

## **'Performativities' and 'Fabrications' in Performance Management - □**

### **Shamalin Naidu 'Performativities' and 'Fabrications' in Performance Management**

**(Research in progress)**

#### Abstract

This paper draws on doctoral work underway into the analysis of teachers' voices in recent South Australian initiatives in teacher evaluation. The implementation of a new Performance Management policy is currently one of the major educational reforms introduced to the public sector workforce in South Australia. Performance Management clearly illustrates an attempt by the State to control the work of teachers. The underlying philosophy of Performance Management is to make teachers more efficient, more effective and more accountable. The paper will critically scrutinise this bureaucratic process and amplify the voices of those being controlled. The research data will reveal that Performance Management is simply a means control over teachers' work however that control is now more subtle and exerted through the discursive construction of subjectivity. The paper will start out by locating Performance Management in a broader social and political context and consider whose interests are being served. Secondly, it will consider a similar study of Performance Management undertaken in Western Australia, and discuss its implications for South Australia. And finally, the paper will highlight first-hand accounts of how teachers employ defence mechanisms ('performativities and fabrications') in order to resist evaluation as a form of bureaucratic and ideological control.

#### Background

Since the mid-1980's, Australia has experienced rapid and extensive changes in education at the Commonwealth, national and state levels. Such changes have impinged to varying degrees on almost every sector and aspect of education (Kenway, 1994). As a consequence, insights into the contemporary constructions and interpretations of mainstream educational practice reveal that 'neo-liberal discourses are predicated on the market rhetorics of efficiency, choice, and accountability' (Hickey, 2000, p. i). In line with this market ideology, the Australian educational bureaucracy has implemented changes across many fronts: beginning with the compelling issue of funding, curriculum reform, locus of responsibility and power, technological advancement and workplace reform. As a result of these changes 'the Australian education industry is being influenced increasingly by assumptions underlying corporate managerialism' Chadbourne and Ingvarson (1992, p. 28).

The rationale for the application of commercial approaches to the public sector include the view that past structures, procedures and services were inefficient and did not embrace managerialism in totality. Presently, private enterprise management approaches are deemed to be superior to past alternatives; the ideology being that managerial and structural reforms guarantee a revision to practice that results in increased productivity.

Central to this position is the view that reform is management led. Bureaucracies in all sectors of the public service, including education, have been compelled to apply processes and practices derived from the private sector in their management and administrative duties (Sachs and Groundwater Smith, 1999).

This market orientation and a managerialist reform agenda requires public servants to be market sensitive, customer responsive and service oriented (Barzelay, 1992). Sachs and Groundwater Smith (1999) clarify the above by stating government policies have not only been focussed on workplace reforms throughout all sectors of the economy to ensure greater productivity and international competitiveness. This has meant that the agencies and practices of the state have been the focus of "micro economic" reforms. Across all spheres of the public sector, policies and practices have been driven by global economic imperatives to be more efficient, effective and economic (p. 215).

Thus, it can be argued that public sector reform has occurred in response to the need for government to develop policies consistent with increasing social and cultural complexity, rapid change and public demand for more economic and efficient government services. Government has sought to meet this situation by adopting a market orientation towards the provision of services and a managerialist approach to their delivery (Sachs and Groundwater Smith, 1999). Taylor et al. (1997) argue that 'corporate managerialism, devolution, the role of markets in education, the new federalism and the development of human capital theory are some of the key elements of the present Australian state' (p. 81).

These moves toward public sector management across educational systems has meant increasing accountability, more visible procedures and greater emphasis on outcomes, and quantification. Eunson (1994, p. 106) and Wright (1995, p. 151) suggest that this public sector ideology increases managerialism control in order to bring about conformity. These moves are profoundly ambiguous because they send mixed messages across educational systems. One the one hand, they stress equity and fairness, accessibility and the rights of teachers and students while on the other hand, they force schools to return to an industrialised-era of accountability.

The above reform agenda has impacted on teachers' work in Australia because teachers are an important component of the public service. Thus it is not surprising that disputes have arisen between the state and teachers over the context and conditions of work. The State wants to codify and more closely regulate teachers' work and to legitimate the redistribution of public resources away from education in order to enforce its economic ideologies. Dale's (1992) observations gives a clear understanding for the accelerated push for control over teachers and their work at this particular juncture. He argues that the present demands imposed by the State has the tendency to regulate teachers' work in the form of top-down policies which uses a range of managerialistic technologies to monitor outcomes (pp. 387-395).

The paramount aim of the State is to ensure that all its employees are fully productive in order to maximise profits. The key words in this rationale are 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency'. However, MacIntyre (1984) warns us that claims about effectiveness and efficiency are about means of control. The workers [teachers] are manipulated to abide to compliant patterns of behaviour. During periods of economic transition, the closer regulation of State employees takes on new dimensions and new practices (Robertson, 1996). Teachers are currently facing this dilemma. 'The state, by attempting to implement an industrial relations regime based on individualised teacher contracts, has the capacity to direct teachers' work more closely through greater control over the terms and conditions of their work' (Robertson and Chadbourne, 1998, p. 36).

