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**Performativity and the demise of the teaching profession: the need for
rebalancing in Australia**

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Abstract

Serious damage to teacher professionalism is being triggered by the current performance dominated culture caused by neoliberal global conditions (performativity) in Australian schools. Many teachers are feeling severely compromised in their ability to offer quality teaching to their students. It is imperative that education policy makers and school leaders are informed on the latest research and literature around this topic. This will help to instigate plans to move forward in a more positive way. This paper explores the relationships between the qualities of a professional teacher and the negative effects of performativity and proposes a rebalancing framework. Three significant elements of teachers' professionalism are identified as essential components of a professional teacher: knowledge, autonomy and responsibility. The negative effects of performance culture on these three aspects are discussed and three compromising factors are identified: lack of autonomy, stifled creativity and breach of trust. Finally, evolving from the analysis of relevant research and literature, a conceptual framework is proposed. With a recurring theme of establishing a balance between control and collaboration, this rebalancing framework focuses on the interconnecting elements of leadership, professional learning and responsible, informed accountability.

Keywords: Performativity, professionalism, autonomy, trust, accountability, professional learning

Introduction

A passion for teaching and a love of children is common to many who enter the teaching profession. Full of enthusiasm and positivity, new teachers embrace the

challenge of unlocking the secrets of the students in their classes. Fresh from university, they welcome the opportunity to utilise the newly polished tools of the trade with real children and to make a difference in the world.

Although to the more cynical reader this may sound overly romantic and perhaps not quite true to the reality for every new graduate, the fact is that teachers all over the world are quickly becoming disillusioned. Why are teachers losing the passion to teach after such a short time?

Fortunately for Australia, Gabbie Stroud has eloquently and engagingly described her own path down this slippery slope in her book 'Teacher' (2018). Stroud weaves the chapters of her book through the increasingly difficult to negotiate pathways of her teaching career. Her start as the bright-eyed, passionate, enthusiastic new teacher in the 1980s to her reluctant withdrawal from the profession 20 years later acts as a simultaneous encouragement and warning for teachers and educational policy makers in Australia. Stroud attributes the demise of her career to the pressure caused by changes in the teaching conditions of schools during this time. The introduction of the new Australian Curriculum and the Professional Standards for Teachers diminished Stroud's professional identity, but the most crushing blow was felt under the all-pervasive influence of the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing. Stroud suffered under the gradual disappearance of the respect for her knowledge, her responsibility and her autonomy in the classroom. She describes her frustration as she was increasingly unable to exercise her professional knowledge gained from working with the individual children in her care.

Stroud's timely message could be used as an opportunity for us to think about what we can change to keep good teachers influencing our children in schools. It enables teachers and educational policy makers the opportunity to collaborate to

reinvigorate the passion and enthusiasm in our teaching colleagues while reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the aforementioned changes to fight for the maintenance of teacher professionalism. This paper aims to outline these changes in policy and the subsequent effects on the professionalism of teachers. I believe Stroud is right in saying that the situation for teachers in Australia is at a crisis point and that it is time that we looked seriously at the demoralisation of teachers in Australia and restore their professionalism. Solutions are explored with the goal of the maintenance of passion and professionalism. Using a theme of balancing collaboration with control, I will argue in the hope that together, we can heed Stroud's warning while embracing her encouragement.

Control is an element of the current world-wide phenomena of the neoliberalisation of education. In the last three decades, educational reforms in many countries, including Australia, have been dominated by a business-oriented model which aims to improve teacher quality (Burnard & White, 2008; Furlong, Whitty, Whiting, Miles, & Barton, 2000). Based on the premise that high performing teachers will produce high performing students and therefore a globally competitive economy, cost efficient performance has become a key issue in schools with educational policy developing strong links with economic goals (Burnard & White, 2008). Students and staff are viewed as human capital within this neo-liberalist paradigm and governments in OECD countries, have developed a focus on measurable outcomes such as high stakes testing and formal educational standards (Brennan, 2011). The core premise of this performance management is that standards will be enhanced due to the competition created between schools and parental pressures (Lingard, 2010). With the goals of increased accountability and standards, a culture of performativity has developed, where

educational institutions, teachers and students are compared, regulated and judged against these measures (Ball, 2003).

