' for the sociology of education were emerging under the leadership of Young and others (Young, 1971). This led to a writing partnership between Young and the author in the mid-1970s that produced two edited books (Whitty & Young, 1976; Young & Whitty, 1977), which sought to move beyond the crude binaries of the so-called 'new sociology of education'. The chapter then suggests that Young's subsequent distancing of himself from this work in his insistence on 'bringing knowledge back in' (Young, 2008), and more especially his emphasis on 'powerful knowledge', may have led him to neglect earlier sociological insights concerning the 'knowledge of the powerful'. It concludes with a discussion of Young's somewhat surprising rehabilitation of the work of Bernstein and suggests that, in focusing on the curriculum, Young has sometimes understated the importance of pedagogy in the reproduction or transformation of patterns of educational opportunity.

In September 1968, after studying history as an undergraduate at Cambridge, I arrived at what was then the University of London Institute of Education (ULIE) to train as a history teacher. However, I had already developed an interest in sociology as a result of a course I had taken at Cambridge on 'Theories of the Modern State', which introduced me in some depth to the works of the 'founding fathers' of sociology. And, as a student activist, I became more interested in reading works by such writers as Raymond Williams (1963) and E. P. Thompson (1963) than what I was supposed to be reading for the then rather conventional Historical Tripos. I also developed a specific interest in the sociology of education as result of participating in a Fabian Society study group that was exploring the relationship between social background and educational achievement and drawing on empirical studies, such as those of Jean Floud *et al.* (1956).

Soon after I arrived at ULIE, I remember reacting to a dismissive comment about sociology from another PGCE student there by trying to explain what 'we' as sociologists did. This early self-identification as a 'sociologist' also meant that I spent at least as much time at 2 Taverton Street, where sociology was located at the time, as I did in the history department. It was there that I was probably first introduced to Michael F. D. Young and I got to know him better when I was taught by him on the sociology of education option. He encouraged me to think about doing further study in the field, which led me to enrol on the part-time Academic Diploma course in 1970 and the full-time MA in the Sociology of Education in 1972. Meanwhile, I had begun teaching history and social studies at a comprehensive school and I was increasingly keen to understand why the change that was so obviously needed in overcoming embedded inequalities was so difficult to achieve. I hoped further study in sociology, with Michael Young and his colleagues, might help with this.

The 'old' and 'new' sociologies of education

When I started studying sociology of education in earnest, I realised that there was much more to it than the sort of work that I had read as a member of the Fabian Society study group in Cambridge. That tradition's identification of 'early leaving' and 'wastage of talent' as both an economic and a social justice issue influenced the Labour Party in its espousal of comprehensive secondary education and this apparent link between academic work and political action excited me. But I arrived at ULIE long after Jean Floud had departed and discovered that Michael Young and others were doing work that self-consciously distinguished itself from the 'old' sociology of education of Halsey *et al.* (1961) and heralded important 'new directions' for the subject I was about to study (Young, 1971).

As I have suggested elsewhere (Whitty, 1985), the 'old' sociology of education of the 1950s and 1960s could be seen as largely concerned with mapping social inequalities in education or exploring how the cultural features of working class homes and communities militated against children from such backgrounds succeeding in school (Craft, 1970). Its policy focus was therefore on how those 'deficits' might be compensated for in order that children from such backgrounds could succeed. While the school system, and particularly its selective nature, was seen to be implicated in this wastage of talent, relatively little attention was paid to the content of schooling itself. In many of the studies at that time, there was a confident assumption that what we took for granted as education was a worthwhile 'good' in itself and that it was in the interests of both individuals and the national economy that they should receive more of it. In other words, the key issue was access to schooling.

The 'new' sociology of education, which was inspired by Young's book on 'new directions', seemed to reverse that argument. It suggested that the crucial determinant of who succeeded and who failed was the nature of what they encountered in school and that it was therefore hardly surprising that middle class children succeeded because they understood the culture of the school, which was essentially consonant with their own. This seemed to justify various forms of 'progressive' or 'child-centred' pedagogy or alternative curricula closer to the experience of working class children in the terms of which they could succeed.

