

The role of professional learning communities in facilitating teachers' pedagogical adaptation and change

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Abstract

This article draws on a two-year PLC process to explore the role of professional learning communities (PLCs) in facilitating teachers' pedagogical adaptation and change. Situated within the context of the current South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which is described as tightly scripted and regulated, this article argues, drawing on Nancy Fraser's conceptualisation of justice, that there is a need for teachers to dialogue about ways in which the pedagogical process can include ethical concerns of recognition of student cultural knowledge and a representation of diverse social-cultural groups in the process of knowledge redistribution, and suggests that PLCs hold the potential to mediate this process. Drawing on Bourdieu's thinking tools, this article conceptualises teachers' pedagogical adaptation and change via the PLC process, as a form of 'habitus engagement' that engages with the teachers' firmly held pedagogical dispositions, their 'pedagogical habitus' which over time has acquired a depth of complexity that is difficult to shift.

Introduction

Situated in South Africa, this article discusses the role of professional learning communities (PLCs) in changing or adapting teachers' pedagogy in consonance with a socially just teaching orientation. The discussion for this article draws from a two-year PLC process where teachers from different school contexts collaborated together to find ways to conceptually and pragmatically shift and change their pedagogy towards a more socially just teaching orientation (Fataar & Feldman, 2016). The teachers, who were mostly serving students from low-income areas, were invited to participate in an on-going dialogical process of a PLC to interrogate their current teaching practices to find ways to shift, adapt or change their pedagogies to include

Fraser's notion of justice in their teaching orientation. Fraser emphasises the need to consider a recognition of students' social-cultural constructions of identity and student participation within the redistribution of school knowledge. This entails teachers finding ways in which they can create opportunities for students to engage in activities and dialogue that draw the students' social-cultural knowledge into the school curriculum knowledge, i.e. CAPS, as well as involving the students in an engagement with wider social worlds.

In the first year, five teachers from different school contexts committed to the PLC process. During the second year one teacher from the first year remained in the PLC and was joined by six teachers from three different school contexts. The focus of the PLC discussions over the two-year period was not aimed at working outside of, or undermining the CAPS framing, but rather finding ways within the current CAPS system to generate an enriched, socially just teaching environment (Feldman & Fataar, 2014). The PLC was based on a pedagogical perspective aimed at working against the deterministic orientation associated with a scripted curriculum towards providing a platform for the teachers to explore the spaces of intervention and possibilities of adapted pedagogy in order to promote more productive student educational engagement.

The current South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which is described as regulated, prescriptive and externally controlled in its implementation approach, has tended to reduce teaching to a scripted pedagogy that expects teachers to teach to the test in a climate of standardised systemic testing intended to improve the quality of education in schools (Ramatlapana & Makonye, 2012). Fataar (2015) argues that this policy discourse, that has dominated current educational developments, has eroded teacher autonomy and leaves little space to stimulate and meaningfully engage students in their learning. This article suggests, therefore, that given the current curriculum framing and positioning of teachers, there is a need to instantiate a different, more socially just pedagogical orientation in teachers' classroom practices and suggests that the dialogical PLC process holds the potential to mediate a change towards a more engaging form of pedagogy that includes all students in the learning process.

The article draws on Bourdieu's thinking tools to consider teachers' pedagogical adaptation and change, which is conceptualised as a form of 'habitus engagement' (described below) that engages with the teachers' firmly

held pedagogical identities (Feldman & Fataar, 2014). Habitus engagement suggests that any adaptation or change in the teachers' pedagogy must contend with teachers' embodied pedagogical dispositions from their initial teacher training and subsequent educational fields they have inhabited. I describe these embodied pedagogical dispositions which have formed over time as the teachers' pedagogical habitus, and which have acquired a depth of complexity that is difficult to shift. I suggest, therefore, that given the current South African school context and the CAPS scripted pedagogical framing, PLCs can provide a platform to support on-going deliberate conversations that engage with the durability of the teachers' embodied pedagogical habitus to include new pedagogical possibilities that involve a more enriched and socially just teaching orientation.

