Article

Teachers Performing Professionalism: A Foucauldian Archaeology

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Abstract

Faced with the perceived need to redefine education for more economic utilitarian purposes, as well as to encourage compliance with government policies, Australia, like many other Anglophone nations, has engaged in numerous policy shifts resulting in performativity practices becoming commonplace in the educational landscape. A series of interviews with teachers from Queensland, Australia, in which they revealed their experiences of professionalism are examined archaeologically to reveal how they enact their roles in response to this performative agenda. Findings suggest that while there is some acceptance among teachers of the performative discourse, there is increasing resistance, which permits the construction of alternative or counter-discourses to the currently internationally pervasive performative climate.

Introduction

In Australia, the promulgation of policies, and the allocation of funds associated with those policies, has seen a discourse of performativity that privileges measurable outcome goals, redefining earlier notions of teacher professionalism. Some teachers have embraced the performance agenda, seeing it as an opportunity to advance successful careers and increase professional development opportunities (Goodrham & Hodkinson, 2004; D. H. Hargreaves, 1994; Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark, & Warne, 2002). Others see loss of morale, identity, and autonomy, an overemphasis on accountability and a tightly surveilled, low trust working environment that stifles innovation and creativity (Avis, 2005; Blackmore, 2004; Burnard & White, 2008; Kelchtermans, 2004; O'Connor & White, 2011; Sanguinetti, 2000). Many writers such as Deem, Hilliard, and Reed (2008) posit that autonomy is an integral part of professionalism (Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting, & Whitty, 2000; Leaton Gray & Whitty, 2010; Quicke, 2000), and with the relentless creeping of performative practices into education, it is timely to investigate how teachers are performing their roles by accepting, reacting to, or challenging such a performative discourse. We argue that there is a need to dig deeper into different landscapes to explore how teachers are responding to this redefinition of professionalism as performativity. We borrow from Foucault's (1972) archaeological toolbox to enable us to undertake this excavation.

This article first conceptualizes performativity in educational contexts and then outlines how a performative discourse and its associated practices have colonized the Australian educational landscape with particular escalation since the turn of the century. In this study, teachers' experiences of these changes are captured through open-ended interviewing techniques before their "statements" are subjected to Foucauldian archaeological analysis to identify their reactions to the prevailing performative climate. These findings are discussed in relation to the educational field, revealing how teachers are playing what Foucault (1972) has described as their "truth game" of professionalism and performativity. While some comply, many voices reveal teachers who choose to "jump past the hoops" rather than "through the hoops" in resisting the identified performativity agenda.

Performativity in Education

Resting on the fundamental economic assumptions that institutional competition and consumer preferences are an efficient resource allocation system, the performance agenda has emerged as a counterpoint to older policy technologies of professionalism (Ball, 2003; Blackmore, 2004). In essence, performativity privileges measurable outcome goals. Such performance indicators encapsulate or represent the worth, quality, or value of an individual or organization within a

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field of judgment (Ball, 2003; Burnard & White, 2008). Performance criteria are often justified as a necessary means of ensuring accountability and equity in the distribution of scarce educational resources with some limits placed on professional autonomy accepted as minor collateral damage (Groundwater & Sachs, 2002; A. Hargreaves, 2003). However, Chua (2009, p. 160) claims that the result is a restriction of teachers' "designerly cognition" and "designer identities," lowering the professional standards of educators as they limit their aim to the visible and measurable goals captured by the performance criteria. Similarly, Avis (2005) claims that other conceptualizations of good practice outside performance criteria are silenced and denied legitimacy.

A recent study by Vidovich and Currie (2011) found that Australia is an extreme example of external regulation that privileges corporate over academic modes, is characterized by coercion, and staff and students' voices are no longer heard as the trust gap widens and a performative agenda takes hold. From this perspective, where once teachers were positioned as having specialized knowledges (Shulman, 1987), a shared technical culture, and a strong service ethic (Carr, 2000; Etzioni, 1969; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Larson, 1977), many writers agree that teachers are increasingly discursively repositioned as non-experts. With educational decisions coming from outside the educational world, teachers all but work in standardized accountable environments as unquestioning supporters and implementers of a competency-based, outcome-oriented pedagogy related to the world of work, in line with Australian government policies (Sachs, 2003). For some, such conflict is highly personalized, what Ball (2003) has referred to as struggles over teachers' souls. For such teachers, the ethics of competition and performance differ markedly from previous ethics of professional judgment and cooperation (Burnard & White, 2008). To explore this contested space, we operationalize Foucauldian archaeology as our method of investigation. Archaeology is a comparative analysis designed to examine the simultaneous exchanges between discourses influencing the current policy and teacher context. We therefore begin with a historical representation of the Australian educational context and then specifically refer to Queensland where the interviews took place.

The Australian Historical Educational Context

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, teachers in Australia were subjected to various discourses of derision in government documents and the popular media, being blamed for widespread unemployment and used as scapegoats for the failure of governments' educational policies. Cultural conservatives and the then Liberal Government, followed by the subsequent Labor Government, business leaders, and the New Right, as well as the "trial by media" (Sugrue, 2009, p. 373), reiterated the myth of decline in standards and generated a

sense of crisis in education that they intimated would lead to national decline. This relentless onslaught resulted in employer organizations being rewarded with a policy role in education (Marginson, 1997). What employers wanted was a competency-based pedagogy directly related to the world of work (Robertson, 1996). The result was that thinking skills, problem-solving, coping with authority, and social skills (vocationalism) rose high on the priority list. Governments at the time also thought it necessary that schools form school/business partnerships (Robertson, 1996). Various international policy documents such as *Investing in Our Children: Business and the Public Schools* from the U.S. Committee for Economic Development (CED) urged business to take the challenge of improving schools by using the principles of effective organization and management (CED, 1985). Tertiary institutions were also invited to forge business links through collaborative programs.

