**Discourses we live by**

**A struggle for recognition**

My doctoral thesis ‘A struggle for recognition’ is an interrogation of the discourses I live/have lived by. It is an auto/biographical account of how I have, now and in the past, turned to education in my struggle for recognition. I now find myself, an academic, who was raised in poverty, confused about my class positioning. In the institution within which I work I am told that by the virtue of my education and my position in the labour market that ‘you are one of us’ but I do not feel middle class or that I inhabit the world of the university in the same way as the majority of my colleagues. In my thesis I have used Bourdieu and his conceptions of habitus, field and capital; and Honneth’s theory of recognition and disrespect to interrogate feelings of estrangement and disillusionment in the academy where, in a bid to continue to educate the teachers of tomorrow, we, teacher educators, are forced to engage in hegemonic practices.

In addition, ‘I have ‘engage[d] in a simulated conversation’ (Brookfield, 1995: 187) with many theoretical friends, academics who are themselves from working class origins who offer a unique, empathic appreciation of the phenomenon of ‘being working class’. With these colleagues, I have been able to talk about my experiences which has enabled me reclaim my past and to help recognise the contradictions between my beliefs and the demands of practice are not idiosyncratic to me but are actually phenomena experienced by others like me. Furthermore, through writing my thesis I have been able to ‘come out’ and confront the academy’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy regarding class.

Being an educated white working class woman is a slippery shifting identity but by using these sensitizing frameworks, I have been able to illustrate interconnections between my identity and its historical, psychological, social and political formation.

Brookfield, S. D. (1995) Becoming a critically reflective practitioner. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons