Leaders and Leadership in

Education

Helen M Gunter

*Leaders and Leadership
in Education*

Helen Gunter is Senior Lecturer within the School of Education at the University of Birmingham. Before entering higher education Helen was a secondary school teacher (history and politics) and manager for 11 years. She has teaching and research interests in education management, biographical methodology, and the professional development of teachers. Helen has published articles and books on theory, educational leadership and appraisal. Her particular research interest is in the history of the field of education management, and she has recently completed a study into the intellectual history of the field.

Leaders and Leadership in Education

Helen M. Gunter

Contents

Acknowledgements

Without Barry this book would never have been written. Thank you.

This book has its origins in *Rethinking Education* (Gunter, 1997) where I issued the following invitation:

> You are cordially invited to contact me and to participate in this ongoing research. Your account of your professional life history, the choices you have made, the nature of your work within your past and current professional portfolio and your views on the development of the field of education management are all of interest and central to our collective concerns. (p. 114)

I have very much enjoyed the dialogue that resulted and I am delighted by the positive feedback. I would like to pass on my thanks to the reviewers as this stimulated me to take the arguments forward. In this book the conversation continues . . .

If leadership is not about having a vision, then how might we best understand what all the fuss is about? The argument that dominates this book is that leadership is not an 'it' from which we can abstract behaviours and tasks, but is a relationship that is understood through our experiences. Consequently, leadership is highly political and is a struggle within practice, theory and research. Furthermore, leadership is not located in job descriptions but in the professionality of working for teaching and learning. I have a strong commitment to educational leadership through which learning activity is a space for knowledge use and creation. Such thinking has been supported by Bourdieu's theory of practice and I would like to thank Professor Jenny Ozga for introducing me to his work and for her support for my research.

I am also indebted to my friends and former colleagues at Keele University: Gill Cleland, Barbara Cole, Professor Denis Gleeson, Professor Derek Glover, Barry Pitt, Mike Johnson, Richard Race and Pat Smith. My professional life has been further enriched by my move to the University of Birmingham, and I would like to thank Professor Stewart Ranson, Professor Peter Ribbins and Dr Desmond Rutherford

for their tremendous support. Teaching has always been important to me and my thanks also go to the Doctor of Education (EdD) Leaders and Leadership in Education course members who are making postgraduate work so exciting and challenging. I am grateful to Professor Anne Edwards, and colleagues in the Centre for Sociocultural and Action Theory Research at Birmingham, for introducing me to Activity Theory.

Recent events have suggested to me that this book has a deeper origin. In 1998, along with my school year group I turned 40, and we had a reunion. Not an unusual event, but as I looked around the room at over 200 people who had but had not changed, I realised the importance of our experiences. We were all victims and beneficiaries of educational structures. In 1969 we all failed the 11+ and hence the structuring of education had limited our life chances. We were to be prepared for a particular working life that fitted in with others' plans for children like us. However, in 1972 the school became comprehensive, with new teachers, new buildings and new opportunities. The school now had a sixth form, I was in the second sixth form group, and the optimism was infectious. For the first time we were not intellectually impoverished through labelling. Looking around the room at the reunion, at people who in a high unemployment area were working, had raised families, gained professional qualifications and ran their own businesses, it was a crime to have failed us at 11 years of age. It was comprehensive education that gave us all a second chance through inclusion. We are now living at a time when trying to be optimistic about education is difficult, and the current government seems to be on track to end comprehensive education. In my 11 years of being a school teacher I never changed my view that comprehensive education is the best way to enable effective governance in our society. I wonder if the current modernisation of education will have the same positive effects on the attitudes and outcomes of children's learning as my generation experienced from comprehensivisation? We will have to wait and see. The creation of diversity between schools, rather than enabling diversity within the comprehensive school, is dangerous for a country where the democratic settlement continues to be vulnerable. This book is dedicated to the class of 1969.