Teachers are required to work in a professional capacity in this environment to enact the official curriculum. This atmosphere of performativity represents a significant cultural shift as these structural reforms have led to changes for teachers representing a move from a former collaborative model to one that is more individualistic and autocratic (Liew, 2012). Teachers' professionalism, in terms of autonomy, knowledge and responsibility, is often compromised as many schools react to the pressure by implementing a more bureaucratic leadership model (Bourke et al., 2015; Sachs, 2016). Although there are some teachers who respond well to the pressures of performativity of their own accord (Bourke et al., 2015), being measured and judged purely on measurable performance outcomes is often interpreted by teachers as a method of control and forced compliance (Sachs, 2016). Teachers experience this as a lack of trust which can lead to dishonesty and inauthenticity (Ball, 2003; Meng, 2009), decreasing their professional autonomy and responsible teaching behaviour. Paradoxically, although creative flexible thinking is promoted by governments as an asset in the twenty-first century (Barr et al., 2008), performativity pressures are seen to be stifling this kind of thinking (Ball, 2003; Burnard & White, 2008; Luke et. al., 2013; Meng, 2009).

It is argued by policy makers that the introduction of this type of business model in schools will increase accountability and standards; however, there is growing evidence of the negative affects this performativity has on both teachers and students. Since this represents a relatively recent change in the educational environment in Australia, there is an absence of research indicating any positive effects of the performance culture in schools. It is argued in this paper that it is not the introduction of

performativity measures that are the problem, but the extent and manner in which they are implemented. To be competitive in the globalised economy and to educate our students to be creative, innovative thinkers, teachers must be accountable and learn to utilise research on best practice. It is evident however, that the obsession for testing and measurable outcomes which has been seen in many countries, has been overemphasised (Sahlberg,2007). There is an overbalance of testing rather than learning, and an overemphasis on control and compliance rather than inclusion and collective wisdom. Teaching incorporates more than what can be defined by narrowly-focused numerical accounts of students' numeracy and literacy skills.

It is important to reconnect with the purpose of education, rather than to focus purely on measurement and outcomes in education (Biesta, 2009). To improve the human condition, we need to educate young people to collaborate and be compassionate, creative, and socially and emotionally intelligent to solve the problems of this global innovative age. As a practicing teacher of over 30 years in rural remote, and metropolitan areas, I would argue that the focus on performativity suppresses the passion of teachers for the art and craft of teaching. This paper aims to explore the literature in all these areas and propose some **rebalancing solutions** to encompass learning and preserve teacher professionalism in Australian schools.

Therefore, this paper will answer the following questions:

Does '*Teacher*' represent the experience of the majority of teachers in Australia, or is Gabbie Stroud merely a victim of unfortunate circumstances?

What is the effect of performativity on teacher professionalism?

What are the implications of this for the future?

The first section of this paper outlines the definitions followed by an examination of literature presented under the headings, lack of autonomy, stifled

creativity and lack of trust. The remainder, representing the discussion and implications, is presented in three parts, consisting of three interconnecting suggestions found in the literature to restore balance to teachers' professionalism. Firstly, the need for a new type of professionalism for teachers is discussed and the implications of this for school leadership. Secondly, the types of professional learning needed to maintain teachers' adaptability and creativity in their teaching is presented. Finally, it is proposed that responsible accountability is achieved via the implementation of evidence-based practices for learning in classrooms.

Method

This paper represents the results of a literature review based on the two research questions. The review of literature aims to identify existing information on the research problem by identifying, locating and analysing relevant literature (Mills & Gay, 2015).

Initially, database searches were conducted in an iterative manner for peer-reviewed literature identified via searches on the primary keywords of 'teacher professionalism' and 'performativity' and confined to work done since 2000. Three research databases were selected for the first stage of this literature review: EBSCO, Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and Web of Science (Education and Educational Research category). This led to further searches on the secondary keywords of 'autonomy', 'knowledge' and 'responsibility'. Google Scholar searches were conducted using the same keywords. Reference lists of each article were reviewed to find additional material.

Articles were included according to relevance and the main problems and solutions were identified and recorded. The literature review was conducted by

complete reading of each piece of literature. A qualitative review was considered appropriate for the study.

Mapping is a technique which helps to understand relationships with complex topics and has been shown to be effective in comparison with more traditional textbook exercises (Chiou, 2009). Mapping techniques using Microsoft Word mapping tool were used in the initial stages as a brainstorming and scoping tool and then again in the final phase. Concept mapping was useful throughout the review process to clarify key arguments in the literature.

Three clear themes emerged from this process: control and compliance, stifled creativity, and lack of trust. After these three important themes were identified, relationships between variables and the research questions were used to explore some possible solutions for the future.