This phase in Australia became known as the "Reorg" (Ashenden, 1990). Education was presented with a new economic mission (Blackmore & Sachs, 2005), not just about developing the skills and talents of the Australian nation as in years gone by but now about developing education and research as a way to increase the nation's global competitiveness. Essential to this objective was the restructuring of teachers' work and reconstitution of their professionalism within an economic and performative framework.

Thus, teachers were simultaneously blamed for all the ills in society and presented as the mechanism for national economic reconstruction. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) reports at the time called for globalization and a program of microeconomic reform, and this became the taken-for-granted international wisdom the Australian government took on board. Under the leadership of Dawkins, Minister of Employment, Education, and Training from 1987 to 1991, the government used many strategies to follow the OECD line. Education was further opened up to the business sector to ensure a productive workforce, a competency-based curriculum was introduced to schools to meet industry requirements, and the Australian Research Council (ARC) was formed to make Australia more productive (Marginson, 1997). With business drawn into education, more corporate forms of management were introduced into educational establishments. Strategies such as the creation of market-based systems of accountability, the formation of national systems (corporate federalism, Lingard, 1991), devolution, and industrial mechanisms led to new forms of educational management that inevitably weakened the position of teachers. Education became redefined as an industry with inputs and outputs, operating as a national/global market in which choice and competition would enhance the quality of teaching, as parents (the education consumers) shopped around.

This marketization of education (Sachs, 2003) saw schools marketing themselves with mission statements and strategic plans expressed in "business-speak." These market

strategies became the commonsense discourses of schooling. Rather than being seen as problematic, they became the contemporary taken-for-granted way of thinking at that time, and schools that did not take on this approach were said to be "out of touch." According to Sachs (2003, p. 18), the imperatives of this market regime were for schools to produce students who were "numerate, literate and able to take civic and social responsibility" as multi-skilled, flexible workers who would boost the economy and increase international competitiveness.

In pursuit of this goal, schools were transformed into carriers of economic policy; corporations with line managers working effectively and efficiently under direct ministerial control. Teachers were repositioned as education workers subject to this management. However, in what Sachs (2003) referred to as a paradoxical strategy, devolved school management (Blackmore, 2004) was introduced to give the illusion of a quest for quality that was controlled locally, but the development of policies and strategic control of teaching, curriculum, and assessment remained firmly in the hands of centrally located bureaucrats. This distancing by governments, or "steering at a distance," was a successful strategy for avoiding controversy while positioning teachers as the weak link in the educational supply chain.

As "education workers," teachers became subject to "industry" award restructuring strategies whereby, to win pay increases, employers and unions had to "cooperate to review their rewards in order to improve industry efficiency, productivity and workers' career opportunities" (Reid, 1993, p. 131). Offsetting work reorganization and productivity for wage increases meant that industrial and educational issues could no longer be separated and the government had a further potent mechanism for reforming teachers' work.

These strategies redefined teachers as technicians whose role it was to efficiently implement decisions made by their managers (Blackmore & Sachs, 2005). Their job was to improve student performance, compete with neighboring schools for resources, and raise money from the business sector (Robertson, 1996). However, they were not to be involved in intellectual, philosophical, or epistemological decisions (Reid, 1993). Governments were strategic, making sure that any consultation processes with teachers were tightly managed. The intellectual autonomy characterized in traditional discourses of professionalism had well and truly been stripped from teachers.

"Discourses of derision" continued into the 1990s, but this time not only were teachers being attacked but also a discussion paper by the Department of Employment, Education and Training in 1992 openly asserted that teacher educators in Australia had lost touch with classrooms as well as being too old and set in their ways (Department of Employment, Education and Training [DEET], 1992). Governments maintained that what was needed in pre-service teacher courses was a focus on classroom skills (Reid, 1993) instead of philosophy, history, and sociology. This was further strengthened by the push for the development of national competency standards.

Since the turn of the century, performativity activities in Australian education include, but are not limited to, the use of professional standards to enhance teacher quality and professionalism with the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*[1] developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL); curriculum reform with the introduction of an Australian National Curriculum; and the continuation of high-stakes testing programs such as the National Assessment Program–Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN[2]). The latter two are both under the auspices of the Australian Curriculum Reporting and Assessment Authority (ACARA).

Even though the performative agenda has colonized the Australian educational landscape extensively, in what Lingard (2010) has referred to as "new national accountabilities" (p.129) or "cooperative federalism" (p. 130), Queensland, where this study took place, has "a tradition of respecting and trusting teacher judgement" (Klenowski, 2011, p. 81). After the abolition of public examinations following the Radford Report of 1969 (Lingard, 2010), the state has continued a 40-year history of school-based curriculum and externally moderated standards-based assessment in the senior phase of schooling (Years 11 and 12) with a Core Skills Test having the effect of stretching teaching (Lingard, 2010). Such practices were extended with the New Basics trials and, from 2005 to 2009, with the incorporation of standards referenced moderation in Years 1 to 9 (known as the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting [QCAR] Framework). Queensland conceptualized the framework from the view that assessment was an integral part of teaching and learning. The tests were not about measuring school or teacher effectiveness; rather, the intention was to build teachers' assessment capacity and assessment literacy. Teachers, valued as a community of learners met to discuss, critique, and analyze student responses (Klenowski, 2011; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2010, Lingard, 2010).