For some of Young's philosopher colleagues at ULIE, this seemed to embrace a dangerous 'relativism' and, for them, *Knowledge and Control* was 'knowledge out of control' (Pring, 1972). Writing about this spat between sociologists and philosophers in my own MA dissertation in 1973, I discussed the views of David Gorbitt (1972), then one of Young's most vocal supporters and the person who (rather than Young) coined the term 'new sociology of education'. I applauded Gorbitt's advocacy of the need to subject to sociological examination the processes by which particular curricula become institutionalised and justified, but I expressed some scepticism about his conclusion that having laid bare the ideological underpinnings of what was seen as a dominant reproductive curriculum, it would be a simple matter to substitute an emancipatory curriculum. Indeed, I characterised Gorbitt's position and that of other phenomenologically oriented new sociologists of education as 'naïve possibilitarianism'. However, I was never entirely sure how far Young himself signed up to the radical conclusions of his followers in the new sociology of education. And I

am not sure that, even in a brief flirtation with Merleau-Ponty in ‘taking sides against the probable’, Young himself could really have been described as a ‘naïve possibilitarian’.

Nor indeed was he unambiguously guilty as charged by philosophers at the time of arguing that reality is ‘nothing but a social construction’ or that ‘all knowledge is relative’ and ‘criteria of validity and truth ... are ... open to socio-historical relativization’ (Pring, 1972, p.25). I actually suggested that Young’s own commitment to relativisation, such as it was, might be viewed not as a statement of an epistemological position, but as a procedural device for subverting taken-for-granted assumptions about the seemingly absolute status of the knowledge which had come to be institutionalised in the school curriculum (see Whitty, 1974, 1985). A statement, to which he subscribed a little later explicitly stated that a commitment to “calling into question ‘what might be taken as education’ indicates not a move to relativism, but an engagement in, and an invitation to the reader to engage in, the ongoing construction and exploration of what is to be questioned” (Beck *et al.*, 1976, p.1).

My own argument at the time was somewhat different. I was concerned about sociology of education deserting its own core territory, both conceptual and empirical, for a turf war with philosophers over epistemology. Not that I regarded knowledge, and certainly not what I termed school knowledge, as a no go area for sociologists, but those early encounters did not seem especially enlightening or productive. I wrote that I did not believe that the value of a sociological approach to school knowledge was entirely dependent upon the resolution of epistemological questions, were that indeed even possible. Nor was their significance for the selection of knowledge in the curriculum always obvious at the time. And I went on to say that, while such questions are by no means unimportant, my own view was that, even if sociologists had been correct to stray into the field of epistemology, traditionally the preserve of the philosophers, they had been less wise in deserting some of the territory more conventionally that of the sociologist.

For me, the phenomenological version of the new sociology of education (what I have subsequently termed NSoE1) failed to recognise that, although the curriculum as it existed was but one of a number of possibilities, each of which might interact differently with the culture of the home, its dominant form served particular social functions that might not be so easily overturned. Similar arguments were put by Sharp and Green (1975) and, by the late 1970s, the second phase of the so-called ‘new’ sociology of education in England (what I have termed NSoE2) came to be dominated by neo-Marxist approaches influenced by the American writers Bowles and Gintis (1976). In complete contrast to the possibilitarianism of the earlier phase, some of this neo-Marxist work seemed to deny any real possibility of change from within the education system, whose nature was seen as structurally determined by the needs of the capitalist economy.

Indeed, it seemed that everyday professional practices, even if carried out by well-meaning professionals, merely sustained broader structures of oppression whose origins lay elsewhere. Ethnographic studies of everyday practices in schools and classrooms at this time were sometimes rather less pessimistic, but even pupil agency was often seen to contribute to social and cultural reproduction, as writers like Willis

(1976) and Corrigan (1979) demonstrated how working class pupils actively participated in their own positioning in the class structure.

Both phases of the 'new' sociology of education were seen as dangerous by rightist critics, particularly in terms of their potential impact on teachers. An Open University course on *Schooling and Society* came in for particular criticism in this respect (Gould, 1977), while Dawson (1981) argued that sociology of education, initially 'ineffectual' but no longer 'harmless', should "be cut out of courses for student teachers ... to improve the intellectual and moral environment in which would-be teachers are taught" (p. 60). However, in reality, the sociology of education's influence on policy and practice at that time was probably much less significant than either its advocates hoped or its critics feared.