Arising out of this corporate managerialism ideology, the imposition of performance models on teachers' work has become widespread practice. National systems are in place in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Australia and New Zealand. In federations like Germany, the United States and Canada, individual states, and provinces have the initiative to impose individual performance models (Brennan, 1999; Woodhouse, 1996).

Throughout Australia, all aspects of schooling, including teachers' work, in government schools is controlled by the various state education departments. As a result, centralisation has been a dominant feature of the administration of public education and state departments have, by and large, centrally financed and administered for all schools : staffing, teacher accountability, curriculum, planning, buildings, and maintenance. Centralisation has afforded educational bureaucrats and politicians the right to dominate the big issues in relation to educational policy in spite of reformist notions of school improvement through 'school site management' and 'devolution' (Knight et al., 1995).

Whilst departmental officials and policy makers justify public service accountability as a rationale for a changing educational purpose and for various reforms, including a focus on state wide planning, on more and better reporting of information, and on results, Kuchapski (1998) cautions us by stating: the pervasiveness of accountability as a method of reforming education may lead one to assume that a high degree of clarity surrounds the term, and that a great deal of thought has gone into establishing the principles and elements that undergrid the concept to ensure that the processes and mechanisms developed in its name are conceptually coherent. However, no such clarity exists (p. 1).

However, despite an outpouring of resources to make teachers' work more accountable, it can be stated that 'in practical and theoretical terms, the area of accountability is a mess' (Macpherson, 1995, p. 475) and the concept is 'in urgent need of rehabilitation' (Macpherson, 1996, p. 1). Regardless of whether these accountability practices are necessary and beneficial, critics argue that it is demonstrably the case that managerialism is exerting greater power and control over teachers' lives (Bates, 1983; Menter et al., 1997; Grunter, 1997). Smyth (1996) argues that while these new market driven modes of accountability challenge older 'bureaucratic and judgemental approaches', they are far from innocent, and the discourses of participation, collegiality, teamwork and partnership are not what they seem at first glance (pp. 188 - 189).

The critical viewpoints of accountability stated above seem to have fallen on deaf ears in Australia. Some State governments have deemed appropriate a system of accountability in the form of Performance Management to closely monitor employees' work. The introduction of a system of Performance Management as a means of accountability reflects a form of consultation and participation with a corporate style. The surveillance of teachers' work is now judged on corporate managerialistic principles. In other words, this reform comprises a carefully orchestrated 'corporate management of education' in a circumstance in which the goals, missions and strategic directions are set by the educational policy makers (Smyth, 1995 ).

Down et al. (2000) state that 'official Performance Management policy faces the dilemma of resolving an inherent tension between the discourse of managerial control and teachers' traditional ways of knowing and talking about their work' (p. 2). In this vein, it could be argued that while a Performance Management policy might be designed with the very best of intentions to institute a necessary form of 'quality control', what they end up doing is reinforce the notion that teachers are not the experts, that educational hierarchies are necessary and just, and that teachers do not have to enter into educative dialogue with one another about their work (Gitlin and Smyth, 1989, p. 164).

This is not surprising when one considers that 'evaluation is a part of State regulation, monitoring and steering' (Popkewitz, 1992, p. 2). In this instance, the use of performance models as a means of evaluation, refers to a specific technique by which government, in the framework of the State, enables individuals to be useful to society (Foucault, 1988, pp. 154). Atkinson-Grosjean and Grosjean (2000) state that these performance models may include, but are not limited to, social technologies like performance indicators. They are situated

within broader, ideological mechanisms variously characterised as public sector reform and new public management. These mechanisms attempt to impose accountability on public sector institutions and improve service provision, by measuring performance against managerial, corporate, and market criteria.

### The 'performative' state and teachers' work

These market - oriented reforms in education echo a shift from the welfare to the 'performative' or competitive state. Schools now forced compete with each other and with private providers in the open market for customers both nationally and internationally (Cerny, 1990). This current ideology has also had profound implications for teachers. Hickey (2000) states that 'teachers' work is now subsumed by a systematic regime of testing and reporting. Educational effectiveness is based increasingly on economic criteria' (p. ii).

Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (1997) elaborate on this new ideology by stating that 'the restructuring of the Australian state has impacted substantially upon the character of educational policy, as well upon the structures of policy production and practice' (p. 81). To date policies regarding teacher education in Australia have not been specifically concerned with reforming the teaching profession as an individual entity but rather in reconceptualising the contexts in which teachers work, especially with respect to regulatory frameworks. The terms and conditions of teachers' work can be conceptualised as a move away from a welfare state (Dabscheck, 1994), to an individualistic, market-oriented regime of industrial relations directed towards the goals of employment flexibility and capital accumulation. Thus, it is not surprising to see large scale policy borrowing from the private sector which is then enforced upon teachers to make them more accountable.

Lingard and Blackmore (1997) strongly voice the argument that the restructuring of the academic workplace has been marked by the increased accountability demands put upon it through profiles and funding formulas at the same time that the sector is being freed up in order to earn its own keep. This centralised decentralisation produces significant tensions and contradictions in the daily operations of schools. In turn, these tensions are played out in the everyday lives of individual teachers, in the form of demands made upon their time to provide feedback and accountability upwards to their institutions, through performance management. This management accountancy is premised upon an input-output model in which the fundamental operative principle is efficiency.