South African schooling context

The current South African curriculum policy reform, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) that was implemented in March 2011 is based on a mode of teaching that includes strong classification and framing that makes curricula knowledge visible and explicit to all students (Bernstein, 1975). The CAPS was implemented in response to an educational system that was described as exacerbating, rather than ameliorating, inequality in student educational outcomes, particularly in working class communities (Jansen & Christie, 1999; Christie, 2008; Fataar, 2010). In other words, it was based on the plausible argument that education in South Africa's democratic post-apartheid school system was failing the students who needed it the most, i.e. students from working-class homes and communities. Maringe and Moletsane (2015, p.348 citing Weeks, 2012) argue that not only is the educational system failing our students, three quarters of South Africa's schools can officially be described as dysfunctional, and are not serving the purposes for which they are meant. Thus, South African schooling remains precariously unsatisfactory for the majority of learners and the education system can be described as resembling a "two nation or two economies state" (Fleisch, 2008, p.1). On the one hand, schooling takes place in former white schools that are well-resourced and provide a decent quality of education to white, coloured and black children of the middle classes, while a second system, which is for the most part poorly resourced with a poor infrastructure, caters for children (mostly black African and coloured learners) from poor working class townships, rural areas and informal settlements (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015).

In response therefore to the immense diversity and on-going inequality found in the South African schooling system, the CAPS was implemented with the aim of shifting the curriculum policy focus to a controlled transfer of knowledge and learning with the aim of attempting to meet the basic educational needs of all learners and, in particular, those in impoverished circumstances.

Ramatlapana and Makonye (2012) and Msibi and Mchunu (2013) criticise CAPS for being a pre-packaged curriculum that restricts teacher autonomy and professionalism. The emphasis on the use of workbooks, text books and a tightly scripted curriculum designed ostensibly to improve the educational quality of teaching in schools (Spren & Vally, 2010), has produced an educational regime that demands uniformity in curriculum implementation across South African schools which is strictly monitored by governmental officials (Ramatlapana & Makonye, 2012). CAPS is further accompanied by a results-driven assessment regime that requires Annual National Assessments (ANAs) to be written by all schools in Grades 3, 6, 9 as well as a National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination at the end of students' twelve years of formal schooling (Department of Basic Education, 2016). The CAPS, as a policy orientation, has therefore resulted in a "preponderance of policy discursivity that has had pernicious consequences for teachers' relative autonomy" and arguably leaves little pedagogical space for an enriched and critical perspective in education or an opportunity for socially engaging pedagogy to be established (Fataar, 2012, p.57).

It is within this predominantly narrow focus to teaching and learning in schools, as is currently packaged in South Africa's curriculum policy approach that I argue for the role of PLCs to support teachers dialoguing about ways in which they can adapt and change their teaching practices to include a recognition and representation of students' diverse social-cultural groups in the process of knowledge selection and knowledge redistribution. This approach, within the South African schooling context, builds on Fataar's (2015) argument that the current narrow scripting of the school curriculum fails to leverage a rich curriculum and pedagogical platform that accords schools and teachers the necessary conceptual space to engage students in productive learning. A pedagogically just orientation, therefore, requires that we find ways to bridge the gap between student learning and the school's functional and pedagogical orientations by placing student subjectivities and their lifeworld knowledges and literacies at the centre of teachers'

pedagogical repertoires and their curriculum engagement with their students (Fataar, 2015). Christie notes:

the challenge is not to view what exists as inevitable and unchanging – and not to underestimate the task of changing what exists. The task is to keep envisaging alternatives, to keep challenging with new ideas, and to keep pressing against the boundaries of common sense towards something better. The task is always to hold an ethical position on education, which entails a commitment to continuously thinking about how we may best live with others in the world we share. As educators our task is to enrich debates from within educational discourses (2008, p.216).

This article, therefore, suggests that the dialogical and on-going conversations of PLCs, as a form of habitus engagement that engages with and challenges the teachers' embodied pedagogical dispositions, plays a crucial role in challenging teachers to find ways to enrich the teaching and learning environment by adapting and changing the manner in which they develop and implement lesson units. This combines Fataar's (2015) challenge to create classroom practices that leverage the pedagogies necessary for productive school engagement for all students and Christie's (2008) invitation to continually press against the boundaries of the status quo towards something different, something better.