Helen M. Gunter
University of Birmingham

Abbreviations

AERA	American Educational Research Association
APU	Assessment of Performance Unit
AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
BEAS	British Educational Administration Society
BELMAS	British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society
BEMAS	British Educational Management and Administration Society
BERA	British Education Research Association
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CASE	Cognitive Acceleration through Science Education
CCEA	Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration
CCEAM	Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management
CEO	Chief Education Officer
COSMOS	Committee on the Organisation, Staffing and Management of Schools
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CTC	City Technology College
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
EdD	Doctor of Education
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FE	Further Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GMS	Grant Maintained Status
HEADLAMP	Headteacher Leadership and Management Programme
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HRM	Human Resource Management

ITT	Initial Teacher Training
ICSEI	International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement
IIP	International Intervisitation Programme
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISEIC	International School Effectiveness and Improvement Centre
LEA	Local Education Authority
IQEA	Improving the Quality of Education for All
LFM	Local Financial Management
LMS	Local Management of Schools
LPSH	Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers
MCI	Management Charter Initiative
NAHT	National Association of Head Teachers
NDC	National Development Centre
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headteachers
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OTTO	One Term Training Opportunities
PANDA	Performance and Assessment
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PRP	Performance-Related Pay
PSSR	Primary School Staff Relationship
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
SATs	Standard Assessment Tasks/Tests
SCRELM	Standing Conference for Educational Leadership and Management
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SMS	School Management South
SMT	Senior Management Team
SMTF	School Management Task Force
STRB	School Teacher Review Body
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
WSCD	Whole School Curriculum Development
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

1

Challenging Leadership

News headlines continue to tell us that there is a crisis in education: '4,000 teacher jobs cannot be filled' (Dean, 2000a), 'Schools policy crisis as third superhead quits' (Carvel and Mulholland, 2000), and, 'Poverty no excuse for failure, says Blunkett' (Carvel, 2000). It seems that what we need is more leadership of educational institutions, with superheads being drafted in to turn 'failing' schools around. The questions I explore in his book are why leadership and why now? And, is it *educational* leadership? This is problematic for leadership watchers and practitioners because, even though popular models seem to suggest that we have settled the debate, it is still the case that we know little about the realities and possibilities for leaders, leading and leadership in educational settings.

I focus on how particular positions regarding leadership in educational studies can be revealed through an examination of research and theory, and how this interconnects with the education policy context. I ask the question: how can we best describe and explain the emerging field of educational leadership? Investigating knowledge production enables a range of issues to be explored: what is a field and what positions are there within and between fields? How does membership of a field create and resolve debates about theory, practice and research? This allows us to dig deeper and ask: in what ways is the production and organisation of knowledge within a field related to dominant group interests and values? This enables professional practice to be related to systems of control and considers the interplay between the agency of the knowledge worker and the structuring effects of organisational location within an educational institution.

This book is about and is the product of intellectual work, and my contribution is to theorise leadership in education through the use of Bourdieu's theory of practice. By thinking with Bourdieu's thinking tools of habitus and field I present the leadership territory as an arena of struggle in which researchers, writers, policy-makers and practitioners take up and/or present positions regarding the theory and practice of educational leadership. This provides opportunities to reveal positions that are being written into and out of the working lives of educational

professionals. Furthermore, it enables a historical as well as a contemporary perspective to identify a range of approaches to understanding the everyday work of educational professionals. I draw on intellectual resources from around the world to enable particular questions to be asked about the growth of the field and interconnections with educational restructuring. In order to illuminate the interplay between structure and agency I use site-based performance management in England and other nations of the UK, with a particular focus on schools, as the prime location. The emphasis is on large-scale mapping and contours, rather than on charting of each intellectual pathway. In exploring boundaries I show the messiness and dynamism in the positioning and repositioning of work. I am well aware that much will remain uncharted, and I hope that through reviews and continued dialogue the terrain will be further opened up.

The leadership terrain

The leadership in education terrain is very busy. By using the metaphor of a field we can identify this space as a place of struggle over and within theory and method. Activity is structured, entry and boundaries are controlled. Leadership knowledge workers who engage with what we know and generate new knowledge about what we need to know are located in a range of employment and organisational settings, from teachers in classrooms through to professors in higher education institutions. It is a territory where answers to particular leadership problems are sought, and it is also an interesting site for the exploration of enduring questions about human beings. All are represented in this book, but differences within professional portfolios and the setting in which knowledge production takes place does mean that enabling what we know about leaders and leadership to be made visible is highly problematic. The real-time real-life nature of educational work means that capturing, understanding and theorising the dynamism, even by those directly involved, is challenging. This does not invalidate the project but, instead, provides us with the opportunity to ask who the knowers are, why they are deemed to know and, perhaps significantly, where are the silences?