Gordon (1993) lends support to the above by stating the changing context of educational administration is framed by the deregulation of the market and a move to the contractualist or 'performative' state. Thus, it is not surprising that the corporatisation of education has produced new management technologies. Corporatisation, as explained by Wexler (1995) is, when the market infiltrates all aspects of the organisation. Knights and Morgan (1991) define corporate strategy as the 'planned relationship between the market and the internal characteristics of the organisation' (p. 257).

As a result of this new trend, educational administration has gained new power through its mediation of the market in education, and in its assumption of new management discourses (Drucker, 1995 ; Senge, 1990). Now policy makers and politicians seek to steer and not row through policy and the allocation of resources (Taylor et al., 1997). Using input-output measures means that the whole education institution or system can be 'tracked, monitored, structured and deconstructed from a fixed central pivot' (Marginson, 1995). Blackmore (1997) advocates that 'economists and system controllers assume society is an organic unified totality. They believe in the capacity to produce a totalising truth. As a result new modes of direction and control have occurred - one of which is that of 'performativity' (pp. 3-4).

Lyotard (1984) states that "performativity" has always been present where efficiency is the bottomline for decisions and that 'the true goal of the system, the reason it programs itself like a computer, is the optimisation of the global relationship between input and output' (p. 11). Seen in this light, 'performativity' in the context of education has taken on a new dimension - that of being seen to perform .

According to Lyotard (1984) 'performativity' works in two main ways. First, as disciplinary system of judgements, classifications and targets towards which schools and teachers must strive and against and through which they are evaluated. The standards and quality of work are important issues here. Second, as part of the transformation of education and schooling and the expansion of the power of capital, 'performativity' provides sign systems which represent education in a self-referential and reified form for consumption.

Ball (2000) also states that there is now a translation of educational processes into performance indicators and measurable outcomes. The information established in the systems of accountability does 'stand for' and 'represent' valid, worthwhile or meaningful outputs; that what you measure, what you get, is what you want or is worth having (pp. 1-3).

The activities of 'performativity' are evident in the day to day activities of teachers and in the social relations between teachers. Teachers are forced to choose and judge their actions. These actions in turn are judged by others on the basis of their contribution to organisational performance. There is a shift in focus from a concern with individual needs to a concern with aggregate performance (Ball, 2000). This is synonymous with the underlying philosophy prevalent in corporate managerialism. Thus schools in the context of the market, have shifted their organisational emphasis and focus to performance.

Blackmore's (1997) exploration of some of the implications of 'performativity' and its impact upon the nature of teachers' work has significant importance in understanding the nature of the 'performative' state. She makes the following observations: the devolution of responsibility to small subunits [ school administrators] to supervise teachers' work has resulted in a need for performance indicators, performance management policies and the production of data based systems to evaluate teachers; schools serve educational markets with the shift in focus onto the individual as consumer. Schools are now forced to market themselves for financial gain and to make corporate managerialism decisions for which they are ultimately responsible. Teachers are now forced to re-think their roles in schools; and the 'performative' state is increasingly premised upon contractual exchanges between individuals. Teachers are now concerned with teacher employment contracts, performance management contracts and school charter contracts. In this case 'performativity' encourages a process of individuation as teachers work in a state of conscious and permanent visibility resulting in a form of self surveillance which assures the automatic functioning of power (pp. 4-9).

It should also be noted that the emphasis on 'performativity' (as opposed to performance) has other implications for schools. Schools now require more rapid organisational responses to external demands and the market and the move to strategic thinking. As a result, 'there is little doubt that the performance of schools and the basic values of the schools will increasingly become the concern to society as a whole, rather than "professional" matters being safely left to the "educator" ' (Drucker, 1995, pp. 204 - 205).

Walkerline (1992) cited in Blackmore (1997, p. 24), lends support to the above when she states that 'while teaching has always been about performance, it was performance derived out of passion for teaching and care for children. Now, being passionate about the core work of teaching and learning is not enough. Now they are positioned as performers - to attract clients, to persuade, to seduce through indicating their expertise, yet an expertise which is

constantly under challenge. One also has to be passionate about the school priorities by performing a range of extra – classroom activities'. Thus teachers' 'performativity' is judged by criteria which are out of the control of teachers. Teachers are judged by a set of external criteria implemented by management or by how, their actions in the classroom, is represented symbolically through some form of communication (Cvs, promotion applications and in standardised assessments).

The 'performative' state has also lead to the development of new technologies of the self. The State now constructs a certain type of subject - whether principal, teacher, student or parent. The emphasis on 'performativity' and accountability significantly alters work practices and identity formation. These new technologies of the self are enacted in the form of fabrications by some teachers. Fabrications in this context refers to versions of truth, in respect, of an individual teacher which do not exist. In this sense teachers are not 'outside the truth' nor do they render simply true or direct accounts, teachers purposefully produce in order 'to be accountable'. Truthfulness is not the point - the point is teachers' effectiveness in the 'market' or how they rank during inspection, as well as the 'work' they do 'on' and 'in' the organisation of the school (Ball, 2000, p.9).

## The social and political context of Performance Management

### The roots of Performance Management

The roots of Performance Management lie deep in the private sector and it has been transferred into the public sector as a key element in the movement towards new public management or managerialism of the public services during the 1980's and 1990's (Blackmore, 1999).