The role of professional learning communities in adapting and changing practice

Professional learning communities (PLCs) can be described as a learning space in which “teachers work together and engage in continual dialogue to examine practice and student performance and to develop and implement more effective instruction practice . . . teachers learn about, try out and reflect on new practices in their specific context, sharing their individual knowledge and expertise” (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009, p.3). PLCs are fundamentally about professional and collective teacher learning with a specific focus on problematising the learning needs and outcomes of the students (Stoll & Louis, 2007; Katz & Earl, 2010; Brodie, 2013). Central to the learning process in a PLC is the on-going dialogue that focuses on teacher development and improved student learning. Senge (1994) makes a distinction between discussion and dialogue, stating that, while discussion is intended to provide a space for the voicing of viewpoints, dialogue goes beyond individual understanding and allows the participants to gain insights

that they would not have been able to achieve individually. PLC work is thus enhanced by the collaboration of the PLC members dialoguing together around the PLC's focus of inquiry.

A crucial element within all PLCs includes having a clear organisational purpose or focus that the community collectively enquires into (Brodie, 2013). A challenging focus is one that requires teachers to reconceptualise and rethink their existing practices, challenge taken-for-granted assumptions and make adaptations or changes in their practice based specifically on the needs of their particular students within the context of their school. The intention of PLC work is to build collaborative learning communities where relationships and supportive conditions can be used to assist teachers to shift from the traditional isolation which is often found in schools, to that of a more community-based culture of learning. The value of the PLC lies in its focus both on process (how we teach and students learn) and product (or the outcomes) of the learning process. Research indicates that there is a measurable difference in student achievement in schools where teachers form PLCs and place student learning at the centre of their focus and inquiry with an unrelenting attention to successful student learning (Stoll & Louis, 2007).

By way of providing practical examples of how the dialogical engagement of the PLC holds the potential to shift and change the way in which teachers engage students in the learning process, I offer two examples that emanated from our PLC dialogue and related classroom activity; one is from a Grade 6 English class and the second is from a Grade 6 Geography class. The focus of the PLC's conversations centred on problematising ways in which the PLC teachers could enrich school learning opportunities by inviting students into meaningful participatory educational experiences that both recognised student subjectivities and enabled a representation of the diverse social-cultural student groups in the process of knowledge selection. In order to facilitate this approach to learning in a Grade 6 English class, one teacher chose to negotiate, based on the CAPS requirements for the term, a 'theme' that would guide the manner in which the students' learning and written tasks would take place. The decision to find alternative ways to present the school knowledge was made by the teacher following his reflections on the previous term's work. During the PLC, the teachers discussed their concerns regarding the disinterest the students often displayed in the tasks presented in the textbook. Collaboratively the teachers discussed different ways of engaging the students. The decision was made to experiment with moving away from the scripted textbook tasks to engaging the students in negotiating both the 'what'

and ‘how’ of the written tasks and assessments. Subsequently, the Grade 6 English class chose the theme of ‘music and drama’ for the term’s lessons. Based on the CAPS requirements and using the theme of ‘music and drama’, the teacher and students then negotiated the written tasks and assessment opportunities for the term. In this manner, the teacher was able to both recognise the students’ diverse cultural knowledge and enable a representation of this knowledge through the redistribution of the school knowledge code.

A second example from a diverse Grade 6 Geography class was a lesson unit on: “Why people live where they do (South Africa)” (CAPS Social Sciences p.32). This unit included reasons for people settling in different areas with a focus on why people move from rural to urban areas. For this lesson the teacher tasked the students with interviewing family and/or community members to investigate why they were currently living where they were. This lesson unit, which by the teachers’ own admission, would normally have been presented narrowly as a redistribution of knowledge, i.e. a list of reasons that people move from rural to urban environments, was able to become recontextualised within the learning process as a more socially just learning experience that provided for an opportunity for cultural recognition of the students, their families and community and a representation of the diverse social-cultural groups in the process of school learning. My point of departure, therefore, in arguing for PLCs within the South African schooling context, is based on the view that what is required to enhance the professional agency of teachers, within the current regulative teaching environment which is framed by the CAPS, is a far richer notion of pedagogical practice aimed at leveraging an engaging pedagogical orientation that actively involves all students in the learning process. I suggest that this type of approach is required in a context, such as South Africa, where the space for professional dialogue about ways to enrich the teaching and learning at schools has been eroded by the scripted pedagogical approach of the CAPS, which requires very little dialogue among teachers in schools about their actual pedagogies.