This book draws on a range of theory and research from knowledge workers who undertake work around particular intellectual positions on the leadership terrain:

- *Critical studies*: concerned with power structures, and how educational professionals experience work.
- *Educational management*: promotes improvements in the leadership, management and administration of educational organisations.
- *School effectiveness and school improvement*: identifies the characteristics of effective schools, and the processes that will bring about improvement.

Even in attempting to describe these positions I am adding to boundary disputes, though the simplicity of these categories becomes evident as the book unfolds. At the moment all I wish to say is that knowledge workers who have identified their work as being located in one of these areas of activity are increasingly interested in leadership. Consequently, networks are developing that are bringing together interesting alliances or are making clearer the boundaries. However, before I can reach the stage of describing this positioning I need to establish some conceptual underpinnings. In particular, I need to be explicit about the authoring process and to problematise my own position.

An intellectual journey

Bourdieu (1988) argues that any attempt to try to be anonymous and to be neutral or to hide behind method 'is doomed in advance to failure' (p. 25), and so my position within the unfolding analysis is open to scrutiny. I begin the process of revealing the intellectual resources that make up the 'the lacework of meanings and significations' (Seddon, 1996, p. 211) that shapes my orientation to this area of study and practice. My original interest is rooted in a combination of personal experience and academic discourse, and as a knowledge worker in both a school and, more recently, a university setting, I have observed and I am a part of the growth in the field from the early 1980s. This involvement has gone through a number of interconnected, and often parallel, phases involving working as a teacher of history and politics in a secondary school through to a university lecturer in education management. This experience of positioning my professional practice and interests within the field, and securing employment within a higher education institution (HEI), has raised a number of questions about how my own professional identity has been challenged and reshaped. Not least because I have become increasingly networked into other fields both through my research and writing, and it is difficult to escape the dominant language and discourse of 'effectiveness' and 'improvement'. The question I ask is: how do I come to be professionally located where I am today? Exploring this raises the importance of lived experience and how I understand my professional practice and make sense of my situated context. This can be revealed through professional life stories in which choices and decisions, to work here or there, to teach this or that, to write on this topic or that, can enable an understanding of how clusters of people can come together to create and develop an area of activity. Underlying this is an understanding of what it means to be a member of a field in which professional practice is shaped through association with others, and what happens when particular questions are asked, research issues are focused on and debates about theory take place.

Since becoming a student, and then a researcher, I have developed a

sense of being within a field of study and how I see my position and how others seek to position my work. This may appear, with hindsight, to be neat and tidy. However, within any person's professional biography there are contradictions and dilemmas that have had to be faced, and these are often not revealed through the publication process. Under-pinning this is the interplay of agency and structure, and issues around what it means at different times and in different situations to be able to make sense of and to live in the world. The complexity of this approach is illustrated when knowledge workers give glimpses into how they understand and handle these dilemmas. Skeggs (1997) describes how we are positioned by macro structures such as nation, class and sexuality, and these affect our access to education and employment, and what we understand as possible in our lives. Often in contradiction to this is epis-temological positioning through particular theories, methodologies, funding and fashions: 'all these positionings impact upon what research we do, when and how we do it. However, there is no straightforward correspondence between our circumstances and how we think: we are positioned in but not determined by our locations' (ibid., p. 18).

Like Deem (1996a) I inhabit border territory, I simultaneously do and do not belong. Much of my professional practice is the same as other field members, but my research and theoretical interests have shifted from the common-sense problem-solving agenda to that of critical studies and, in particular, the historical setting and development of the field. During this intellectual journey I seem to have crossed Popkewitz's (1999, pp. 2–3) metaphorical room away from the 'pragmatic-empiricists' who are concerned to make organisations work better towards a position where 'critical' is interpreted as being about understanding and explaining the tensions and contradictions in why organisations work in the way they do. Being critical is not about taking an oppositional stance but is about opening up spaces for discussion about knowledge claims and produc-tion (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996).

This type of reflexive approach enables me to see the link between the dynamic and ongoing development of fields I am studying and changes within my professional identity. In doing this I am taking inspiration from Greenfield because he sees his work and writing as representing 'a groping towards understanding, not a uniform and logical line of extra-polation' (Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993, p. 269). This has considerable resonance with me as it supports my argument that this book is a con-tribution to a dialogue and not a claim to be encyclopaedic. This ongoing reflexive approach is what makes study exciting and worthwhile, but at the same time I am well aware that researching fields and knowledge production can be challenging. As Bourdieu (1988, p. xv) argues, what is spoken or written about 'is bound to be read differently by readers who are part of this world as opposed to those who are outsiders'. Nevertheless, making the self visible means that the 'assumptive choices' (McPherson and Raab, 1989) I have made in the design and development

of this book can be opened up to debate and it returns us to the opening questions in how we seek to understand the theory and research about leadership within educational settings through position and positioning. I problematise intellectual work by making connections between the individual knowledge worker and the context in which knowledge production takes place.