However, more recently, this trust seems to be disappearing with pre-service teacher testing in literacy, numeracy, and science an important agenda item in response to the Australian (National) Curriculum. In addition, Education Queensland has developed an initiative called Curriculum into the Classroom (c2c), which outlines lesson-by-lesson and unit-by-unit exactly what teachers should be teaching. Although not yet mandatory for all state schools, it may appear inevitable that some principals and teachers will anticipate further encroachment of performativity practices and thereby exacerbate an ever more regulated educational environment.

While teachers have always been rendered "weak" since the advent of compulsory mass schooling (Jones, 1990), the 21st century covert technologies include the increased modes of surveillance epitomized by Bentham's Panopticon (Foucault, 1995). Today's teachers, like Bentham's

prisoners, perform as if surveillance is omnipresent. Subjection to the assumed gaze results in teachers' self-monitoring so that self-regulation occurs "naturally." Whether this is through parental or community demands, registration systems, the online audit of professional learning or the publication of high-stakes testing data, the monitoring system or the "eyes that must see without being seen" (Foucault, 1995, p. 171) produce information so that teachers are knowable and may hence be regulated. This "visibility is a trap" (Foucault, 1995, p. 200), locating teachers in a political field invested with power relations that render them docile but "productive." A hold is placed on their conduct as they are coerced by means of observation. Teachers, in their quest to achieve enhanced professional status through conforming to current performance criteria, become regulated and controlled by disciplinary technologies of the self (Blackmore, 2004; Osgood, 2006). In such an emerging environment, it is timely to investigate how teachers are "performing" their roles in this performative climate.

Methodology

As teachers and teacher educators, the authors have become increasingly aware that many teachers struggle with perceived inconsistencies between the stated requirements of their employers and public discourse as a whole and their personal beliefs about what it means to "be a teacher." To conceptualize this awareness in a scholarly way, we looked to the work of Michel Foucault who was interested in the relationships between power and knowledge as a form of social control, particularly in social institutions. Thus, in response to the core question of this article—How do teachers enact their roles in a constantly changing performative climate?—a qualitative methodology using open-ended interviews was chosen for data collection.

In previous work, the present authors have applied Foucault's archaeological method to cross-analyze the academic literature on professionalism, policy documents, and the statements made by currently practicing teachers. For the purpose of this article, the focus is on the latter: the continuities and discontinuities in the statements of teachers, voices that according to Gale (1999), Dwyer (1995), Freeland (1994), and Ball (1994) have often been neglected. Following the principles of Foucault (1972), teachers' statements were analyzed to develop a uniquely detailed archaeology. Foucault delighted in others borrowing his tools and many such as Scheurich (1994), Ball (1990, 1994), Gale (1999, 2007), and Taylor (1997) all to some extent have drawn on his theories of discourse for policy analysis. Relatively few have applied the tools to the empirical evidence of teacher statements in the way we have.

Twenty Queensland teachers were invited to engage in individual face-to-face recorded interviews of around 1-hr duration with one of the current writers. Interviewees were identified by a process of snow-balling from professional learning networks to achieve maximum variation. The final panel of respondents tabulated in the appendix reveals details about gender, qualifications, school sector, position in the hierarchy, and years of experience. Following the ethical clearance guidelines from the university where the writers are employed, informed consent was obtained from the interviewees, and they were assigned a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes. After initial closed questions to ascertain participant demographics (see the appendix), the open-ended approach to interviewing was outlined, assuring the participants that there were no right or wrong answers and encouraging them to elaborate on their practices and experiences as part of a rich dialogue. This unstructured technique provided insight into the interviewees' socially constructed worlds (Freebody, 2003) and reduced the risk of the researcher leading the interview. Furthermore, interviewees were specifically asked to identify particular experiences as foci for the discussion that followed. Given the frequent use of the word "professional" in official and teacher discourses, the focal question of the interview was "Please tell me about a time when you felt you were being professional or behaving in a particularly professional manner." The conversation continued with probing from the interviewer using the stem-plus-query design (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001), for example, "I am interested in your concerns about unprofessional behavior. Would you tell me about some of these concerns?" Or, "you mentioned quite a few things . . . you mentioned OP results . . . achievements . . . different abilities in your classroom . . . so can you elaborate on your role as a professional teacher . . . looking at those things." Therefore, each interview took a different path as participants' responses were explored.

In Foucauldian terms (1972), such teacher responses (statements) are the "atoms" or "elementary units of a discourse" so when statements from the teachers in this study make core repeatable claims, they emerge as the teachers' regimes of truth on professionalism. Foucault's insistence that statements must have a material existence meant that each statement was recorded, placed, and dated against the person who said it and their status (hierarchical level, years of experience); in other words, who produced the statement and with what authority (Ball, 1993). What follows is an elaboration of our application of the archaeological method to the interview data.