The sociology of education policy

Michael Young has rightly pointed out to me that our own joint work at that time (Whitty & Young, 1976; Young & Whitty, 1977) did not fit neatly into either the possibilitarian or the deterministic approaches characterised above. Morgan (2014) summarises that work as warning against political economy views of education that offer little scope for teachers to work towards transformation, but also as stressing that there are limits to schooling's autonomy. Importantly, he suggests, we argued that education alone would not provide the means to progressive social change, which required a broad social movement to which radical teachers' struggles needed to be linked.

My own substantive interest shifted somewhat in the 1980s towards education policy and into empirical studies of education policy making. During this period, English education became increasingly overtly politicised. Elected in 1979, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government introduced neo-conservative policies of state control and prescription in relation to the National Curriculum and national assessment, whilst also encouraging neo-liberal market forces through parental choice and school autonomy. The main focus of my work during these years was trying to make sense of these apparently contradictory developments in sociological terms (Whitty, 1989; Whitty *et al.*, 1998).

The sociology of education in Britain became dominated by the sociology of education policy at this time and I was by no means the only sociologist of education who took this route. Although it had already been a feature of the work I myself had undertaken at King's College London in the early 1980s, the sociology of education policy soon came to be identified with a group that grew up around my successor there, Stephen Ball, including Diane Reay, Meg Maguire and Sharon Gewirtz. Another group joined me at Bristol Polytechnic where I headed up the Education Faculty in the second part of that decade.

Within this work the longstanding focus in British sociology of education on working class 'failure' remained evident, although the way of approaching it was often via an attempt to understand how education policy, whatever its claims, has in practice consistently favoured middle class children (for example, Power *et al.*, 2003; Ball, 2003; Reay, 2008). In some ways, this was rather less novel than we sometimes claimed (Power and Whitty, 2006), as this phenomenon was central to what had been

demonstrated by the political arithmetic tradition (Halsey *et al.*, 1980). Ball (2011) has similarly pointed out that *Education and the Working Class* (Jackson and Marsden, 1962) “anticipated Bourdieu’s point that we need a theory of advantage as well as disadvantage” (p. 960). What was perhaps more novel at this time was the emphasis, particularly by Ball himself and his colleagues, on middle class strategies for maintaining their advantage.

Even so, as Young has pointed out, the debate between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ sociologies, “which seemed all-important to many of us at the time”, was in large part “an example of generational conflict within the academic community” (Young, 2008, p. 220). The same might be said of the lack of enthusiasm on some of our parts for the post-modernist perspectives that gained currency within the sociology of education in the 1990s, although it also created different generation units among scholars of the same generation (Hill *et al.*, 2002). It may also be, as Young (2008) hints, that the ‘extreme relativism’ of those perspectives reminded some of us of the shortcomings of the first phase of the ‘new’ sociology of education (NSoE1).

During much of this period, Young himself worked on issues associated with post-compulsory education, where his encounters with vocational education and qualifications frameworks raised concerns that would inform his subsequent work on the role of knowledge and skills in the curriculum. We had relatively little academic contact at that time, although we remained friends and indeed, from 1992 onwards, colleagues at what was by now the Institute of Education, University of London (IOE).

Rethinking the knowledge question

The New Labour government, first elected in 1997, emphasised neo-liberal policies of parental choice and school diversity as the key to educational improvement and closing the social class attainment gap (Whitty, 2008; 2009). Its stance on curriculum and pedagogy was less clear, although towards the end of its tenure the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) seemed to favour a tentative move away from a largely subject-based National Curriculum introduced under Margaret Thatcher (QCA, 2009). In this, it was heavily influenced by the recent writings of IOE philosopher, John White (2006).

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government elected in 2010 under the leadership of David Cameron continued to promote a neo-liberal agenda with its policies on Academies and Free Schools. However, neo-conservative policies, reminiscent of the Thatcher era, experienced a revival at that time and the nature of school knowledge was put firmly back on the policy agenda. Michael Gove, who served as the Conservative Secretary of State for Education in the Coalition government from 2010 to 2014, took the view that what working class children needed to succeed was exposure to the traditional curriculum. His abolition of the QCA and the introduction of his so-called English Baccalaureate reinforced the role of traditional subjects in the curriculum and reflected his belief that it was an indictment of recent educational history “that just around 16 per cent manage to succeed in getting to secure a C pass or better at GCSE in English, Maths, the sciences, a language and history or geography” (Gove, 2011). A whole series of other reforms to school examinations sought to roll back any tendency towards a skills-

based curriculum and ‘progressive’ approaches to teaching and assessment. Gove’s allies even accused Ofsted, the English schools inspectorate, of favouring progressive teaching methods (see, for example, Christodoulou, 2013).