In order to provide a theoretical consideration of how pedagogical change can be mediated through the on-going collaborative PLC dialogue, I now turn to a discussion on the methodo-logic of the two-year professional learning community process.

Facilitating pedagogical justice: the methodo-logic of a professional learning community

In arguing for the logic on which a pedagogically just PLC process can be founded, I draw on Hattam, Brennan, Zipin and Comber's (2009) framing approach which they call the methodo-logic of a research process. This method does not refer to research methods or methodology but rather provides the logic of an approach that includes the guiding principles that underpin the decisions and activities of the project. For a pedagogically just PLC process, this methodo-logic is founded on an ethical commitment to finding ways in which teachers can adapt or change their current pedagogies in consonance with a more pedagogically just teaching orientation. This approach draws on Fraser's (2009) conceptualisation of social justice that considers the dialectic 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, combined with Fataar's (2015) argument for the terms on which a pedagogical justice orientation can be leveraged within our current school curriculum framing.

My argument for finding ways to provide a more pedagogically just learning platform for students is evidenced on a Bourdieusian insight. This premise states that students enter schooling from different structural positions due to early-life immersion in the family and communities that embody distinctive qualities of dispositions or 'habitus'. Bourdieu (1984) describes the 'primary habitus' as repetitive patterns of practice and interaction from early childhood that have been internalised within our family. These social habits are based on ways of knowing from our family positions, economic class, and other structural power relations that emerge in different contexts. In schools, students begin acquiring overlays of a 'secondary habitus' as they assimilate the new conditions and new information and scaffold it onto the existing primary habitus. The degree of this secondary assimilation will depend on whether the codes of pedagogic interaction as well as other features in the school site are familiar to the primary habitus. The dispositions of the students' lifeworld-based habitus, therefore, acquire greater or lesser 'capital' value depending whether these cultural codes align with the dominant mainstream curriculum. Bourdieu states that educational systems, and especially schools, reproduce social stratification by maintaining

the pre-existing order, that is, the gap between pupils endowed with unequal amounts of cultural capital ... by a series of selection operations, the system separates the holders 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).

Students whose embodied cultural capital or habitus aligns with the school system allow those children access to the codes of schooling while denying others the opportunity to achieve success at school or feel that school is in their best interests. These students find that the curriculum makes no connection to the learning from their community contexts or lifeworld knowledges and therefore they see no intrinsic value in engaging with the educational experience.

The conceptual underpinning of pedagogically just PLC work as suggested in this article, is an attempt to bring all three dimensions of a social justice approach into a productive relationship with each other so as to inform the teaching practices of teachers. The aim is to provide teachers with a productive set of conceptual resources that inform their teaching in terms of which they are able to intellectually engage all their students in the learning process. Hattam and Prosser (2008) challenge us to move beyond mere compensatory programmes which are mostly based on a view that the problem lies in student and community deficits. This view challenges a deficit theorising approach that blames the underachievement of minority and low-income students as “a plethora of inadequacies, such as inadequate home literacy practices, inadequate English language, inadequate motivation, inadequate parental support and inadequate self-concept.” (Hogg, 2011, p.666) This deficit theorising leads to acceptance of students’ low academic achievement and expectations by teachers. While many teachers would dispute holding such views, these views may lurk below consciousness as attitudes or beliefs and provide an obstacle in teachers realising the potential of all their students.

