DEAD-LINES: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERACY, TEACHERS' EMBODIED PRACTICES AND SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY IN THREE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

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A functional school is characterized by 'systematic, formalized learning and teaching' (Christie 1998:285), where teachers are required to contribute to the school culture by managing seemingly mundane, often invisible, ordinary tasks. However, this is not the case in many South African schools. We argue that these invisible practices are an important part of teacher habitus and the ways in which teachers' embody these mundane practices requires more nuanced investigation. We contend that literacy underpins many of these practices affecting levels of functionality.

We draw together the work of Foucault (1977) and Bourdieu (1990) to try to understand how disciplinary writing practices are embodied as part of teachers' 'bureaucratic habitus' (Webb et al. 2000) in three high schools in the Western Cape. Data was gathered from a four year school intervention project based at the Schools Development Unit (SDU), at UCT. The data set comprises teacher and management interviews, student focus groups, school and class observations and school documents. A thematic content analysis identified instances of disciplinary writing and bureaucratic habitus. This was then recategorised into two categories: textbook management and time following Jansen's (2005) argument that they are mismanaged and require tracking.

Our approach to literacy is located in a socio-cultural paradigm. Textual practices are shaped by communities in unanticipated ways and affected by material and social relations (Luke 2008). To understand these practices we draw on Foucault's work on power. We argue that one technique of disciplinary power, disciplinary writing, is a necessary part of teacher habitus. Bourdieu's work enables us to show how 'durable dispositions or tendencies to think and act in certain ways' (1977:39) are transported across fields often resulting in diminished access to quality education.

We show how the 'power of writing' fails or succeeds due to poor 'documentary administration' (Foucault 1977). We compare schools' practices for managing student latecoming focusing particularly on one school where capturing students in a 'network of writing' (Foucault 1977) resulted in shifts in teacher and student habitus. The controversial issue of textbook delivery and access (Chisholm 2013) reveals how the influence of overlapping fields and poor record keeping compromises learning as students internalise messages that textbooks have little value. When school functionality is linked to student performance, teachers' careful enactment of literacy practices required for a bureaucratic habitus have long term consequences for students.