Definitions and Australian Context

To begin, a short overview of the issues as well as the specific characteristics of performativity for teachers in Australia and the definition of teacher professionalism.

Performativity

The manner in which Australia has responded to neoliberal influences in education has shifted and changed with different governments and times and will continue to do so as there is no doubt that global economic forces and international policy institutions now govern the direction of school reform (Fischetti, 2014). ‘Performativity’ is a term coined by authors to encompass the changes introduced for teachers by neo-liberalist policies to measure the performance of teachers, schools and students to maximise economic efficiency (Ball, 2003; Meng, 2009; Moore & Clarke, 2016). In Australia, teachers’ performance is measured in a variety of ways across the states and territories.

Constant revision of performativity measures in Australia undeniably influences the capacity for teachers to perform their jobs and therefore their professionalism.

Currently, the performance culture in Australian schools is dominated by three things: The Australian National Curriculum, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, and the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

Teachers' professionalism is presently affected by the fact that the Australian National Curriculum (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2013), which is being implemented with varying success in all states, is experiencing problems such as overcrowding, lack of inclusivity and an imbalance in pedagogy (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014). This curriculum is now mandatory, and there is a danger of reform fatigue for teachers with its constant revision and debate.

Currently, different states are wrangling over its content and working out how to adapt their own curriculum (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014). Despite these difficulties, there is hope that the National Curriculum will become a useful, innovative curriculum enabling teachers and students to relocate without compromising their education and will allow teachers the flexibility and autonomy to teach their specific students without compromising their professionalism. In my position as university lecturer, it is encouraging to witness the positive attitude which pre-service teachers embrace the flexibility of the Australian Curriculum and the creativity it inspires.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2017). The standards include descriptions of what is expected of teachers over the three domains of professional knowledge, practice and engagement. This is seen by some as a positive move towards increasing teachers' professionalisation in Australia, as it offers teachers the autonomy to develop a career pathway and self-

determine their professional development (Fischetti, 2014). It is, however, too soon to measure this effect. Conversely, writers have expressed more negative views on the standards, questioning their flexibility for the future and the controlling manner in which they may be used (Mayer, Mitchell, Macdonald, & Bell, 2005; Sachs, 2003).

In 2007, the Australian Labor government delivered the “Education Revolution” which was designed to improve excellence and equity in the Australian school system (Rudd & Gillard, 2008). This reform agenda aimed to raise the quality of teaching and improve accountability and transparency in Australian schools. A central element of this was the introduction of NAPLAN which generates data about the attainment of basic literacy and numeracy skills by students in Australian schools. NAPLAN represents a major part of the government’s push to increase standards and accountability.

Although it was never the intention, NAPLAN is now high-stakes testing with school results published in league tables on the ‘My school’ website and parents encouraged to shop around for schools according to performance. The My School website and NAPLAN were developed by The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) as well as their role in the creation and implementation of the Australian National Curriculum. There is much negative debate about NAPLAN by teachers and unions and one of the arguments is that the top performing schools in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), do not conduct national testing (Breakspear, 2012). Many teachers feel that NAPLAN detracts from teaching time as the four-month delay in results makes it impossible to use them to inform teaching practices. At present, NAPLAN tests are not aligned with the Australian Curriculum (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012) which also increases workload for teachers. There is also evidence of ‘teaching to the test’ and ‘cheating’ in NAPLAN testing (Fachinetti, 2015; Lingard, 2010). Fischetti (2014) claims Australia has created

‘testing’ rather than learning centres. Inequality is also maintained as high-stakes testing has become a self-fulfilling prophesy for disadvantaged children who suffer from constant test preparation. There is also evidence that high-stakes testing has strong negative consequences on students’ wellbeing, such as anxiety depression and suicide (Fischetti, 2014). The prevalence of this research indicates that it is time that Australia looks seriously at this method of testing and its implications and stops hiding behind the ‘unintended consequences’ of NAPLAN.

Regardless of whether these elements of performativity improve quality of teaching and accountability, due to the constantly changing policies and sheer number of processes involved, the time taken for teachers to individually administer these measures has increased exorbitantly (Sachs, 2016). This takes a significant time away from their teaching. Australian teachers already spend significantly more hours in front of their classes than other developed countries. For example, teachers in Australia spend 1300 hours in front of their classes per year compared to Finland at only 700 hours (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014). This administration time, combined with the extra administration requirements placed on teachers by each school for reporting, marking and programming, represents a serious problem for teachers.