The first step in excavating the empirical data is looking for homogeneity or continuity in the teachers' statements. The repeatability is noted, counting the frequency of terms and words with particular attention given to their arrangement and co-location with other words and terms. A coding mechanism is established that consists of numbering the repeatable terms or words or overlapping themes (frequency or analysis of terminology) running through the transcripts. Statements from teachers are also analyzed to see whether they present themselves as "passive" or "active" agents in teacher work. This reveals their subject position.

The second step involves the identification of "distances" between statements or, as Foucault (1972) prefers, the analysis of contradictions. These discontinuities are equally as important as the continuities and must be noted.

As noted above, archaeology yields a comparative analysis and accordingly we chose to present our comparisons in the light of a discussion of the Australian and the Queensland historical educational context and the non-discursive domain (see above). Finally, in what Foucault refers to as the analysis of transformations, we reveal the interactions between different elements of the system; for example, how different interpretations of professionalism may vary in their implications for how teachers perform their roles.

Generative collaboration between the researchers working independently noted and numbered identified themes before cross-referencing to look for comparability. This whole process was conducted with a high degree of openness to new interpretations; it was a strongly iterative and comparative process of sorting and resorting data (Akerlind, 2002).

The themes were continually reworked and refined until the final set was determined. These themes represented the "discourses" of professionalism as revealed by Queensland teachers. For the purpose of this article, the discourses were further scrutinized to examine how teachers enact their roles in a performative climate.

Findings

The analysis of teachers' statements revealed that teachers enact their roles in six main ways:

- *Unresisting acceptance:* Regarding performance-related policies and practices as the uncontentious definition of "professionalism" in teaching,
- *Passive resistance:* Choosing to ignore policy documents and other forms of external "pressure,"
- *Subtle resistance:* Enacting alternative truths,
- *Overt resistance:* Publically questioning the efficacy of change agendas,
- *Assertive resistance:* Declaring professional confidence and competence in the self as a reflective practitioner, and
- *Aspirational resistance:* Promoting leadership rather than performativity.

Each of these is addressed in detail below.

Unresisting Acceptance

Four of the participants in particular display unresisting acceptance of policies and practices tied to performativity. In the following example, Kory focuses on the professional standards for Queensland teachers (Queensland College of Teachers [QCT], 2006):

The ten QCT Standards were developed by the State Government, so they [teachers] can look at how well they are delivering content . . . how you are continually progressing to become a better educator . . . by taking a step back and looking at how you meet each of the standards, you are able to tell, well I am not doing this one really well, I can do this better.

Sally describes her use of the same document:

. . . the last standard is for reflective practice, especially when developing major assessment units—it is really important . . . to critically and effectively reflect on the work that you have done to ensure that both the students and yourself are reflecting and gaining from the learning experiences . . .

Kory and Sally are first-year teachers who use this policy document "to reflect," "tak[e] a step back," and "critically and effectively reflect." The repetition of statements such as "continually progressing," "becom[ing] a better educator," and "gaining from the learning experiences" allude to how these new teachers accept the policy documents unquestioningly as a means of reflection for improving their performance. They both concede that their knowledge of this document was obtained while at university, simultaneously illustrating the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in reinforcing the standards and performance discourse, and the influence of the link between HEIs' funding and accreditation of courses to standards implementation. Mary also accepts the recently promulgated standards (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011) and reveals how she interprets her role within her school as she supervises pre-service teachers. She says,

I meet with the beginning teacher, and go through the teacher standards, and they need to show me . . . how they are reaching those professional standards, or not reaching them—which ones they think they are doing very well in, and not doing well in, and what is it that I can do to help them develop in those areas.

Rather than encouraging the use of the standards for self-reflection, Mary, a deputy principal with more than 20 years' experience, uses this policy document to observe where new teachers are "doing well" or where they need to "develop." While the overlapping theme or continuity is about improving performance, terms such as "they need to show me . . . " illustrate a subject position of power where Mary is active in both promoting the reform agenda and establishing her own superior position. This is in contrast (a discontinuity) with Kory and Sally who passively accept the standards document as a compliance discourse normalized and legitimized at university (" . . . it is really important . . . " [Sally]; " . . . you are able to tell" [Kory]).

Unresisting acceptance may also be exemplified in cases where teachers have embraced the use of another policy technology, that of high-stakes tests, not just for measuring

student performance—"20% were under national benchmark" (Xanthe) and "we had two trial tests, one in February . . . and that gave us the feedback we needed to see what they [the students] didn't know" (Judy)—but also for determining teacher performance, the latter notion shown in a statement by Jan: "There needs to be some discussion about each teacher and their performance." Jan has the responsibility for NAPLAN testing in her school, and Xanthe and Judy are also senior managers where part of their job is to risk manage against poor public performance. Thus, it appears that all these teachers (unresistingly) accept the performativity agenda as they are required to impose such policies within their hierarchical responsibilities. However, the majority of responses from other teachers in this study reveal varying degrees of resistance both to policies and practices.

Passive Resistance

Passive resistance is evident in the teachers' declared lack of knowledge about performance related policy documents. An example of this can be found in the participants' responses to knowledge about the *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* (QCT, 2006) document, introduced by the QCT with the ostensible purpose of improving teacher quality and enhancing professionalism in Queensland. As one respondent clearly articulates—"never heard of them" (Mike). Other participants show some knowledge of the standards revealed in statements such as "I am aware there are documents. I did read some of it at some stage but I wouldn't be able to articulate what the detail is" (Barbara), or "I flicked through them . . . but would not know explicitly what those standards were" (Tia). Such definitive common statements— "I am aware" and "I did read"—reveal some degree of "awareness" toward the Queensland standards. However, terms such as [I] "wouldn't be able to articulate" and [I] "would not know explicitly" indicate that both Tia and Barbara have chosen either not to engage with or to disregard the current order for professionalism in Queensland. Both of these teachers are middle managers with between 11 and 19 years of experience in schools. However, their flippant responses reveal that they perceive the standards to be, at the best, irrelevant to their professional lives. This is in direct contrast (discontinuity) to the first-year teachers, Kory and Sally, and the other experienced teachers, Mary, Jan, Xanthe, and Judy, as outlined in the previous section. It is noteworthy that these experienced teachers (Tia and Barbara) represent the independent and state systems, but this appears to make no difference to their perception of the standards documents as having little influence on how they perform their roles. Perhaps these teachers do not wish to gain any further promotions.

Passive resistance from teachers is also noticeable when dealing with demands from parents. Janice declares that "it's a very matter of fact type relationship." These sentiments are repeated in other statements such as keeping parents "at

arm's length" and "let the teachers move on with the education" (Judy). In such cases, and despite the public rhetoric of collaboration with parents, the teachers define and position themselves as professional experts who deserve to have their expertise recognized. Exasperation is also evident in the teachers' voices—"just let me teach" (Holly) and "just tell me what to do and I will do it well" (Jan). As a senior manager, this comment from Jan is noteworthy reiterating her unresisting acceptance as outlined in the previous section.

Subtle Resistance

The second subtly nuanced form of resistance is where teachers seek to create alternative truth games. In playing the truth game in a different way, teachers make other options visible by destabilizing performative discourses. Two examples of this are evident in the interview data. The first subtle form of resistance is concerned with teaching as a human endeavor (Day & Smethem, 2009), involving emotionality on different levels. Referring to teacher/student professional relationships, interviewees speak of love and care for their students as well as passion for teaching their disciplines. Common statements that illustrate the latter notion are "each teacher has to show their passion" (Barney), "they have got to love what they are doing" (Janice), and "you have to have a passion for teaching" (Mike). Passion is not just expressed in general teaching terms but also about having a passion toward students, as shown when Barney speaks of a "love of students . . . you genuinely care about young people"; "you treat them as individuals" (Kate); and "build their confidence" (Xanthe). The lexical linking across these statements is one of care. These teachers' sense of professionalism is internally ascribed; an intrinsic motivation to do their best in the interests of the students in their care, and this is the model that they see as the most appropriate for guiding their professional practice. What is noteworthy is that four out of the five teachers quoted above have higher degree qualifications and have been teaching for longer than 20 years. This is in contrast (discontinuity) to Jan, with an undergraduate qualification and less than 10 years' experience, who still maintains that each teacher needs to "[have] some discussion about . . . their performance."

Furthermore, teachers declare and practice altruism, self-sacrifice, and conscientiousness as shown by statements such as "putting the job first" (Cecilia) and "ensuring that they [students] have the best possible and best educational experience that you can provide" (James). Once again, both these teachers have more than 20 years of experience. However, the emotional dimension of teaching as alluded to in these teachers' overlapping statements is not included in performative policy documents, as it is neither quantifiable nor auditable. Whereas governments promote managerial practices and a construction of professionalism that values rationality where the emphasis is on being competitive (Bourke, 2011)—exemplified in Xanthe's earlier comment, "20%

were under national benchmark"—these teachers maintain a subject position where a moral dimension of professionalism is prioritized over the performance agenda.

The second subtle form of playing the truth game differently to destabilize the dominant performative discourse includes participants' references to specialized knowledge. According to participants, teachers need to be "thorough in their understanding of their subject area" (Barney), "up-to-date with developments in their subject area" (Xanthe), and have "a great deal of expertise and knowledge in their area of teaching" (Holly). Furthermore, Mike describes the need to be "competent" and "confident" in a discipline area. Policy documents such as the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011) or its predecessor, the *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* (QCT, 2006), both refer to "content" knowledge, with a clear intimation that knowing centrally defined "content" and how to teach it has priority over any specific teacher specialist expertise. Thus, both of these documents construct the parameters of teachers' working knowledge as "content"; content that is prescribed in a National Curriculum or the c2c agenda in Queensland. Furthermore, through accreditation procedures, this construction shapes teacher education to produce new kinds of teachers imbued with new approved forms of knowledge. The responses from Kory and Sally and their training in a discourse of professional standards are testimony to this. However, the statement from Holly (a first-year teacher but also the daughter of a long experienced teacher and teacher educator) reveals a discontinuity as she does not share the sentiments of the other newly qualified teachers.