In contrast, a pedagogically just approach to teaching and learning allows teachers to engage with students as individuals, rather than based on assumptions and stereotypes. This allows teachers to move away from “the intense brutality of a system that does not really seem to ‘see’ children” (Spindler & Spindler, 1983, p.75) to one that engages educators in a deep understanding of the students that they teach. This approach values the recognition and representation aspects of a socially just orientation and challenges meritocracy that privileges conformity and standardisation. Conceptualising a more pedagogically just stance allows teachers to confront

the hegemonic forces that continue to shape curriculum and schooling on a middle-class value system, and find ways to work effectively with the diversity of students to support and value their cultural identities and lifeworld knowledge in order to afford them success within mainstream school learning.

Working with Bourdieu: a conceptualisation of pedagogical change

In this section I offer a conceptualisation of pedagogical change by drawing on the theoretical resources offered by Pierre Bourdieu. By arguing for the role of PLCs as a form of ‘habitus engagement’, I offer an understanding of how pedagogical adaptation and change can be mediated between the dialogical PLC process and the teachers’ practical implementation of their adapted or changed pedagogy at the school site.

Habitus operates as a system of durable, transposable patterns of socio-cultural practices or dispositions gained from our cultural history which stay with us across various contexts. 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 provides one with a sense of how to act and respond “without consciously obeying rules explicitly posed as such” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.76). Habitus includes our ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being and captures how we carry our history within us and how that history plays out in our present circumstances (Grenfell, 2008, p.52).

A crucial feature of habitus is that it is embodied and is not composed solely of mental attitudes and perceptions; it is a whole body experience (Reay, 2004). Bourdieu describes this as ‘bodily hexis’. Bodily hexis incorporates a relationship between social structures (or social fields) and one’s habitus and 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 beings 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, *embodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking, and thereby of *feeling* and *thinking* (1977, p.87, p.93; italics in original).

While we may think of the body as subjective, something individual or belonging to the self (Webb, Schirato & Danahar, 2002, p.37), our body is an incorporation of our history, a repository of ingrained and durable dispositions that structure at a corporeal level the way we generate meaningful social activity.

For Bourdieu it is through the habitus that social reproduction in schools takes place. Education as a field or social context comprises of complex relations and structures that operate between teachers, students, and the curriculum. These structures and relations are constantly shifting and changing while at the same time being embodied and absorbed by both teachers and students as the values and relations of schooling (Webb *et al.*, 2002, pp.115–6). One’s responses, although they seem natural and unconscious, are always largely determined or regulated by contexts or cultures which have informed the structuring of one’s habitus. Bourdieu refers to this as the partly unconscious ‘taking in’ of rules, values and dispositions, which he defines as “the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, [which] produces practices” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.78).

A teachers’ pedagogical habitus thus incorporates the values and imperatives and embodied mental and corporeal pedagogical practices that have formed over time given the educational fields they have encountered. These educational fields include their own schooling experiences, their training as teachers and their teaching experience in schools. A teachers’ pedagogical habitus, as “a system of cognitive and motivating structures” or “dispositions” that function “as principles that generate and organise practices” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.53) therefore organises and positions them as certain types of teachers, which in turn structures their teaching practices in certain ways. Consequently, any substantial or effective change in the teachers’ practices has to contend with the durability of the teachers’ pedagogical habitus formation over time and the teachers’ relationship with the various social and/or educational ‘fields’ in which they are engaged.

It is, therefore, the embodied pedagogical beliefs of the teachers, “that escapes questioning” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.98) that can be seen in the ‘hardness’ of change in their classroom teaching practices. Adapting or shifting teachers’ pedagogy thus requires an on-going engagement with the conscious and unconscious educational values and beliefs that teachers have imbibed over time and which has structured the manner in which they enact their classroom pedagogy. It is this engagement, that I refer to as pedagogical

‘habitus engagement’, which I argue must challenge the teachers’ embodied pedagogical habitus which has formed over time, in order to move beyond dialoguing about the possibility of pedagogic change, to the pragmatic implementation of a more socially just teaching orientation.

