
The Production of Australian Professional Development Policy Texts as a Site of Contest: The Case of the Federal Quality Teacher Programme

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Abstract

This paper reveals how the provision of teacher professional development is conceptualised within the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP) policy text and its predecessors, and uses these texts to infer the nature of the production practices associated with the development of these policies. The paper argues that multiple tensions within these texts gesture towards support for complex and contested approaches to professional development during the policy production process. To make sense of this contestation, the paper draws suggestively upon Bourdieu's field theory, which conceptualises the social world as consisting of social spaces or "fields", and extensions of his theory, which reveal fields as exerting considerable influence upon one another. The paper argues that "Quality Teacher Programme" texts infer support for more progressive, social democratic approaches to the provision of teacher professional development within the educational policy field, as well as more economistic and neoliberal approaches.

Introduction

The provision of teacher professional development, or "PD" as it is typically described in Australian education, is currently constructed as a crucial element of school reform policies, where schooling and its quality are seen as central to the economic competitiveness of the nation. However, federal government policy texts do not frame PD provision in a uniform manner, instead revealing contestation over the purposes of teacher learning, and the ways in which such learning should be enacted. This paper draws on the Australian federal government policy ensemble primarily responsible for PD provision, typically described as the Quality Teacher Programme, and uses these

policy texts to infer the nature of the contestation which attended the production of these policy texts. These texts include the latest iteration of this initiative, the *Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme: Client Guidelines 2005-2009 (AGQTP)*, and its predecessor policy texts – *Quality Teacher Programme Client Guidelines 2000-2002 (QTP)* and *Commonwealth Quality Teacher Programme: Updated Client Guidelines, 2003 (CQTP)*.

In part, the contestation associated with the production of these policies reflects a broader context characterised by a general questioning of teacher professionalism. Such questioning is evident in the increased push for teacher accountability, and technical approaches to teacher appraisal (Grundy & Robison, 2004). These regulatory practices in education are also a result of governments' concerns about how to respond to globalisation. Teacher learning policies, as with public policies in general, both promote and are a product of globalisation processes and global flows of information. These processes are supported by bodies such as the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Bank, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), all of which affect nation states and may be construed as examples of a nascent global policy community (Henry, Lingard, Taylor, & Rizvi, 2001). The influence of and emphasis upon neoliberal, economic and management-oriented approaches in such supra-national bodies has affected the nature of global flows of information within nation states, all of which engage in processes of policy borrowing (Henry et al., 2001). Consequently, public-sector policy production practices reflect the influence of neoliberal and managerial pressures upon governments. However, and at the same time, it is also acknowledged that those influenced by globalisation, including governments, are not simply passive recipients, but also able to exert agency under these circumstances (Ozga & Lingard, 2007; Lingard, Rawolle, & Taylor, 2005). Appadurai (2001) refers to such agentic responses as instances of globalization "from below".

In this context, neoliberalism is understood as a means of governing which emphasises individual responsibility, and involving governments actively supporting such principles (Rose, 1999). These principles are promoted by more managerial practices, which involve the assertion of rank by superiors to achieve cost-effective and efficient economic outcomes (Stilwell, 2000); the emphasis upon managing for economic imperatives is sometimes described as "economism" (Cobb, 1999). These influences mean that teachers' work and learning are increasingly regulated in Australia as governments struggle to respond to the broader global contexts which frame such responses as mandatory (Smyth, 2006).

To interrogate the production practices associated with these policy texts in this broader context, the paper draws suggestively upon Bourdieu's theory of practice which conceptualises the social world as consisting of different social fields, each of which is both subject to change, as well as possessing its own peculiar characteristics, or "logics of practice". However, while fields are understood to be relatively autonomous, the data presented in the paper also validates recent theorising which contends that fields may also exert influence upon one another (Maton, 2005), resulting in what some theorists describe as "cross-field effects" (Lingard & Rawolle, 2004). Consequently, the paper utilises theorising relating to the relative autonomy and heteronomy of fields to better understand the nature of the policy production practices which may be inferred from PD policy texts.

A Bourdieuan Approach: Fields, Habitus, Capitals

To make sense of PD policy production practices, this paper draws upon Bourdieu's "thinking tools" (Bourdieu cited in Wacquant, 1989, p. 50) of fields, "habitus" and "capitals". For Bourdieu, fields are social spaces with identifiable characteristics, or logics of practice (Bourdieu, 1998), which exist in relation to, and contest with, other possible practices. These practices are not deterministic, however, but are instead understood as the result of the constant interplay between actors and the broader contexts which impact upon them, and within which they seek to exercise agency. While the dominant practices at any given moment come to define a field, and exert a structuring influence upon agents' actions, individuals and groups within fields also influence the nature of the fields in which they are located (Bourdieu, 1998). They are not simply passive beings but are also able to affect relations of power within these social spaces.