Overt Resistance

The next area, a more overt form of resistance, questions the efficacy of change agendas, particularly in relation to the areas of curriculum change and high-stakes testing regimes, technologies associated with performance. Many statements reveal the overwhelming feelings of frustration toward guiding authorities because of the number and frequency of changes being imposed. Statements that demonstrate this include "there are rapid changes in curriculum affecting Queensland schools" (James); "Queensland schools are in a spin" (Jan); "changing too many things too quickly" (Xanthe); "let's try 15 things at once, then going onto the next without bedding down something properly" (Janice); and, "we've got state agendas and national agendas and teachers are, you know, constantly being asked to revise things" (James). These common statements with repetitive terms such as "rapid changes," "in a spin," "too many . . . too quickly," and "15 things at once" indicate total exasperation accompanied by overt resistance, further expressed by James in the following statement: "I don't even think teachers are taking it [change] on board any more." James's comment reveals defiance on the behalf of teachers where they openly ignore directives. On the other hand, discontinuities exist in

the acknowledgment that "we have had to develop a program to ensure our students are prepared in regards to literacy" (Judy) and "although time-consuming, you definitely need to use data from high-stakes tests" (Judy). However, the use of definitive terms such as "we have had to" and "you definitely need to," together with statements such as "with national tests, people just feel that they are constantly being checked up on," indicate that surveillance and work intensification lead to further overt forms of resistance particularly by the veterans. Kory observes, " . . . older teachers just giving up." Although this could be dismissed as merely the result of teacher burn-out, references to the rhetoric of care elsewhere in the interviews suggest the alternative interpretation of teachers clinging to more moral forms of professionalism that they see as more beneficial for students. They might also be influenced by the inconclusive and sometimes contradictory evidence globally to support performance regimes in improving student outcomes (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2010; Lustick, 2011).

Assertive Resistance

The fourth area of resistance is concerned with teachers asserting their own professional confidence and competence. Participants' responses reveal that many are engaged in pursuing higher degree qualifications that encourage critical reflexivity of both themselves and of the practices they are subjected to. Statements to reveal this include the following: "I keep up my reading in what is going on," "getting hold of articles" (Holly), "current publications, current writings" (Barbara), "studying, doing a Masters, a qualification more than a degree" (Mary), and "doing extra qualifications" (Xanthe). These statements illustrate how some teachers commit to research and higher degree activities to add reflexivity, depth, and quality to their practice. Being an expert with specialized knowledge is an assertive form of resistance where one can do more than parrot a curriculum—one can manipulate the knowledge and use it to critique and be confident and competent in one's own practice. With the exception of Holly (a discontinuity), all these teachers have a higher degree.

However, professional reflection/learning has been limited by some schools permitting professional development only when the learning experiences are based on the standards and fulfill the performance agenda. Common statements to show this include "We can only go to professional development if it fits with the standards" (Xanthe) and "I wanted to go to a workshop on de-stressing, but because it is not in the standards, I was not allowed to go" (Jean). These statements such as "we can only go" and "I was not allowed to go" reveal how professional development is reduced to the notions of professionalism or professional learning as defined in standards documents, thus limiting professional autonomy. A key element of asserting professional confidence and competence and thus professional autonomy is

self-reflection. Teachers include reflection as part of their regime of truth to critically analyze their own practice so that they can develop professionally and improve student outcomes. Reflection is described by interviewees as giving them "vision" (Janice), "realiz[ing] I had to change that practice" (Xanthe), and reflecting on "what works, what doesn't work, what I could do better" (Genevieve). In the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011, p. 2), teachers are required to use the standards for "self reflection." This suggests that reflection is reduced to what is prescribed in the standards documents only. In this document, "reflecting" is more commonly replaced by "reviewing" and "evaluating," revealing a managerial and performative discourse of professionalism. In stark contrast, the construction of reflection by teachers aligns with Schön's (1983) ideas of the reflective practitioner and a more practical discourse of professionalism. According to Ryan and Bourke (2012), it is crucial to include the element of reflexivity (critical reflection) in any representation of professionalism to foreground the importance of understanding the ways in which teachers mediate their subjective and objective circumstances and make the decisions that they do.

As already mentioned, performativity also generates accountability claims from parents; however, the following statements exemplify a second form of assertive resistance where teachers make decisions as professionals even if parents disagree: "I had to show him . . . that I knew what I was doing and that I was working in the best interests of his daughter" (Tia) and "if you can explain things very clearly for them then they go away and, they can accept what you are doing" (James). The use of definitive statements such as "I had to show him" and "they can accept what you are doing" highlight teachers asserting their expertise in didactic rather than dialectic forms of communication. Once again, these notions contrast with policy documents such as the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011), which give parents a loud voice rather than allowing teachers as professionals to get on with the job at hand (Bourke, 2011).

Aspirational Resistance

The final area identified in these data, aspirational resistance, is evident as the teachers propose an alternative to the regulatory control of management and the performance agenda—that is, educational leadership. Participants mention how important the principal's leadership qualities are to the success of the school, but they also value shared leadership opportunities. This is revealed in comments such as "I believe strongly in shared leadership" (Kate), "sharing decision-making, collaboration" (Sue), and "all teachers in some way have a leadership role: it's part of being a professional" (Sue). Both these teachers are experienced leaders in schools, and their comments contrast strongly with the construction

of leadership in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011), which is not really concerned with leadership, but rather management and performance, represented linguistically by the use of verbs such as to "evaluate" (p. 17), to "monitor" (p. 11), to "revise" (p. 8), and to "review" (p. 9). Once again, this highlights the regulatory nature of such documents, promoting a managerial and performative discourse of professionalism. Teachers' responses reveal an aspirational resistance highlighting autonomy, sharing in decision making and being considered an equal partner, notions that align with traditional professionalism discourses rather than the privileged voice of performance in policy documents.

Discussion

The data analyzed here reveal a number of continuities and discontinuities (similarities and differences; Foucault, 1972) within and between the varying themes. Although the overall responses reveal a binary of compliance versus resistance (even if somewhat unbalanced), there are various reasons as to why teachers comply with the performance agenda and varying (even intensifying) degrees and forms of resistance to such policies and practices.