Knowledge and knowing

Describing and understanding leaders and leadership in education is about knowledge production: who does it, what they do, how do they do it and why do they do it? The emphasis is not so much on the product of knowledge in the form of a fact or a theory, as the process by which there is 'a selection and organisation from the available knowledge at a particular time which involves conscious or unconscious choices' (Young, 1971b, p. 24). This problematises knowledge rather than accepts it as a given, and it sees knowledge production as connected to the interplay between agency and structure.

Agency is concerned with the subjective capability and capacity to control, for example, through the exercise of choice and discretion. In asking about the who, what, how and why of knowledge production we need to consider the skills and the will to use them. This can be related to identity and how the individual is able to position the self as *being* a knowledge worker and, more importantly, how what the individual *does* in their relationship with others makes this visible (and invisible). In this way who knowledge workers are is not just about what a role or job is or is not, but it is about what is and is not done. Identity is not homogenous and static, but is about identities that can shift within time and space, and can complement or contradict.

Identity is not just the product of the individual but is a socialised and socialising process in which identities can be received as well as shaped. Structure is concerned with external controls, for example, how technical job descriptions and/or organisational cultures define expectations of what work is and is not about, and so agency can be enhanced, moderated or stifled. Organisations are also places where external power structures are at work in which social injustices in our society related to discrimination and political interests can impact on, and perhaps determine, the exercise of agency within knowledge production. Visibility of the self as a knowledge worker may be highly public, or it could be consciously suppressed or unconsciously repressed. How the self is represented and allowed to be represented is interwoven with social and political issues of age, disability, gender, race and sexuality. In this way the individual is the object of someone else's gaze, and can be grouped according to abstract categories and essentialised as being a typical example.

This brief analysis of agency and structure enables us to investigate

leaders and leadership in education by asking, for example, why did I not write this book in 1985? This could be related to how I saw and understood my work as a teacher, and how I made choices to prepare lessons and mark essays rather than write a book about the exercise of pedagogic leadership underpinning those activities. It could be that even if I had wanted to write a book (and many teachers do), I was unable to do so because of the institutional, political and social context that determined what a teacher should and should not be doing.

If such choices and directions in professional practice are to be theorised effectively, then a conceptual framework that will enable the interplay between agency and structure in the exercise of power to be at the forefront is needed. Work by researchers and theorists about knowledge production is itself a field of struggle through which position and positioning takes place, and from this work there are a number of conceptual issues that enable important issues to be raised about leaders and leadership in education.

Leadership as a paradigm shift

It could be that the growth in leadership studies is due to a new paradigm, and certainly the word 'paradigm' is being used increasingly as a means of describing change. Kuhn (1975) argues that knowledge is located within epistemic communities: 'a paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share, and, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a paradigm' (p. 176). What this scientific community 'share' are a number of connections related to professional identity, such as being the practitioners of a scientific speciality, absorbing the same technical literature, membership of professional societies, reading the same journals. In addition to this there is a 'tacit knowledge' that comes from the doing of science and in being trained in the rules and assumptions of the paradigm. A paradigm shift takes place when the epistemic community accepts a new way of thinking, seeing and defining the world. Such changes are incremental and are rarely the product of one person. The most important aspect is how these changes are disseminated in journals and eventually reach the lay person through their impact on teaching and textbooks: 'what were ducks in the scientist's world before the revolution are rabbits afterwards' (ibid., p. 111).

This approach enables us to see that knowledge, and what is or is not the truth, is related to those who produce it. However, it is a rather elitist view of knowledge production because it presents intellectual and manual work as rational and separate. A privileged epistemic community is able to control the progress towards, and the acceptance of, what is the truth through a top-down transmission of what is to be known. It seems that leadership as a paradigm is only helpful if you want to impose a model of leadership. For the field to gain a better sense of itself and its

purposes, then, we need a way of understanding knowledge production that not only enables the struggle within and over knowledge to be visible, but also to be more inclusive of who the knowers are.