Consequently, fields are sites of contestation within which individuals and groups are both influenced by and influence the nature of the goods, values – the capitals – which characterise any given social space (Bourdieu, 1998). These capitals characterise fields as sites of accumulation of particular traits, behaviours, properties, titles, academic qualifications, but also as sites of learning and development through which people learn to act in, and change, the world.

Social fields exhibit and are influenced by particular capitals as a result of the individual and collective habitus which constitute them. The habitus is a social product, the embodiment of a set of dispositions within an individual or group, which arises as a result of exposure to particular experiences (Bourdieu, 1990). The notion of a collective habitus also implies fields exercising a pedagogical function, and the potential for change during this process.

Consequently, the logics of practice which characterise fields are subject to change from the constant interplay, contestation and recursive relationship between actors' habitus, their capitals, and broader social structures. However, some theorists have argued that fields may be understood as even less autonomous than implied by non-deterministic readings of Bourdieu. In further exploring the relative autonomy of fields, these theorists have argued that fields overtly exert influence upon one another. While Bourdieu (1990) argued that all fields are overlain by a broader field of power associated with the influence of government, and the "temptation of calculation" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 105) associated with the economic field is always present in other realms of life, other theorists have taken the interplay of fields further. Maton (2005) for example, reveals that while policy players within the higher education sector in the UK retain considerable relative autonomy in terms of final policy positions, policies affecting the sector have been influenced by the economic field via marketisation and New Public Management principles. Similarly Lingard & Rawolle (2004) draw upon the development of federal Australian science policy to reveal that while scientific research and science-related issues influence science policy, science policy is also heavily influenced by the media field; the authors describe such influences as "cross-field effects" (Lingard & Rawolle, 2004). This paper draws upon this theorising of fields and field relations, in relation to multiple Quality Teacher Programme policy texts, to hypothesise that policy production practices associated with the provision of teacher PD are contested.

Exploring Quality Teacher Programme Policies

The policy texts utilised in this paper include the original *Quality Teacher Programme Client Guidelines 2000-2002*, released shortly after the 1999/2000 budget, the *Commonwealth Quality Teacher Programme: Updated Client Guidelines, 2003*, released in 2003, and the *Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme: Client Guidelines, 2005 to 2009*, released in 2005. Collectively, these policies are described in this paper as the "Quality Teacher Programme" (QTP).

The original QTP initiative (hereafter, QTP 1) sought to provide funds to improve the quality of teaching and the status of the teaching profession in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000). This was followed by the release of updated guidelines in 2003 (QTP 2), and a later set of client guidelines in 2005 (QTP 3). Each iteration had its own peculiar emphases but also retained many features of the original QTP policy.

Copies of the policies were collected over a period of several years, as an extension of a broader research project into the effects of a complex ensemble of federal and state policies on the provision of professional development in a cluster of schools in

Queensland (see Hardy, 2006). The policies were analysed in relation to the purposes of teacher PD, and modes of delivery of teacher PD. Methodologically, Bourdieu's (1998) notion of social practices as "relational" – as characterised by difference from, and contestation with, other possible practices – was applied to the policy texts as a data set. Such an approach was suggestive of competition and contestation between more economic governmental priorities, and more progressive, educational approaches, during the policy production process.

Each of the QTP policies reveals evidence of policy support for teachers to respond to government priorities, in a climate of stringent fiscal accountability. Teachers and other school personnel are construed as responsible for accessing and utilising the funds provided through this programme, which are typically channelled through teachers' respective school systems, under set guidelines which outline how such funds may be used. The prescriptiveness of the programme is apparent in the way proposals were to be assessed within the original guidelines (QTP 1):

The **three-year strategic submissions** will be assessed against the following criteria:

- How the proposed activities will significantly update and improve teachers' skills and understanding in the priority areas focused on by your State or Territory;
- Whether the proposed approach to reporting is satisfactory to the Commonwealth, including how outcomes will be measured; and
- The balance of funding between programme activities and administrative support. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000, p. 3)

Such emphases reveal significant influence by the commonwealth over the purposes of the teacher learning to be supported within schools, and relatively little opportunity for teachers to influence these purposes. In large part, teachers are construed as functionaries within a larger system. This is in keeping with broader, increasingly managerial emphases within the Australian public sector in general (Stilwell, 2000), and difficulties in trusting teachers in particular (Smyth, 2006).