In a lecture while in Opposition, Gove had cited the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci to support his view that educational methods which called themselves ‘progressive’ were actually regressive in social terms. He argued that “with the abandonment of subject disciplines, the poorer lose out ... Richer parents who can afford it access specific subject teaching earlier rather than later with the most successful prep schools introducing discrete subjects taught by subject specialists before pupils go on to secondary education” (Gove, 2008). Not surprisingly, Gove was also an admirer of E. D. Hirsch (1999).

Meanwhile, the sociology of education itself went back to the ‘knowledge question’, but in very different terms from those it employed in the 1970s. In particular, Michael Young, whose earlier work had been seen as supportive of progressive approaches to education, now distanced himself from such an interpretation of his position. Rather than taking the methodological get-out I offered him, Young himself returned with vigour to the knowledge question directly, now more firmly rejecting his earlier flirtation with relativism and adopting instead a ‘social realist’ epistemological stance.

He now questioned whether subject-based curricula did only favour middle class children and suggested that project- or theme-based curricula, which had been thought to better suit working class children, were actually more socially regressive than the traditional curriculum. Thus, his *Bringing Knowledge Back In* (Young, 2008a) was a critique of progressivism and constructivism, and indeed of the ‘new’ sociology of education itself, at least as powerful as any offered by Conservative politicians. Even though his more recent work also identified the limitations of the Cameron government’s position on the curriculum (Young, 2011; Young and Lambert, 2014), Young’s apparent volte face has been warmly welcomed by neo-conservative critics of progressive education such as Christoloudou (2013).

Young now considers that the distinctive role of schools is to transmit knowledge. While his earlier work had critiqued what counted as knowledge and who had access to it, he now stressed the necessity for what he called ‘powerful knowledge’, as this is the knowledge needed to progress in the world (Young, 2009). He argued that “the everyday local knowledge that pupils bring to school ... can never be the basis for the curriculum [because] it cannot provide the basis for any generalisable principles” (Young, 2009, p. 16). He further suggested that ‘powerful’ knowledge was especially important for working class students who may not have access to it at home, arguing that “the knowledge issue is both an epistemological issue and a social justice issue” (Young, 2008b, p. 32; see also Young and Lambert, 2014). He was therefore concerned that some apparently progressive curricular offers open to such students, including too many vocational courses, lacked both substance and currency. From Australia and North America, Wheelahan (2010, 2013) has argued a similar case and Beck (this volume) attributes first usage of the term ‘powerful knowledge’ in this context to Wheelahan rather than Young.

I have sometimes teased Michael Young by pointing out that his current position is not only rather close to that of some neo-conservatives but also (and this is perhaps more palatable to him) reminiscent of the arguments put by two of the groups who were his major antagonists when I was a student of his in the 1970s. At least superficially, it appears similar to the position of philosophers like Paul Hirst (1969), who then argued for a curriculum based on ‘forms of knowledge’, either for epistemological reasons or because in a stratified society there are principled and expedient reasons for giving all pupils access to high status knowledge. Young also now seems much closer to the materialist critics of the ‘relativism’ associated with the phenomenological version of the new sociology of education that emerged from his early work (Young, 1971). The Marxist historian Brian Simon (1976), for example, feared that its relativist ideological position would deny the working class access to knowledge, culture and science.

My own academic relations with Young have sometimes been distant, and occasionally even strained, partly because I have not been prepared to go as far as him in either direction, although thankfully this has not seriously impaired our enduring friendship. Morgan (2014), in his sympathetic account of Young’s developing thinking, suggests that I was always more strongly influenced than Young by political economy perspectives and, in my recent comments, less inclined to reject key tenets of the new sociology. This is probably the case.

I think it is at least arguable that Young has moved too easily from questioning the assumption of the superiority of academic knowledge to assuming its superiority himself. The connection between academic knowledge and powerful knowledge needs specifying more clearly and initially there was a notable lack of clarity about whether its power had to do with factual content, concepts or knowledge structures and their associated recognition and realisation rules – or what. This has been only partially clarified in later discussions of different kinds of knowledge (e.g. Young and Muller, 2014a; Young and Muller, 2106). Furthermore, I am not sure where Young stands on Maton’s claim ‘that “powerful knowledge” comprises not one kind of knowledge but rather mastery of how different knowledges are brought together and changed through semantic waving and weaving’ (Maton, 2014, p. 181).

