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The Teacher's Voice

Appraisal, Development, and

Implications for Professional Identity

Responses to Teacher Review and Development and

Individual Development Plans in ACT

Secondary Schools

1990 - 1999

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the responses of eleven teachers, drawn from teaching, managerial, policy, and union levels, to their involvement in the development and implementation of Teacher Review and Development (TRAD) and Individual Development Plans (IDP).

Through a case study methodology that uses a phenomenological approach, this research found that TRAD and IDP had little credibility as tools of teacher development or appraisal for teachers because of a range of complexities that included the politicisation of the processes, a lack of financial and resource support, and varied quality control measures.

The research elicited a list of criteria for successful design and development of appraisal processes. These are detailed in Chapter Five of the thesis. They are rigorous monitoring and modelling of the processes, clear goals with stated end dates and recognition for involvement, appraisal that is integrated in existing work practices and based on shared understandings of work value, the provision of resources and time targeted at the appraisal process, a commitment to identifying and acting on inefficiencies, appraisal that is focused on teacher development and not directly linked to salary “reward”.

The research concludes that authentic teacher review and development will not take place until teachers themselves take on the responsibility, as a professional group, external to their employer, for the design of teacher review and development.

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PREFACE

This study was motivated by my own experience of the processes of Teacher Review and Development (TRAD) and Individual Development Plans (IDP) in the ACT. These were processes of teacher development and appraisal implemented in ACT public schools from 1990 to 1999.

Motivation for the research came from an understanding of the complexities of defining teaching quality, and of the difficulties in getting teachers to engage authentically with appraisal processes. This research explores broader issues of the politicisation of the appraisal process, of the cynicism teachers demonstrated toward the processes of appraisal, and the seeming void that appraisal processes fell into when implemented within the teaching service.

As the proposal for research was refined, the research focused on an exploration of teachers' responses to their involvement with appraisal and development programs. It details the responses of 11 interview participants to appraisal processes that had been implemented in ACT government high schools at a systemic level, outside the processes of probation and promotion, from 1990 to 1999.

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