Performance Management constitutes a key element of a managerially driven version of Human Resource Management. One of its strongest legitimating devices lies in the presumption that systems of personnel management can be moved from context to context, and that the basic principles and working assumptions remain the same. It is depicted in a technicist form as a 'free - floating technology capable of being applied in diverse contexts and where the nature of context - specificity is deemed of less relevance than techno - universality' (Hextall and Mahony, 1999).

Angus (1994) is of the opinion that managerialist ideologies are fundamentally grounded in the notion that there exists sets of principles and procedures which can be applied to bring about 'effective, efficient and economic' modes of operation. Little recognition is accorded to issues of structure, power and conflict which are ever present in social structures like schools. These are wished away or rendered invisible in managerialist accounts.

The policy also assumes that rationally designed structures and practices resting on processes of calculated planning will maximise organisational effectiveness. Regardless of whether these practices are necessary and efficient, it is demonstrably the case that managerialism is exerting greater power and control over teachers' lives (Thompson and McHugh, 1990, p. 15).

Rees (1995) argues that the current obsession with managerialism in education cannot be divorced from broader social and economic policies nor can it be seen as a set of neutral or scientific practices somehow uncontaminated by power and ideology. Performance Management is but one part of the broader shift to the market model of education with emphasis on effective and efficient economic management of human and financial

resources (Kenway et al., 1995; Marginson, 1993). Pollitt (1993) argues that presently, management is deemed to be inherently good, managers are the heroes, managers should be given room and autonomy to manage, and other groups should accept authority (p. 17). Rees (1995) elaborates this point by stating that 'managerialism is not divorced from social and economic policies nor is it a set of neutral scientific techniques uncontaminated by politics and struggles for power nor can practices which are appropriate for the conduct of private sector enterprises also be applied to public sector services' (p. 15).

Oakes (1986) elaborates on the political dimension of managerialism by stating State and federal governments view performance reports as instruments of policy to help promote education reforms. Decisions about desired outcomes and conditions will determine the nature of any indicator system ... these decisions will be political (p. 24).

What is Performance Management and how it is defined ?

It is difficult to get a clear definition of the term Performance Management. The following give some indication of the sorts of meanings that are being proposed by those advocating Performance Management and some of their critics. McLagan (1989) states 'that the focus of Performance Management systems is on ensuring that individual and organisational goals are linked and that what individuals do everyday supports the organisational goals' (p. 53).

Silverman (1991) defines Performance Management as: a comprehensive and continuous system that, in addition to traditional aspects of performance appraisal, includes role clarification, coaching and ongoing communications that are designed to help staff develop and improve performance (pp. 5-121).

According to Beer (1981, p. 25) and Saul (1992, pp. 27-28) Performance Management systems, in both the private and public sectors, typically have a broad range of objectives such as: developing individual job objectives which link with those of the organisation; improving individual and organisation performances; improving two way communication between job holder and supervisor so that any confusions about job goals can be cleared up, ideas can be shared; things that affect the job holder can be discussed openly and any problems/difficulties dealt with; improving staff motivation and morale; developing job holder's knowledge and skills by providing training and personal and career development; realistically evaluating job holder's performance and providing accurate and constructive feedback on time; and providing a firm basis for validating and defending personnel management decisions.

However, from a managerialist perspective, Murlis (1992) states: Good performance management is about operating a process which increases the likelihood of achieving performance improvements.

Current thinking in this area indicates that management needs to be practiced by the integrated operation of four processes ... planning for performance, managing performance, appraising performance and rewarding performance (p. 65).

Armstrong and Baron (1998) offer this definition of Performance Management : A strategy which relates to every activity of the organisation set in the context of its human resources policies, culture, style and communication systems. The nature of the strategy depends on the organisational context and can vary from organisation to organisation (p. 4).

As a result of increasing pressures for productivity, accountability, rationalised human resource allocation and equal employment opportunity compliance, Brinkerhoff and Kanter (1980) predicted that 'there would be a growth in the use of formal systems of performance

appraisal, modelled on private sector experience, in private, government and non profit organisations' (p. 3). Thus, what becomes apparent from the above definitions is that Performance Management has different implications at a number of different levels: the personal, the institutional, the systematic and the societal.

### Performance Management in the Australian Context

Australia's political and economic culture has altered radically as it has sought to re-position itself in response to the wider global restructuring of capitalism (Catley, 1996; McAllister and Frankel, 1993). Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) describe this process of transformation as 'from "old style" industrial capitalism characterised by standardisation, mass production, mass consumption and the tyranny of the production line, to "fast capitalism", where the defining characteristics are competition, quality, and markets centred around change, flexibility, and distinctive niches' (p. 26).

Economic activity has now become 'globalised', with : 'a high degree of integration and restructuring within and between transnational corporations and global markets; a more rapid, and more dramatic, than usual process of structural reorganisation within and between the economies of all capitalist countries; and a changing pattern of global relations between transnational capital and nation states' (Broomhill, 1995, p. 27).

Pussey (1991) is of the opinion that 'there is now a new kind of social and psychological "colonisation" in which Australian civil society, identity and its cultures are quite explicitly defined as the malleable and consumable environment of a global economy' (p. 18).