However, QTP 1 is also simultaneously suggestive of tension over the purposes of teacher learning within the policy production process. The teacher learning supported within this policy text is not simply reflective of managerial emphases, but is also supportive of more progressive, social democratic approaches to teacher PD:

The QTP also supports the commitment in the national Goals to improving educational outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students. There will be scope to address secondary target groups, such as teachers of

Indigenous students, teachers in rural and remote schools and teachers in disadvantaged urban schools. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000, p. 2)

However, the way in which teachers of students in the most disadvantaged circumstances are construed as “secondary target groups” may be indicative of some tension with the primary focus of the programme, which is described as enhancing the status and quality of the teaching profession, and to improve student achievement in relation to the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century, with a particular focus upon selected subject disciplines. These emphases are apparent in what are described as the outcomes of the programme, which focus upon very specific curriculum areas. These outcomes are designed to ensure that:

- Teachers’ skills and understanding in the priority areas of literacy, numeracy, mathematics, science, information technology and vocational education in schools are updated and improved; and,
- The status of teaching in both government and non-government schools is enhanced. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000, p.2)

The absence of a specific focus upon the learning needs of teachers of Indigenous, rural, remote and disadvantaged urban students in these outcomes could be construed as evidence of a politics of erasure at play. PD related to specific discipline areas is given priority over other concerns, such as the needs of specific groups of marginalised students.

Such regulatory frameworks within QTP 1 exist alongside what seems like encouragement for teachers to engage with more active modes of teacher learning:

Such activities should:

- Involve stakeholder partnerships ...;
- In relation to IT-based PD activities, allow for participant interaction, particularly activities for rural/remote teachers;
- Focus on the delivery of professional development activities or provide a balance between delivery and the development of professional development materials ...; and,
- Promote sustainable professional development by providing a range of activities and avoid one-off events where possible. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000, p. 4)

There is considerable support for teachers to interact with one another in various partnerships and as active learners. Teachers are encouraged to have a say about the

nature of the learning in which they are involved, and to learn together rather than alone. However, this apparent freedom to engage in multiple modes of teacher learning is exercised within a broader set of constraints over the nature of the learning considered of most value. Consequently, there is considerable friction between the emphasis upon regulatory pressures to engage in PD around very specific priority areas, and apparent flexibility over how this more prescriptive learning is to occur. Such competing pressures indicate a regulated teaching profession, even as attempts are made to foster greater professional autonomy.

QTP 2 also reveals tensions between the purposes and modes of delivery. On the one hand, the guidelines frame effective teacher learning as ongoing, oriented towards student learning, focused upon the needs of teachers' workplace contexts, collaborative, and inquiry-oriented. Such emphases are described as "best practice" approaches to professional learning:

CQTP funded activities should exemplify best practice in professional learning, that is they:

- Are based on teacher and school needs;
- Have clearly defined goals and outcomes;
- Have practical relevance to teachers;
- Involve a balance between theory and practical application in the teachers' schools;
- Consider whole school approaches and regional network activities;
- Involve stakeholder partnerships;
- Support teachers' accountability for student outcomes;
- Provide a balance of curriculum and pedagogical issues;
- In relation to ICT-based activities, allow for participant interaction, particularly activities for rural/remote teachers; and,
- Promote sustainable professional learning by providing a range of work-based, integrated activities and avoiding "one-off" events where possible. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003, p. 7).

However, this apparent freedom about how best to foster teacher learning is problematised by the continued emphasis upon selected disciplinary areas, and particular national foci. As with QTP 1, there continues to be significant emphasis upon the same discrete and limited set of disciplinary areas:

The CQTP in 2003 will focus on the renewal of teacher skills and understanding in the priority areas of literacy, numeracy, mathematics, science, technology (including information technology), vocational education in schools, the national Safe Schools Framework, and the development and implementation of professional standards for teaching and school leadership. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003, p. 4)

Such emphases indicate the continued dominance of particular disciplinary areas. They also reveal a desire to neatly define and delineate the nature of teaching and leadership practices. While PD related to these disciplines should inform teacher and student learning, and there is evidence of support for “best practice” in relation to PD delivery, the guidelines are very specific and prescriptive about the purposes of such learning.