Within the first theme, *unresisting acceptance*, Kory and Sally are indicative of a new transformed generation in Queensland whose initial teacher education training has been based on the professional standards discourse of professionalism. Young Queensland teachers do not stand alone in this respect but are indicative of similar happenings in other countries. Writing about experiences in the United Kingdom, where the performance agenda invaded education at an earlier date, Furlong et al. (2000) claim that

> the assumption behind policy within this area [professionalism] has been that changes in the form and content of initial teacher education will . . . serve to construct a new generation of teachers with different forms of knowledge, different skills and different professional values. (p. 6)

In these cases, performative policy technologies promoted through universities are reshaping the professional educator in a discourse of trainability (Beck, 2008, 2009), where new teachers comply with performative practices without even questioning them. The new policies are aimed at producing a new reality of professionalism to serve political and economic interests. The result is "control," "management," and "discipline" of new teachers; in other words, "training" rather than "educating" new teachers with "specialized knowledge," "leadership," and "reflective" qualities.

Compliance for Mary, Jan, Xanthe, and Judy could also be the result of not questioning, or it could simply be that to keep their jobs they must fulfill what is in their job

descriptions. Rather than compliance or professionalism, some might interpret this transformation as careerism or promotion seeking. Helsby (1995) argues that professionalism is a social construct and, therefore, teachers play a key role in what they resist and what they accept. These teachers may have accepted compliance as an inevitable part of their jobs.

Australia is not the first country where the second theme is evident: teachers ignoring policy in a *passive* form of resistance. Results from a survey in the United Kingdom in 2010 carried out by the General Teaching Council for England revealed that more than half the teachers interviewed were not aware of the professional standards for teaching or their purpose (Poet, Rudd, & Smith, 2010) despite the fact that the standards were first implemented in 1997 and then further revisited and revised in 2007. From these findings in the United Kingdom, Evans (2011) came to the conclusion that perhaps governments are still not succeeding in "call[ing] the shots when it comes to shaping professionalism" (Evans, 2011, p. 864). Evans (2011) claims that teachers will resist changes being imposed on them, especially if they perceive the change as haphazard or "no better" than the status quo.

In the third theme, teachers are transformed by subtly repositioning themselves in active, alternative discourses by including emotionality and intellectuality in their regime of truth on professionalism. The former is not included in policy documents as it cannot be scrutinized, measured, or regulated. In Osgood's (2006) words, the teachers in this study "muddy the water" (p. 12) by performing their professionalism differently. At the beginning of the 1990s, Ball (1990, p. 223) asserted that beliefs (emotionality) were an "older, increasingly displaced discourse," no longer important in teaching. In 2003, he continued by saying that personal beliefs such as commitment were substituted by calculation, and *value* replaced *values* (Ball, 2003; Day & Smethem, 2009). Around the same time, others such as Hanlon (1998, p. 59) also suggested that there was less "elbow room at the table" for traditional discourses as they were not relevant in the corporatized market of education. However, more than 20 years later, the discourse of emotionality (Osgood, 2006) still forms a *subtle resistance* to the performance agenda. The reality of teaching for the teachers in this study needs emotion and a sense of "vocation" (Blackmore, 2004). For these teachers, a list of competencies or a prescribed curriculum cannot possibly represent all the complexities of context and relationships that occur in everyday teaching situations. Even though policy documents may give the rational performative discourse a loud voice, the dominant notion spoken by these teachers' voices reveals resistance and protests loudly for the heart and soul to be left in teaching. These teachers do not suffer from "values schizophrenia" (Ball, 2003, p. 221). Commitment, judgment, and authenticity within practice are not substituted for impression and fabrications of performance.

In relation to specialized knowledge, policies and practices construct teachers as technicians "enacting pre-defined 'best practice' with a pre-defined curriculum, a situation for which skill, but not intelligence is required" (Connell, 2009, p. 224). These teachers, however, alternatively construct a transformed discourse of intellectuality and support the findings from Connell (2009). She argues that, as part of the job of a teacher is to interpret the world for his or her students, a great deal of intellectual work is needed and therefore specialized knowledge. Connell's thoughts are congruent with those of Evans' (2011), who argues that policy documents such as those promoting teacher standards focus on what teachers do (behavioral) rather than what they think (intellectual) and the attitudes they hold (attitudinal). For the teachers in this study, following a list of competencies that promotes "content" knowledge is far removed from the intellectual work that Connell and Evans are referring to. Instead, these teachers promote "designerly" ways of knowing where they carve their own choices rather than becoming "dwarfed and deformed" (Chua, 2009, p. 161) by performance indicators.

In the fourth theme, an *overt* form of resistance, these teachers openly ignore certain directives. Whereas regulatory authorities envisage accountability in the form of high-stakes testing regimes increasing productivity, the teachers in this study see such mechanisms as causing unnecessary stress, frustration, and work overload. According to McCulloch, Helsby, and Knight (2000),

> Educational improvement depends on teachers wanting to make a difference. It depends upon their feeling professional. Neither raising standards by regulation nor professionalising by prescription will work. Teachers have power in the sense that they have to want improvement for improvement to happen. (p. 118)

Here, teachers show evidence of resisting change more overtly in light of the consequences it has for their working conditions, which is not tempered by any positive outcome for students.