Spoehrer and Broomhill (1995) state that 'the consequence for Australia has been the resurgence of nineteenth century economic liberalism which gives priority to the market over the state as the most rational and efficient means for allocating goods and services in society. The advocates of economic rationalism believe that the public interest is best served through the free interplay of individuals competing in the market place' (p. 43).

Yeatman's (1990) analysis of Australian public sector reform in the 1980's highlights significant changes taking place in bureaucratic culture. 'At the heart of these changes, is the adoption of the discourse of management based on the administrative requirements of privately orientated, profit-maximising firms' (p. 13). She also states that: ... the purposes of public administration and public service tend to be reduced to the effective, efficient and economic management of human and financial resources. This is a technical approach to public administration and public service couched within a broader framework dominated by economic consideration (p. 14). Rees (1995) elaborates by stating: Managers are not neutral technocrats. They derive their cues and their scripts from a set of policies which contend that an economy needs to be run like a market with as little interference as possible, that human effort can be counted as a commodity, and that in the conduct of organisations, financial accountability is the criterion to measure performance (p. 16).

Down, Hogan and Chadbourne (1999) are of the opinion that 'corporate managerialism, as the dominant style, seeks to make government more efficient by doing more with less, focussing on outcomes and results and managing change better. One of the major features of managerialism is its apparent ability to redefine social, cultural and political problems into technical problems' (p. 4).

Bates (1983) argues that 'while techniques of rationalisation and control may increase the rationality for organisations and bureaucracies, it decreases the possibility of rational purposive action on the part of individuals' (p. 32).

According to Solondz (1995), managerialism's unwritten personnel policies contravenes wisdom. They act to reduce staff morale, job security, professionalism and career development. They undermine mutual trust and the social contract between employee and employer. They reduce industrial democracy, destroy working relationships and increase occupational stress. In the last instance, they serve to undermine the stated aims of managerialism, especially the claims to accountability, improved efficiency, quality, cleverness and productivity (p. 219).

Humanistic and democratic reforms are being enacted not because they create more humanistic, less hierarchical conditions for workers but because they are a means to creating more and continuing profits. Ultimately, workers do not have the power or freedom to question the 'vision', values, ends, and goals of the new work order itself (Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996).

The fundamental problem with corporate managerialism, according to Stilwell (1995), 'is that it treats people like conventional economic theory treats labour - as a factor of production - as a thing in the service of profits'. In short, every transaction between individuals is regarded as a commodity which only has value according to an economic price of exchange. He believes 'this is ultimately self-defeating because, by denying their essential humanity, the economic system treats people in a manner to which they cannot ultimately lend allegiance' (p. 261).

#### Teachers' perceptions of Performance Management

##### Cries from Western Australia

Down, Hogan and Chadbourne (1999;2000) have researched the question of how Performance Management impacted on teachers' lives and how teachers made sense of it. Teachers' experiences of Performance Management were organised around three emergent themes:

##### Trust

Many teachers remained suspicious and unconvinced by the rhetoric. Many teachers felt that the process of Performance Management put in place to facilitate negotiation and consultation were contrived and superficial. In some instances there were serious mismatches between the rhetoric and the reality of Performance Management practices. This in turn led to a general sense of confusion about the purposes and processes of Performance Management. Thus, according to Down et al. (1999) 'attempts by the Western Australian Education Department to sell Performance Management via school briefings, articles in the departmental journal *School Matters*, in-servicing of selected staff and compulsory professional development on performance management modules, failed because many teachers were and are still ambivalent' (p. 8).

##### The difficulty of being honest

Teachers were also concerned by the way in which Performance Management could promote misrepresentation, dishonesty and mistrust at all levels. Down et al. (1999) state that 'many examples were offered where the superficial images of "professionalism", "effective teaching" and "improvement" were promoted highly, while authentic instances of these things remained invisible. Further, according to some teachers, for example, school development plans were written to impress outsiders and had little impact on what actually happened in schools and classrooms. Some felt that

Performance Management at the school level was the same, with arbitrary and subjective judgements being made about their work by principals and superintendents who had never seen it. Teachers felt that looking good on paper counted for more than "just doing your job properly" (p. 8).

Some teachers were not confident that they could trust their managers, or the system generally, to provide a fair and honest reflection of their work with children. Some were sceptical that quality teaching was even a motive for performance management, seeing it as being much more about control (p. 8).

All the teachers in the study saw Performance Management as being a de facto appraisal system. Their feelings about it were shaped by past experiences of appraisal, in which most of them had felt anxious and powerless to some degree, and many felt that they had been judged falsely or inadequately. As a result, many 'played the game' to satisfy superiors or others charged with Performance Management because of the basic lack of trust in Performance Management processes and the lack of collegiality (pp. 8-9).

#### Reasserting pedagogical values

Central to many of the concerns expressed by the teachers was the loss of control over their work. Teachers believed that Performance Management had not only been 'imposed by outside agents' but had actively disempowered them by 'taking control and putting it in the hands of others' (p. 9). Boyett and Conn (cited in Gee and Lankshear, 1995) support the view that present day management practices are 'vulnerable to abuses of power and elaborate manipulation of people and values' (pp. 8-9). According to Smyth (1995), educational restructuring is a form of recentralisation of power and intensification of control over the purposes and directions of teachers' work (p. 6). However, some teachers did produce oppositional forms of behaviour to this new method of control.