QTP 3 also reveals tensions between the purposes and modes of delivery of teacher learning. As with the earlier policies, QTP 3 is highly prescriptive and presents little opportunity for resources to be utilised in ways other than those specified:

Funds are provided for activities aimed at achieving the AGQTP objectives. DEST will not fund activities which are inconsistent with this purpose. Funding recipients and contractors may be asked to justify any budget item in a budget proposal that appears to be inconsistent with this purpose. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, p. 4)

The goals of teacher PD are more heavily prescribed by government and less reflective of teachers’ own perceived needs, which is in keeping with recent trends in teacher PD provision (Grundy & Robison, 2004).

However, QTP 3 does advocate teacher learning in relation to a broader range of disciplinary areas including civics and citizenship, health education, languages and music (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, p. 3). This is in contrast to earlier policy statements’ exclusive emphasis upon teacher learning relating to literacy, numeracy, science, information technology and vocational education (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000, 2003).

There is also evidence of advocacy for teachers as more active participants in their own learning. This is apparent in explicit support for principles of “leading practice professional learning” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, p. 15) within the policy text. Teachers are encouraged to ensure their learning takes local context into account, addresses teachers’ own needs, and that such learning is ongoing. Amongst other things, teachers are encouraged to consider whether the planned professional learning will:

- Involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences they will be involved in?
- Be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching? ...
- Be organised around collaborative problem solving?
- Be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning – including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives? (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, p. 15)

In these ways, there is support for teachers to be engaged in setting the agenda in relation to their learning. Teachers are at least partially framed as agentic participants and active knowledge producers, even as they are constrained by policy guidelines. Support for the development of whole-school approaches to teacher learning also reflects an increased emphasis upon collaborative learning practices, which contrast with the individualistic practices encouraged more strongly in neoliberal iterations of teacher learning.

Also, within QTP 3, explicit efforts are made to encourage teachers to focus upon student learning in context:

Will the planned professional learning:

- Contain content that focuses on what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning the material?
- Be based on analyses of the differences between actual student performance and goals and standards for student learning? (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, p. 15)

In this way, there is advocacy for teacher learning which seeks to respond to students' specific needs and circumstances. Acknowledgement of the "different problems" students may experience, and the need for analysis of the gap between student performance and goals, gestures towards the importance of local context.

There is also evidence of an emphasis upon students as individual learners, rather than as members of more or less disadvantaged groups within society. This is apparent in the way QTP 3 frames teacher learning in relation to issues of difference within society. Rather than making specific references to teachers of students in rural and remote schools and disadvantaged urban schools, as was the case in earlier policy texts, the

later guidelines refer more broadly to “targeted learning needs” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, p. 4). Such lexical dexterity has made it possible to slip in references to a focus upon boys’ education as a whole, and gifted and talented students. The inference is that these broad categories constitute part of the “new disadvantaged”. This is in keeping with a broader more neoliberal ethos permeating western democracies at present, in which there is increased advocacy for greater individual responsibility, rather than a valuing of more collective approaches to issues of disadvantage.

These QTP texts reveal how teachers have been framed as active meaning makers capable of directing their own learning, which is oriented towards students’ needs. Such learning sometimes reflects a concern about social justice issues. However, at the same time, there is also evidence of teachers being constructed as passive respondents to broader governmental priorities, particularly those associated with economic improvement. That is, PD policies support a complex mix of competing and contested practices (Hardy, 2003). Table 1 provides a summary of some of these competing and contested purposes and modes of teacher learning across the key QTP policy texts referred to above.

Policy	Purpose of Teacher Learning	Mode of Delivery
QTP Client Guidelines 2000-2002 (QTP1)	Strong advocacy for learning related to particular curriculum areas (especially literacy, numeracy, science, ICT); teacher learning as integral to broader economic improvement;	Teachers encouraged to engage in more sustained approaches, and to avoid one-off workshops where possible.
	Emphasis upon improving status of teachers and teaching;	
	Mention of teacher learning related to secondary targets, including teachers of rural and remote, Indigenous and disadvantaged urban students.	
Commonwealth QTP Programme: Updated Client Guidelines 2003 (QTP 2)	Strong advocacy for learning related to particular curriculum areas (especially literacy, numeracy, science, ICT).	Emphasis upon ‘best practice’ in teacher PD, including fostering partnerships, and encouraging inquiry-oriented learning related to local needs of specific schools and students.
Australian Government QTP: Client Guidelines, 2005 to 2009 (QTP 3)	Advocacy for learning related to literacy, numeracy, science, ICT, but also some emphasis upon other curriculum areas including music, languages, health and physical education;	Focus upon teacher engagement, collaboration, context-specific and ongoing learning built into teachers’ work day.
	Focus on broad range of ‘targeted learning needs’.	