Leadership as academic tribes and territories

Becher (1989), who like Kuhn (1975) is interested in knowledge communities, broadens out the focus to consider the relationship between disciplines and professional identity: 'the ways in which particular groups of academics organise their professional lives are intimately related to the intellectual tasks on which they are engaged' (Becher, 1989, p. 1). Becher (1989) uses the example of discovery and describes how it is very important in some fields of enquiry and less so in others. For example, discovery is very important in molecular biology but not so much in taxonomies of plant life. In mechanical engineering it has been replaced by invention. Discovery is out of place in other areas of enquiry such as history. Becher argues that these differences are not just sociological but lie within the nature of the work of the academic, and this leads him to provide a multidimensional framework to investigate the epistemological features of knowledge:

1. *Abstract and reflective or hard and pure*: the natural sciences and maths in which there is linear development by building on previous work. Outcomes tend to be concerned with universal and value free truths.
2. *Concrete and reflective or soft and pure*: the humanities and social sciences in which there is debate about the type of the questions to be asked and the nature and validity of outcomes. There is emphasis on an iterative process and the use of findings as illuminative.
3. *Abstract and active or hard and applied*: the science-based professions, e.g. medicine and engineering, in which trial and error approaches dominate. Progress may or may not take place, and the emphasis is on mastering the natural world through the use of a practical and problem-solving method.
4. *Concrete and active or soft and applied*: the social professions, e.g. education, social work and the law in which the intellectual roots are reinterpreted and developed, and so there is no accumulation of knowledge which is agreed and accepted. This domain is concerned with understanding the complexity of human relationships and interactions, and so is unstable and open to change. Outcomes are focused on identifying the best ways of doing things and in arranging human interactions, and can be judged according to pragmatism, or, utilitarianism or ethics.

Becher goes on to show how these knowledge domains are evident in the creation, evolution and reproduction of tribes of academics and the territories they inhabit. Terrain is marked by the spatial characteristics of

which parts of the campus you visit, through to the stereotyping of disciplines and how new entrants are inducted into professional attitudes and values. The academic within the academy is conceptualised as pursuing recognition as a means of power and this is displayed in rituals to do with citation, and the pecking order of departments.

Becher's work enables the university as a site of knowledge production to be focused on, and using his categories means that leadership studies are concerned with knowledge claims that are 'soft and applied'. Becher (1989) acknowledges the increase in external regulation through directed investment and research grants which is causing 'epistemic drift' (p. 137) as tough choices have to be made regarding the generation of income and the knowledge requirements of those who are funding research. If, for example, funders want knowledge about leadership to be 'hard and pure' then this challenges the epistemology and professional practices of those who see leadership as an alternative way of knowing. However, Becher's analysis does not take this far enough, he does not locate the professional practice of 'academic tribes' and the 'territories' they inhabit within debates about the 'structures of privilege and power relations as a condition of knowledge production' (Skeggs, 1997, p. 20). What we need is an approach to knowledge production that engages with issues around how economic and political interests can create and sustain the structures that ensure particular tribes and territories and particular types of knowledge claims are protected while others are excluded.

Leadership as a power structure

Leadership in educational studies can be seen as the process and product by which powerful groups are able to control and sustain their interests. Such an approach to leadership studies enables the connection between facts and values to be made visible, and establishes that 'the political positions of knowers are significant factors in the construction of knowledge' (Griffiths, 1998, p. 52). In this sense, seeking to understand the production of knowledge requires a description of structural power and dominant elite groups, combined with an analysis of the processes of transmission and learning.

Young (1971a) argues that there is an explicit relationship between elite groups and how knowledge is organised. Knowledge is stratified in the sense that the value of knowing one thing rather than another is linked to power structures that determine what is to be known, and what it is worthwhile knowing. The transmission of this knowledge is controlled through access to learning in a particular institution, the structure of the curriculum within that institution and the power relations that structure pedagogy. Curriculum change and the entry of an alternative way of knowing into the school or the HEI is linked to power relationships, and change will or will not happen dependent on how elite groups perceive

the type and level of challenge to their values and power base (Young, 1971a; 1971b; 1998). A useful starting point is to focus on how knowledge is organised and controlled through disciplines which Bernstein (1971) argues 'means accepting a given selection, organisation, pacing and timing of knowledge realised in the pedagogic frame' (p. 57). Young (1971b) argues that we are socialised into a specialised subject discipline in which learning is a 'private property' for the individual to achieve and be rewarded. Individuals are presented with what is 'high-status knowledge' which is abstract, written, received and distant from experience. Alternative knowledge that puts emphasis on the relevance of theory to practice, and on learning through talk and group activity is of low status (Young, 1998).