Some teachers 'played the game' as a form of resistance to the Performance Management regime. Others simply refused to attend interviews or simply ignored Performance Management. Teachers also justified their modes of resistance by stating that they did not have the time to implement Performance Management and furthermore, many felt that Performance Management failed to improve their teaching or benefit the children in their classrooms.

Down, Hogan and Chadbourne (1999) conclude that teachers in their study believed that schools were becoming far more competitive, divisive, and stressful workplaces because of the increasing efforts by the State to control and manipulate their work; and will always remain suspicious of managerial reforms if these reforms are clouded by authority, structures of hierarchy and paternalistic forms of social relations in the workplace (pp. 11-12).

#### Cries from South Australia

##### Performance Management in South Australia under the Education Department

Spreadbury (2001) states that 'in 1992, the then Education Department came under criticism for the release of its first attempt at addressing the performance of teachers in schools, the intentionally developmental but none too positively titled Managing Poor Performance scheme' (p. 8). Many teachers pointed out that the latter scheme was in itself an end-point and lacked a context. They advocated a 'logically sequenced, continuous and positive framework within which teachers and leaders could engage in meaningful feedback which

would enhance already effective teaching practice' (Spreadbury, 2001, p. 8). However, this was not to be.

In 1994 the newly created Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), initiated the first Performance Management Policy for teachers which set out to determine a framework for enhancing every teachers' work. Even at this initial stage the policy received tremendous resistance from both teachers and teacher unions. Cava (1997) states that the DECS policy was 'one of hierarchical (line management) supervision ... inkeeping with the corporate mentality ... it attempted to reduce education to a mechanism needing to be correctly calibrated in order to perform specific tasks' (p. 6). He further stated:

Teaching was reduced to nothing more than the implementation of curriculum packages while lip service was paid to the need of teachers; DECS's performance policy assumed teacher performance could be easily measured, managed and made more accountable; To DECS, performance management was about inspecting and evaluating the workers and not the organisation. The major rationale for this system seemed to be accountability and efficiency; Current school culture in line with DECS' policy was being driven by the economic imperative. There was a push to define teachers as economic beings rather than social beings; DECS' aim was to subordinate the classroom teacher to the superior wisdom of their line managers; and Teachers were seen as functionaries, employed to carry out the wishes of DECS and their principals (p. 6). Thus, it was not surprising that many progressive teachers viewed DECS' Performance

Management practices as a failure because they completely misjudged what motivated teachers. Teachers' 'commitment is altruistic and is motivated from within, not inspired by indicators or manners' (Cava, 1997, p. 6).

Two relevant postgraduate studies undertaken during this period also echoed teacher criticisms of the DECS policy. Grealy's (1997) research findings highlighted three major concerns evident in the policy. Firstly, the policy was very general and does not provide details of appraisal processes. This could have led to a variety of interpretations and a lack of constituency as schools developed their own processes. Secondly, the policy rested on the assumption that there was an agreement on what was good teaching and ignored issues of detail as to who would be appraised and by whom, the methods of appraisal, the frequency and outcomes. Thirdly, the policy attempted to combine the formative or performance development process and the summative or performance management process into one teacher appraisal process (p. 7).

Brown's (1998) study mentions four major issues of contention by teachers with the DECS policy. Firstly, the above policy was seen as removed from the complex world of teaching. A second criticism was that the policy lacked a human side, particularly in terms of the importance of relationships in teaching and learning. The language used in the policy text was a third target of criticism. Many of the terms and phrases used were not seen to be educational ones. Finally, there were questions regarding who the policy was designed to benefit (pp. 23-24).

Overall, the teachers interviewed by Brown (1998) saw the need: to steer the use of Performance Management away from an attempt to measure teachers' ability to reach particular standards of competence towards its use as a tool for more deeply understanding teaching as a form of intellectual, moral and political labour; for Performance Management to be seen, not as an additional program or responsibility, but as a natural part of teachers' work with a strong focus on students and their learning; for skill development to be a central tenet of Performance Management, particularly in terms of giving and receiving feedback, engaging in dialogue and asking questions that encourage forms of practical and critical

reflection on practice; for Performance Management to focus on the successful practices of teachers as well as points for change and growth; and for resources, especially time, to be allocated to support teachers' involvement in Performance Management (p. 29).

### Performance Management in South Australia under the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE)

Since 1996, with the arrival of the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE), a view emerged that the existing policy of Performance Management required some modification, specifically making it more relevant to all employees. Hence in 2000, a review of the policy was initiated. In addition, a set of guidelines has been developed to assist leaders and education employees in the implementation of effective performance management practices (Spreadbury, 2001).

These guidelines provide some guidance for how to achieve improved performance related relationships between the teacher and line manager. Spreadbury (2001) states 'as guidelines, they are not mandatory in the same way a policy must be adhered to. Their use or adaptation is purely voluntary' (p. 8). However, Cava (2001) disagrees with the latter statements by stating that 'the guidelines reinforce management hierarchy at the expense of the professional independence of the classroom teacher. The emphasis is on creating a clear distinction between employees and management' (p. 14). He maintains that 'the focus is clearly on imposing a corporate model aimed at controlling classroom teachers rather than recognising them as true professionals' (2001, p. 14).