Table 1: Summary of purposes and modes of learning supported within ‘Quality Teacher Programme’ policy texts

Analysis

Quality Teacher Programme policy texts are suggestive of an educational policy field characterised by considerable contestation during the policy production process. On the one hand, QTP policy texts may be understood as reflecting the effects of more progressive and social democratic logics of practice to the provision of teacher PD during this process. At the same time, these texts may also be suggestive of how the policy production process is also influenced by more economic and neoliberal logics. These latter emphases are more typical of the economic field. More economic and neoliberal approaches are suggested by the way in which policy texts support teacher learning which is construed as closely aligned with economic improvement. Arguably, such approaches compete with more explicitly social and democratic emphases.

The prescriptive nature of each of the QTP policy guidelines is suggestive of the broader field of power having exerted considerable influence upon the educational policy field. The logics of practice which seem to be validated and valued are those associated with endorsement of governmental priorities. Under these circumstances, teachers are framed as passively accepting the requirements placed upon them. This is in keeping with how Smyth (2006) describes teachers' work and learning as increasingly regulated.

Under these circumstances, more neoliberal and economic pressures are evident in the emphasis upon professional development oriented towards the "hard" sciences, mathematics, information and communications technology, and literacy within QTP policies, even as efforts are made to augment these foci (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000, 2002, 2005). These disciplines are construed as being more obviously aligned with economic improvement. The QTP policy heritage presented in this paper reveals how economic emphases have exerted considerable influence within educational policy settings. The notion of a self-regulating and autonomous teaching profession is difficult to fully countenance under such circumstances.

The emphasis upon learning focused on these disciplinary areas within the Quality Teacher Programme policy texts also reflects the broader policy context in which it is located. Such emphases may be tied back to the impact of the "meta-policy" (Yeatman, 1990) *Backing Australia's Ability* (see Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). This policy and allied policies associated with education, such as the *Review of Teaching and Teacher Education* (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education (CRTTE), 2003a, 2003b) series, emphasise learning oriented towards promoting innovation and broader economic improvement. Within this framework, literacy, numeracy, scientific and technological skills are isolated as being especially important for students as future citizens (CRTTE, 2003a, 2003b). The interim report *Attracting and Retaining Teachers of Science, Technology and Mathematics*, with its emphasis upon the

selected curricula areas of science, technology and mathematics (CRTTE, 2003c), exemplifies how particular areas of the curriculum are considered of sufficient value to warrant special attention. Whilst being fundamental planks of a well-rounded education, these areas are also seen as integral to the federal government's commitment to innovation, which is read in the Australian federal arena as relating primarily to economic innovation. That such emphases are common across policy settings in western countries also reveals the effects of policy borrowing in global contexts (Henry et al., 2001).

The valuing of teacher learning across these domains is not in itself problematic; rather, it is the extent to which this emphasis dominates alternative educational emphases which is significant. The QTP policy texts are suggestive of how, over time, more economic emphases associated with the economic field, and the broader field of power, have exerted considerable influence upon the educational policy production process, such that advocacy for more progressive and social democratic approaches within the educational policy field is less evident than was previously the case.

The emphasis upon teacher learning oriented towards specific disciplinary areas within QTP 3 is also suggestive of how economic tendencies within the field of power compete with and dominate advocacy for alternative purposes of teacher learning, such as those geared towards more collective conceptions of difference and disadvantage. The habitus which is suggested of those engaged in the policy production process is not one solely oriented towards collective, cumulative and historical social disadvantage in local contexts. Instead, more reactive dispositions towards affirmative action approaches may be inferred from the contents of QTP policies. Under these circumstances, a policy-making habitus which marginalises learning related to traditionally disadvantaged groups in society is evident, even as there is simultaneous evidence of efforts to advocate for such groups. Under these circumstances, more neoliberal and economic logics of practice within the economic field may be suggested as impacting upon the educational policy field – resulting in what Lingard and Rawolle (2004) describe as “cross-field effects”.