Relating knowledge production to power structures is an important contribution and can help to explain features such as the endurance of hierarchy in schools and so leadership can be seen to have been reworked and developed over time to sustain political and economic interests. Knowledge and the truth are not neutral but are related directly to powerful interests, and intellectual work is highly political in seeking to support or challenge this dominance. However, this approach does tend to objectify, and so it can limit agency because in being essentialised the complex identities that grow through the individual's experiences and struggles over time and in a range of contexts may be lost. The post-structuralist writer Foucault (1972) moves us forward by arguing that power is diffuse and is visible through discourse. Discourse is presented as being about what can be said and thought, and 'who can speak, when, where and with what authority' (Ball, 1994b, p. 21). Meaning comes from power relations, there are exclusions and inclusions, claims are made, and positions taken. Finally, discourse is complex and dense, and is about how the world is seen and understood, and the assumptions that structure what can and cannot be said. There are sites in which a right to speak is known and understood, and education can be identified as a site of discourse development. In this sense a teacher or lecturer does not create, develop, communicate and transmit knowledge separate from context, and practice is linked to issues of power, status, recognition and value judgements about worth and validity. This approach is conceptually productive because through discourse the structuring of power is visible, and intellectual work can be seen as complicit within the 'regime of truth' about and for particular forms of leadership (Ball, 1994b). Developing this approach to knowledge production needs to consider the struggle over knowledge through practice, and how position and positioning is central to what can and cannot be said.

Leadership as praxis

Knowledge production through professional practice is central to action research. As Winter (1989) states: 'in action research practitioners reflect

on their work in such a way as to generate insights which will open up new practical developments, and from these new practical developments fresh insights are derived which subsequently open up further practical innovation, in a theoretically endless spiral' (p. 193). This relationship between theory and practice is a matter of debate and Hirst (1974) makes a distinction between 'forms' of knowledge and 'fields' of knowledge. Forms of knowledge or disciplines are concerned with knowing the world, compared with fields of knowledge which are action orientated. Forms of knowledge have central concepts forming a logical structure, with techniques and skills, and 'distinctive expressions which are testable against experience' (Hirst, 1974, p. 44). In contrast a field or 'organisations' of knowledge 'are not concerned, as the disciplines are, to validate any one logically distinct form of expression. They are not concerned with developing a particular structuring of experience. They are held together simply by their subject matter, drawing on all forms of knowledge that can contribute to them' (ibid., p. 46). Therefore engineering and medicine as fields are dependent on foundational knowledge from the natural sciences; and, education is a field based on the social sciences.

Usher and Edwards (1994) argue that this has common-sense appeal in its neatness and tidiness, but they agree with Schon (1983) that the application of the Hirst model distorts practice because disciplines are within practices: 'education cannot "draw from" disciplines in a Hirstian sense because it is already "in" disciplines – disciplines are already implicated in education' (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 49). Carr (1993) argues against the theory–practice divide, and against the superior–subordinate implication of that divide: 'by making the twin assumptions that all practice is non-theoretical and all theory is non-practical, this approach always underestimates the extent to which those who engage in educational practices have to reflect upon, and hence theorise about, what, in general, they are trying to do'. (p. 162). He goes on to argue that we need to locate concepts within their historical and cultural context, and he demonstrates that praxis as defined as 'morally informed or morally committed action' is currently being marginalised. Emancipatory praxis requires the practitioner to be the subject and not the object of change, and pedagogy as a leadership relationship is within the tradition of educational practice (Smyth, 1989a). However, the ability of the teacher to engage in self-reflection and collaborative critique is limited by their self-censorship rooted in contextual settings.

Teachers are currently positioned as curriculum technicians (Ball, 1990a) and followers of charismatic leaders (Gronn, 1996), and so it seems that what we need is an approach to knowledge production that focuses on the use and production of knowledge in which the knowledge worker in the classroom and the university can engage in dialogue about the same questions, participate in the same networks and engage in both radicalism and practicalities at the same time. Gramsci's (1973) contribution is to connect domination by the state (political society) with hegemonic