Spreadbury (2001) urges teachers to familiarise themselves with the policy document and that they should take cognisance of the fact that Performance Management is a two way process between managers and employees, negotiated between both parties and focused on the achievement of agreed goals. He states 'as such, the process should not be top down, controlled by the manager or perceived as having potential punitive consequences' (p. 8). But 'what's the use of being a manager if you can't get the workers to do what they are told? Management is provided with the weapon of yearly summative reports to hang over the head of every classroom teacher' (Cava, 2001, p. 14).

Cava (2001) also states that DETE has put together the perfect management system, one that keeps all the control, takes all the credit while accepting no responsibility and deflecting all criticism. To DETE a professional teacher is little more than an employee paid to implement government policy without question. There is no room for advocacy or a thinking profession, only government directions, strategic planning and core business (p. 14).

### Current critical perceptions of the DETE's Performance Management policy

In the present scenario, South Australian teachers perceptions of Performance Management are no different from those echoed by their colleagues in Western Australia and those interviewed by Grealy (1997) and Brown (1998). Observations recorded from my study reveals the following prevalent themes: the purpose of Performance Management

Most teachers interviewed had great reservations about the purpose of Performance Management. Whilst acknowledging that the policy was intended to support the professional development of teachers, many were suspicious of the hidden agenda of the policy. Most teachers saw the policy as a means of teacher control and as a tool of bureaucratic surveillance. Teachers stated:

While I agree it is a means of surveillance ... the bigger picture is that it is insulting. They check on what you are doing. The actual policy from the department is a top-down issue.

Teachers, on the whole, see the management of teacher performance as a way of 'masking' the unwillingness of the DETE to concentrate on improving teaching and conditions for the kids. Teachers feel as if they are being left out these days because Performance Management has become an institutionalised way of blaming teachers for the present ills of the system.

As an administrator, I think that it (Performance Management) is a complete waste of time and there may be some that hold the belief that it is good because they enjoy the power that goes with it all. the effectiveness of Performance Management

Some teachers appear to be neutral towards the process in terms of its effectiveness whilst others voiced great antagonism. The predominant view appears to be that the process is not achieving what it aims to. The following accounts echo these sentiments: I have no problems with Performance Management because I think that what I get from my teaching is what I put into it and so I get all the pats on the back and all the evaluation that I need from the students themselves. I believe that the students are the greatest evaluators and you just get so much more back from them than your colleagues. So who needs Performance Management? I certainly don't but if it's there, it's there.

I agree with Performance Management in principle but I have a lot of reservations. Well, I don't know whether it's because it is not being implemented properly. This brings to question the purpose of the process. I agree it is a means of surveillance ... the bigger picture is that it is insulting. There are no surprises in it for me. It's not really anything different to what I was previously doing. Policy does not dominate my teaching. I work within the framework of the policy. I am very open about the fact that I think that the current system of PM is full of bull ... I don't think it is effective and I don't think it does what it is supposed to do. It is just a process of 'big brother' watching. Who gives a damn? I do my work so what can they do to me? Appraisal does not bother me. I have not changed my practice in any way as a result of Performance Management. I have always worked very hard and take pride in what I do but I still feel insulted that I have to document everything and measure the hours and all the other things that go with that. the question of time and resources

Several teachers indicated that they were aware of possibilities for performance enhancement inherent in the process, should time and resources be devoted to it within the school, and recommendations for professional development arising from it be followed through. The view that the absence of time allocated for the process severely limited its value to the individual teachers. It was recognised by both teachers and administrators, however, that a considerable amount of teachers' time would be required, if the process were to be implemented effectively. Teachers stated:

Unless they ( DETE) change our whole work processes, then these things aren't going to work because the biggest issue for teachers and administrators now is time. They are overburden with too much work and we can only do so much in Performance Management. We also lack the resources. Government schools are receiving less and less monies. How do they expect Performance Management to work if they don't give us the time and the resources? And in the end your priorities gotta ... be more immediate. How else can you work? You say 'well, these things must be done today and those can wait till tomorrow' and Performance Management goes on the 'wait till tomorrow list'. I am not satisfied with it because there's never time allowed for it ...I have friends that work in the department (DETE) and they say 'Well, you get a mountain of time. You can control that time'. You can't control your time.

Teaching is a constant activity ... parents and students control your diary. There's no time for Performance Management. As a teacher you have to give students priority. Perhaps my

biggest whinge of all is the lack of time. I think teachers are being asked to do so much, so much extra all the time these days and I just want to say to them sometimes 'Ah! go away. Just let me teach'. I think sometimes of all these other things that are imposed upon us are wonderful in theory but there just isn't the time. On top of all this they want us to do so much with limited resources.

#### The issue of trust

Many teachers felt that for Performance Management to be successful there had to be a high level of trust between the teacher and the supervisor. My relationship with my team is based on trust. It's very much an open process. I'm there to offer support and ideas and they share with me their challenges, their values, their priorities ... all of this is only possible because they trust me. If there is no trust then you will not achieve anything. There will be resistance because teachers are always suspicious of ... of the purpose of Performance Management ... and who's doing it. So there are two things they want to know... is the department involved and what will happen to the results? ... the person doing it with them at school ... do they trust that person?