The role of professional learning communities in adapting and changing teachers’ pedagogy: pedagogical habitus engagement

Changing the way in which teachers enact their pedagogy is highly complex. Professional development programmes are usually designed to initiate change due to a new curriculum or instructional innovation or to initiate change in teachers’ attitudes and beliefs (Guskey, 2002, p.382). Fullan states that “[e]ducational change depends on what teachers do and think – it is as simple and complex as that” (2007, p.129). In order for sustained education change to occur, teachers need to be involved in processes of challenging and rethinking assumptions and theories on which their practice is based (Fullan, 2007). Unless this happens, any form of new innovation advocated will simply be filtered through the lens of teachers’ already established beliefs and practices and will be colonised by the existing practice (Reid & Lucas, 2010). In order to engage with the teachers’ pedagogical habitus to elicit sustained adaptation and change in their pedagogy, Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and bodily hexis provide us with an understanding that one’s beliefs, that are embedded in one’s habitus and enacted in and through practice, are both a ‘state of mind’ and ‘state of the body’ (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.68). Thus, for teachers, their pedagogical dispositions, how they are thinking and feeling about teaching and learning, is embodied and inscribed within the unconscious formation of their pedagogical habitus and enacted, on an almost pre-conscious corporeal level, within their classroom pedagogy. What this means, therefore, is that in order for the dialogical PLC process to effect pragmatic adaptation and change in teachers’ pedagogical practices, it is necessary to engage with the corporeality of the teachers’ embodied pedagogical dispositions.

Conclusion

My argument as discussed in this article has argued for the role of PLCs as a form of habitus engagement, in adapting and changing teachers' pedagogy in consonance with a more pedagogically just teaching orientation. Situated within the current South African schooling context and the CAPS, I have argued that the paucity of a meaningful and engaging pedagogy, particularly in schools that service working class students, has not resulted in the necessary amelioration of inequality within the South African schooling system. The current scripted, regulated and performative-driven CAPS, implemented in an attempt to alleviate the disparity found between the schools in wealthier leafy green suburbs and those situated in impoverished circumstances, has tended to erode teacher autonomy and resulted in an achromatic pedagogical approach to teaching which doesn't meaningfully engage all students in their learning. For this reason, I argue for PLCs that place teacher professionalism, collaborative learning and a more enriched pedagogical approach to student learning, as central to the on-going dialogical PLC process. This approach, as a form of habitus engagement, I suggest, holds the potential to challenge teachers to find ways to instantiate a more pedagogically just approach that meaningfully engages all students in productive learning.

Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus and bodily hexis, I have argued that shifting or changing teachers' pedagogical practices must engage with the teachers embodied pedagogical habitus, as it is here that their deepest pedagogical dispositions reside, 'tattooed' in their physical being over time given the educational fields they have inhabited. Thus, to effect change in the teachers' pedagogical practices that over time have become embedded in their pedagogical habitus, these practices must be brought to consciousness, challenged and engaged, in order for the teachers to embody new or adapted pedagogical practices. Bourdieu warns of the durability of one's habitus, but offers a window of hope stating that the structures of habitus are not set, but can evolve, "they are durable and transposable but not immutable" (Maton, 2008, p.53).

My argument for PLCs, as a form of pedagogical habitus engagement, thus invites teachers to heed the call of an ethical responsibility to negotiate the "mad breach of social-educational justice" (Zipin, 2005, p.7) by dialoguing collaboratively towards finding ways to change or shift their pedagogical habitus, and consequently their teaching practices, in consonance with a more

pedagogically just teaching orientation. Zipin (2005), drawing on philosophers Immanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, calls the tension between the redistribution and recognition logic an aporia, which involves a “transaction between two contradictory and equally justified imperatives”, each of which is impossible, but yet must be pursued (p.7). Zipin (2005) describes this impulse as a “disturbed peace” for teachers who realise that for their students and for themselves, the rewards of chasing a socially just aporia, which may be far from just or fair, will make schooling for all students, particularly those most marginalised, “better than otherwise” (Zipin, 2005, p.7). In understanding the limits that school contexts and curriculum structures impose on teachers, I take cognisance of the tension that a socially just orientation effects and suggest that the on-going dialogical PLC process holds the potential to support and direct ways to pragmatically implement a more pedagogically just approach.

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