Many writers have made reference to the fifth theme, *assertive resistance*. Evans (2011) argues that enacted professionalism is the key to understanding and promoting high-quality teaching in real terms. This form of professionalism sees teachers undertaking professional development (in many forms) and then making decisions about what they enact to improve practice and outcomes. Ifanti and Fotopoulopou (2011), along with Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), similarly cite the importance of professional development as teachers transform their own identities as professionals in unique ways. Thus, the "transformed" professionals

are reflexive professionals who can map out and justify their own professional development with regard to their own subjective interests and motivations, along with the objective needs of their students, the profession, and the communities in which they work. The autonomous and reflexive professional is more likely to enact and sustain the discourses of quality teaching than the one who simply follows government mandated performative discourses with a tick-box mentality (Ryan & Bourke, 2012). Osgood (2006) asserts that teachers need to maintain their professional integrity and have professional confidence to find "wriggle room" (Hoyle & Wallace, 2009) so that they can do their jobs irrespective of the external mandates in government documents and the demands from parents. The teachers in this study are critical of imposed accountability and maintain their own licensed autonomy (Osgood, 2006) rather than becoming "ontologically insecure" (Ball, 2003, p. 220). Twenty-three years ago, Ball maintained that standards reform agendas were a direct threat to professional integrity (Ball, 1990), but here we see teachers promoting their own discursive truths to subvert the hegemonic performative discourses that position them differently. Ball (1990) also claimed that professional judgment was subordinate to performativity in the new market regime, but once again, this is not the message coming from the teachers in this study.

In the last theme, *aspirational resistance*, teachers' voices are amplified on the concept of shared leadership. The teachers' notions of leadership all but contradict the construction of management and performativity within the newest Australian managerial policy documents. Instead, collective autonomy is seen as integral to their work as professionals. These thoughts are shared by many authors over many years such as Purvis (1973), Hoyle (1974), Travers and Rebore (1990), Goodson and Hargreaves (1996), Quicke (2000), Furlong et al. (2000), and Leaton Gray and Whitty (2010), who all agree that without autonomy, teachers cannot experiment in new approaches. If teachers are restricted to the management and performative discourse evident in policy documents, then their own capacities to become transformative leaders in creativity (Burnard & White, 2008) and moral choice are compromised. Many teachers in this study wish to be free to share in their decision making for the best interests of their students. In this way, a collaborative model of leadership results where teachers share a sense of purpose and responsibility. This collegial authority or "group trust" (Burnard & White, 2008, p. 673) demands trust from employers rather than management. For more than 40 years, Queensland teachers had that trust.

Conclusion

We have identified six responses to emerging performativity agendas that in the current climate are potentially inimical to the improvement of the educational endeavor that politicians, policy makers, and pedagogues purport to promote. Professionalism was a positive, seen as a discourse of resistance or the "enemy" of economic rationalism and the discourse of performativity (Sanguinetti, 2000, p. 241). Now, however, the notion has been hijacked and remodeled by neoliberal governments to promote their redefined version—a performative professionalism. Our archaeological excavation provides empirical evidence that teachers are not necessarily playing the same truth game but rather reinterpreting definitions of professionalism emerging from policy makers in a traditional image—ways that maintain their individual freedom and personal practical beliefs. The data reported in this article reveal pockets of resistance emerging as teachers ignore, subvert, oppose, redefine, and construct counter-discourses toward forms of performative professionalism with which they are uncomfortable. Hoyle and Wallace (2009) have speculated that despite the advance of the performance agenda, the worthwhile elements of traditional discourses survive in many schools. Our excavations, rather than speculating, provide evidence for this. Teachers in this study describe various ways of playing the maelstrom of professionalism and performativity games differently, in what we now term a "new classical/practical discourse of professionalism." It is imperative for teachers to be daring, courageous, and reflexive, not compliant (Burnard & White, 2008).

It remains to be seen whether the young compliant minds being churned out by the university "machines" retain their acceptance of the performance agenda, or with increasing maturity and practical experience in classrooms assert the very individuality that has been the traditional hallmark of learned professions.

Appendix

Participant Characteristics.

Name (Sex)	Qualifications			Type of school				Positions of responsibility				Years of service		
	Undergrad	Masters	PhD	Primary	Secondary	State	Private	Principal	Middle manager	Senior manager	Teacher	0-10	11-19	20+
Genevieve (F)	*				*	*					*	*		
Mabel (F)	*				*		*		*				*	
Tia (F)	*				*	*			*				*	
Cecilia (F)	*				*		*		*					*
Barney (M)		*			*		*	*						*
Mary (F)		*			*		*			*				*
Marie (F)	*			*		*					*			*
Barbara (F)		*			*		*		*				*	
Mike (M)		*			*		*			*				*
Judy (F)	*			*		*				*			*	
Sue (F)	*				*	*			*				*	
Holly (F)	*				*	*				*	*	*		
Jan (F)	*				*	*				*		*		
Xanthe (F)			*		*	*				*				*
Kate (F)	*			*		*		*					*	
Jean (F)		*		*		*			*				*	
Kory (M)	*				*	*					*	*		
Sally (F)	*				*	*					*	*		
Janice (F)		*			*		*	*						*
James (M)		*			*		*		*					*

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Notes

1. The National Professional Standards for Teachers was renamed the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in 2012.
2. NAPLAN: National standardized tests in literacy and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 in Australia.

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