I just believe that without trust, you can't have quality relationships so unless they ( teachers) trust you, the process is not going to work. So you try to be honest ... you don't give any feedback until you have built a ... trustful relationship with people otherwise you are wasting your time. resistance to the policy in the form of 'performativities and fabrications'

Teachers agreed that the Performance Management policy was designed to make them more accountable to the educational bureaucrats: It's a way of auditing schools ... across a staff to inform change. But we are all professionals and we should, as professionals, be responsible for updating, thinking professional development, doing our professional reading without being checked up on. So I find this part a bit severe.

The policy sent by the department ... it doesn't go with my philosophy. I find it very black and white and it does not cater for the needs of all teachers. Teachers are forced to show results. Their work is controlled by the policy.

This should not be the case.

I think teachers are suspicious of the policy but they go along with it but it just depends on how hard it's brought down. It should be used as a support mechanism and not used as a method of control to instill a sense of fear in teachers.

The department policy guidelines are very broad so once they get into a school, everything is transformed. It all changes ... transformed to the context of the school and there's this massive gap most of the teachers would tell you between what the system says it to do and what really, really is achieved in schools. I am positive that the bureaucrats are aware of this. However, they still want to have checklists in place. They need to feel that they are in control all the time.

Some principals who toe the line highlight any faults or mistakes you make in your work and they then follow the policy to the book and will use Performance Management to their own ends rather than to help you. That's a very bad situation.

Another issue about teacher performance is that on the surface, the rhetoric used to sell it, sounds quite unreasonable. Terminology like 'supporting teachers', 'valuing and recognising', 'employee efforts' and so on are totally unconvincing. Teachers are realising that the department is being dishonest, lacks any real or has any genuine concern for them

as employees and has even less (if that's possible) respect and care for kids in the state system.

Teachers' responses to the issue of 'fabrication' in the Performance Management process varied according to individual perceptions of the process. Some teachers stated that they saw no need to fabricate because little or no time was spent on Performance Management. Others felt that they were compelled to present the case of what they were really doing in a pleasant light to their line managers in order to comply to policy requirements.

Most teachers revealed that they exploited the Personal Development Plan [one of the key elements of a Performance Management framework] to their advantage.

The personal development plan is that part of the planning that relates directly to the staff member's personal development needs. The personal development plan may be incorporated as a part of an overall performance plan. The overall purpose of this plan is to support and extend the growth and development of staff members. It incorporates training and development activities to be undertaken to enhance skills and knowledge (DETE Performance Management Guidelines, 2000, p. 17). It is compulsory for South Australian teachers to engage in 37.5 hours of Training and Development activities per annum. Teachers who breach this condition are forced to report to their schools at the end of the year in order to make up this time. To avoid this, some teachers engage in acts of fabrications by employing the following strategies: the making up of records of journals, articles and resource material which you have read and claim them for Training and Development hours; attending activities for which Training and Development recognition is given in terms of hours. However, only a small percentage of time is actually spent on professional development, the bulk on socialising. You claim the sum total; over-claiming for the time that it took to prepare for Training and Development workshops at your school; renaming activities so that they count as Training and Development activities. For example, some sports coaching renamed as Training and Development preparation so that it can be counted for the 37.5 hours; attending courses that have no bearing on the subject that you teach in order to claim the time; becoming a member of clubs and societies at school in order to appear that you are always busy; and keeping colourful and elaborate portfolios in order to create an impression.

## Conclusion

By providing evidence from Western Australia and South Australia, my aim in this article was to describe and explain the dynamics of Performance Management as a mode of teacher accountability. The research reveals that teachers perceived Performance Management as an ineffective and irrelevant form of teacher accountability that took little or no cognisance of their concerns with the official rhetoric of the policy. They strongly believe that their intentions are not considered and that teachers are being effectively silenced in the evaluation process. Furthermore, teachers' professional autonomy has been eroded at the expense of discourses of managerialistic accountability which very often creates tension in schools. Teachers, therefore, have become technicians concerned with implementing the ideas of others, rather than intellectuals involved in questioning and interrogating their own teaching and the context in which it occurs (Smyth, 1991).

This tension between teachers and the educational bureaucrats is played out in the form of resistance on the part of teachers. Teachers interviewed in both studies echoed the viewpoint that while they did not 'oppose' accountability per se, the present system of Performance Management is extremely stressful, of little or no value, suspicious, and unworkable. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that whatever the reform intentions from outside the schools are, it is clear that they will be modified by teachers as they enact those



intentions; often quite radically (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). The research in South Australia clearly illustrates the latter. Teachers engaged in 'performativities and fabrications' in order to 'accomodate' Performance Management. Credlin (2001) supports this viewpoint by stating that 'while governments might be concerned about the notion of accountability in schools, their calls for reform will be futile if teachers do not understand and support these reforms. Teachers might be constrained to subvert formal procedures and processes to their self-interests even where formal operating procedures (Performance Management) exist' (Credlin, p. 3)

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