In spite of the considerable influence of broader neoliberal and economic emphases, the purposes of teacher learning are not constructed uniformly in policy texts. QTP policy texts indicate the simultaneous valuing of teacher learning oriented towards the needs of those traditionally disadvantaged in society. Even in the latest guidelines in which the focus upon the most marginalised has been diluted, explicit support for teacher learning related to indigenous students and disadvantaged rural and urban students is evident. This is suggestive of the influence of more social democratic logics of practice within the policy production process, alongside more economic logics. Even when more economic positions seem to have been strongly advocated, alternative approaches are arguably still evident and have been

able to resist these more dominant pressures. However, this argument is made tentatively, and in light of the knowledge that such social justice oriented initiatives have been progressively rolled back over the past decade, and that discursive support for more progressive approaches has been appropriated for economic and neoliberal purposes. QTP 3 also reveals evidence of efforts to promote teacher learning which is relevant to a broader range of curriculum areas, and therefore suggestive of a policy production habitus reflecting the influence of more progressive educational capitals as well as more economic capitals.

Even though these curricula emphases are occurring within a wider, conservative political context (characterised by national racial conflict in a tumultuous post September-11 world, and interest in those foreign languages deemed most likely to have an economic payoff) this broadening of learning across more curricula options is still noteworthy as it differs from earlier emphases, and provides some proof of the explicit valuing of an expansive range of disciplines. It is therefore potentially indicative of the influence of more progressive logics of practice within the educational policy field, and of how those engaged in policy-making may be simultaneously enticed by, and resist, powerful neoliberal and economic emphases which seek to narrow the range of disciplinary areas considered worthy of attention. The educational policy field, with its focus upon more progressive principles and knowledge for knowledge's sake, still exhibits considerable relative autonomy even as it is challenged by the field of power, and the economic field.

Also, the QTP policy texts reveal some evidence of explicit policy support for teachers to engage in more active, ongoing, site-based and relevant learning initiatives, thereby contributing to the potential development of teachers as meaning makers who possess important knowledge about their particular circumstances which is necessary to effect improvements in student learning. Such emphases focus attention upon teachers and students' local contexts, and encourage teachers to inquire into these circumstances on an ongoing basis. Such emphases are suggestive of the influence of more progressive logics of practice alongside more economic emphases within the policy production process.

Consequently, QTP policy texts frame teachers as being able to exercise a degree of autonomy in relation to the purposes and modes of delivery of teacher learning, even as they are constrained by these circumstances. This is evident in the way in which teachers are encouraged to engage in ongoing, context-specific and inquiry-oriented approaches, as well as individualistic one-off workshops on prescribed foci. Such emphases suggest that the QTP policy text production practices leading to the development of these policies may be construed as an example of how local sites of reception are able to compete with the effects of homogenising global influences

(Ozga & Lingard, 2007; Lingard et al., 2005); after Appadurai (2001), they may be interpreted as instances of globalisation from below. Such an approach does not naively ignore the influence of economic global processes; after all, there is considerable evidence of the effects of an emergent global education policy field on both policy and practice (Lingard et al., 2005). Nor does it downplay the complexity of the recursive relationship between text and action.

Conclusion

The result of the co-existence of these conflicting influences is an heteronomous educational policy field which appears to display features of both resistance and acquiescence to broader neoliberal and managerial pressures. However, while the QTP policy texts outlined in this paper suggest competing and contested policy production practices, they intimate that the educational policy field displays some features of relative autonomy from broader neoliberal and managerial pressures.

The result of this complexity is a policy environment characterised by considerable contestation (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997); this is typical of policy construction in general and of the iterative nature of policy cycle processes (Ball, 1994; Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992; Ozga, 1999). Such tensions suggest an educational policy field which promotes teachers as collaborative and innovative, at the same time as the outcomes of their work are under increased managerial scrutiny. Under these circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that professional development has become heavily influenced by traditional dissemination approaches which seek to foster teaching as a regulated industry, even as there is discursive advocacy for a more autonomous teaching profession (Grundy & Robison, 2004).

Bourdieu's field theory provides useful conceptual tools to reveal some tentative insights into the complexity of policy production practices which may be inferred from the QTP policy text ensemble. In relation to the purposes and modes of teacher learning, QTP policy texts suggest that more economic and neoliberal principles and practices may have been actively supported in the policy production process. A preliminary case also can be made for the simultaneous valuing of more progressive modes of teacher learning which are considered most likely to benefit teachers of all students, including those in the most difficult material circumstances. The result is a complex melange of policy influences which are sometimes in contradiction with one another, and the suggestion of an educational policy field which simultaneously displays features of relative autonomy, heteronomy and cross-field effects.

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