However, while these questions about ‘powerful knowledge’ and what that means are important, I am convinced that consideration of them should not involve abandoning Young’s and the new sociology of education’s earlier pre-occupation with the ‘knowledge of the powerful’. This tension between these two ideas is reflected in an ongoing debate about whether the curriculum is the embodiment of ruling class culture, where Young and his philosopher critic, John White (2010), seem to have moved in opposite directions. Yet both ideas remain important.

My own key concern here is that we should not lose sight of some important empirical questions about the social processes by which particular curricula become institutionalised and justified – and by whom and for whom. For me, the core sociological issue about knowledge and the curriculum is about how school knowledge is constructed, selected, organised, represented and distributed – and with what effects. This is crucial to understanding how knowledges become powerful

in some contexts and not others. Following Bernstein (1996), we need to understand how and why knowledge is recontextualised in what recontextualising contexts by what recontextualising rules and for what purposes, and how it enters into relationships with other knowledges, including pupils' knowledge of everyday life and teachers' professional knowledge. Bernstein himself remained interested in the nature of the 'relay' as well as what was 'relayed' (Bernstein, 2000). This makes Young's current espousal of Bernstein in support of his own position particularly interesting and, in some ways, problematic.

The return to Basil Bernstein

As was obvious to any of us involved with the sociology/policy studies departments at IOE from the early 1970s onwards, intellectual and personal relations between Michael Young and Basil Bernstein were often difficult. Indeed, Young himself has written about their 'differences' in later years (Young 2008a, p. 220). Yet, particularly in the years since Bernstein's death in 2000, Young has reengaged with Durkheimian perspectives in sociology and cited Bernstein in support of his own current approach to the role of knowledge in the school curriculum and in professional education. I too have returned to Bernstein's work in recent years, employing some of his key concepts to help explain why it has proved so difficult for working class children to succeed in English schools and also to clarify issues about the role of curriculum and pedagogy in educational success and failure (Whitty *et al.*, 1994; Whitty, 2010).

In work of direct relevance to Young's current position on the school curriculum, Bernstein (1977, 1996) recognised that the idea that simply weakening boundaries between home and school would of itself make a significant difference to working class success in school, as seemed to be implied by NSoE1, was both empirically and theoretically difficult to sustain. Furthermore, his later work on knowledge structures questioned both the possibility and the desirability of collapsing such boundaries (Bernstein, 1999, 2000).

Even in an early article, Bernstein argued that education must involve the introduction of children to the universalistic meanings of public forms of thought (Bernstein, 1970). He certainly had little sympathy with writers like Nell Keddie, one of Young's close collaborators in NSoE1, who seemed to suggest that there was no need to induct all children into mainstream 'bodies of knowledge', because "all cultures – class and ethnic – [had] their own logics which [were] capable of grappling with ... abstract thought" (Keddie, 1973, p. 18). To that extent, Bernstein's position was certainly highly consistent with Young's present one. On the other hand, Bernstein also urged teachers to forge greater connections between school knowledge and everyday knowledge, and take into account children's experience in the family and community, something that might seem at variance with Young's position.

However, Young is probably right to surmise that their positions on these issues are not that far apart. Firstly, I suspect that, despite some ambiguity in one of his papers, Bernstein was making a pedagogic rather than an epistemological point, and would have supported the position of Fantini and Weinstein (1968), who argued that "a curriculum for the disadvantaged must *begin* as closely as possible to the pupils' direct experience [because] without such an approach, the abstract cannot be attained"

(p. 347, my emphasis). Secondly, although in his initial return to the knowledge question, Young could be seen as downplaying the local and experiential elements of education, and even the importance of pedagogy, he subsequently clarified his position, saying that “while pedagogy necessarily involves the teacher in taking account of the non-school knowledge that her/his pupils bring to school, the curriculum does not” (Young, 2010, p. 25; see also Young and Lambert, 2014).

Nevertheless, in my view, some of the key challenges in giving disadvantaged pupils access to powerful knowledge – and giving them meaningful and critical purchase on their everyday lives, as I put it back in the days of NSoE (Gleeson and Whitty, 1976) – are pedagogic as much as curricular and it is important that Young and his colleagues (and indeed Gove and his colleagues) address this part of the social justice agenda more fully in the future. Although Young himself discusses both curriculum and pedagogy, and does recognize what he calls the ‘pedagogical challenge’, his discussion of pedagogy remains limited in comparison with Bernstein’s, possibly because of his felt need to redress the balance from his earlier work (Young, 2008b).

Young has also returned to Bernstein in the context of his very recent work on the education of the professions, where he has begun to develop a theory of what we might call ‘powerful professional knowledge’. Here Young takes issue with a tendency in the past 30 years or so to move away from the idea that preparation for the professions requires initiation into received public forms of knowledge developed in the academy and towards attaching greater value to trans-disciplinary and applied knowledges developed in non-university contexts, including the workplace and the community. With his current collaborator, Johan Muller, he is therefore critical of the work of Gibbons on Mode 2 knowledge and of Schon and others, who place ‘reflective practice’ at the heart of professional education (Young and Muller, 2014b; 2016).

Young and Muller question the shift away from what Bernstein calls ‘singulars’ (pure disciplines) and even from ‘regions’ (multi- and inter-disciplinary applied fields like medicine and education) to ‘generics’, which they see as horizontal discourses that lack the structure of disciplines and treat knowledge as infinitely pliable for different local and context-dependent purposes. Hordern (2016), who takes a similar position, even implies that they somehow constitute ‘fake’ knowledge that lacks the ‘inherent value’ of disciplinary knowledge forms (p.367). This charge resonates with Bernstein’s view that connections between the world of practice and the inherent structures of disciplined knowledge get lost in ‘generic modes’ (e.g. through a focus on ‘core’ or ‘functional’ skills). This, in turn, can make such knowledge open to manipulation by governments and employers and potentially destroy the identities (and autonomy) that professionals traditionally acquire through immersion in disciplinary knowledge. It thereby facilitates a shift from professional education to professional training, which may at least as well be undertaken ‘on the job’ as in the academy.

Even if the arguments for a knowledge-led approach to schooling are accepted, there is no reason, of course, why the same design principles should necessarily be applied to professional education. Furthermore, as with ‘powerful knowledge’ itself, there are questions about in what sense ‘powerful professional knowledge’ is ‘powerful’. Traditionally, professional knowledge has as often been esoteric knowledge that

merely distinguishes its possessors from others as it has been knowledge with greater predictive power or greater practical effectivity. Thus, it is certainly a field where Young's earlier critique of the curriculum reflecting and protecting the 'sacred' 'knowledge of the powerful' has applied. Beck and Young (2008) themselves mention that Talcott Parsons once described the American Medical Association as a predatory conspiracy against society, although they also suggest that the idea of the 'inner dedication' associated with traditional models of medical education is 'more than a self-serving myth' (p. 188).

Clegg (2016), who is herself sympathetic to the social realist position of Young and Muller, suggests that their Bernsteinian roots nevertheless blind them to the importance of 'regional knowledge' in two senses – one drawn from the Bernsteinian sense of knowledge regions, the other referring to knowledge generated outside the academy and indeed outside the 'global north'. She points to the 'contextual nature of professional practice' and, though critical of 'voice discourses' in some respects, insists that new actors and social movements beyond the academy 'can and do challenge academic knowledge' (p. 457). In a sense, then, her argument too reminds us of the continuing importance of Young's 1970s' concern with the question of 'whose knowledge?'

Finally, even if Young and Muller are right to reassert the importance of initiation into disciplinary knowledge in professional contexts, a key challenge in professional fields (and arguably even more so than in the case of schooling) is to establish precisely how this knowledge articulates with other knowledge forms and how it can thereby have an impact on practice. Thus, there is again a crucial pedagogical element to this. How can disciplinary knowledge and other external knowledges be brought together with professionals' reflective practice and practical theorising in professional arenas to produce really powerful professional knowledge and learning? In turn, how might this have the potential to impact on the life chances of working class children, which, as we saw earlier, British sociology of education has always had as one of its core concerns? These are issues John Furlong and I are currently pursuing in relation to teacher education (Furlong and Whitty, forthcoming) and I am hoping that Michael Young will want to accompany us on this next stage of the journey.

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