Professional Teachers

The definition of what it means to be professional in teaching is widely disputed and has shifted over time (Bourke, Lidstone, & Ryan, 2015). This generally covers two elements; *being a professional*, which covers the status or regard held by others and *professionalism* which is the conduct or standards that guide the profession (Hargreaves, 2000). Both Sachs (2001) and Bourke et.al (2015) describe the

development of a 'new' professionalism. Sachs (2001) identifies two forms of professionalism; *democratic professionalism*, which originates in the teaching profession itself and focuses on the collaboration of all stakeholders, and *managerial professionalism*, which is the 'new' professionalism imposed on teachers via the performance culture. Bourke et al. (2015) posit increased emphasis on performativity in recent decades as being the factor which has returned professionalism to its nineteenth century disciplinary technology status, albeit as a 'new' professionalism with some young new teachers showing the ability to respond readily and easily to the new structures of performativity. Professionalism will be restored to teachers with more emphasis on democratic professionalism with its focus on collaboration.

In the rapid changes of the current globalised times, teacher professionalism cannot be seen as a fixed thing but one that is under constant change (Sachs, 2016). Since Hargreaves (2000) and Sachs (2003) warned of the need for an active social movement to resist forces of de-professionalisation felt by the marketisation of education, teacher professional standards have emerged. As there is no singular definition of professionalism shared by all interest groups (Sachs, 2016), for the purposes of this paper, professionalism is defined as the traditional, occupational value based on three significant elements which were commonly identified in the literature review. These are; knowledge, autonomy and responsibility (Furlong et al., 2000; Leaton Gray & Whitty, 2010). Professional teachers need a specialised body of knowledge to inform them in their teaching as they encounter unpredictable and complex situations. Autonomy is required if teachers are to use this knowledge to make their own judgements. Professionals use this autonomy with a sense of responsibility (Furlong et al., 2000). It is these significant elements of professionalism that have been identified as compromised in the review of the literature.

The following sections outline the results of the literature review. In short, when viewed through the lens of the effect on the above-mentioned three aspects of professionalism, the problems of lack of autonomy, stifled creativity and lack of trust have been identified as significant problems for the profession. The suggestions to remedy these problems involve a change in leadership style, specific professional learning for teachers and responsible and informed accountability measures from evidence-based research by teachers. Teacher professionalism can be rebalanced within this suggested framework by replacing control with collaboration.

Literature review, results and analysis

Lack of Autonomy

In the reviewed literature, the current performance culture in education is either presented as a necessary measure of accountability by policy makers, or as a form of control by many teachers. Measurable outcomes that feature in a performance culture offer opportunities for shared baselines for learning achievements and a common language about practice. It is also an avenue to increase the transparency and accountability of teachers' work for outside scrutiny and enables a systematic recognition to reward good work (Sachs, 2016).

However, there is evidence to suggest that many schools have reacted to performativity pressures by increasing bureaucracy in schools which compromises teachers' professional autonomy (Bourke et al., 2015; Sachs, 2016). An added complication, or perhaps reason for this reaction, is the effect of performativity on school principals in that they are also becoming prone to being constantly assessable (Niesche, 2015). Sachs (2016) asserts that the current focus on regulation is fixated on compliance, and accountability has the negative effect of restricting the enacted

curriculum as teachers increasingly use time to 'teach to the test'. Control and regulation of teachers' work is a continued trend indicating that teachers' professionalism is ignored (Lingard, 2010; Luke, Woods, & Weir, 2013). Ball (2003) points out that the performativity measures claim to increase the freedom for managers and organisations by removing the 'unnecessary' constraints. Ball sees this as a new form of control which encourages teachers to add value to themselves solely by improving their productivity and thereby negating the worth of commitment and service. Teacher autonomy is therefore restricted, due to this reaction of the tightening of control and establishing top-down approaches to leadership. It is necessary for leaders to initiate changes to restore teacher autonomy, as style of leadership was identified as a strong factor in fostering teacher professionalism in the face of performativity (Luke et al., 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

Stifled Creativity

Perhaps the most serious influence of performativity identified in the literature is its negative effect on the creativity of teachers and students. The ability to think creatively is something that is promoted in Australian educational documents as being important for the needs of life in the twenty-first century, necessitating the ability for flexibility, initiative, adaptability and new ways of thinking (ACARA, 2013; Burnard & White, 2008; Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs, 2008; Tan, 2015). Although teacher standards and high-stakes testing were initiated from a desire to increase knowledge levels in an effort to create human capital (Rudd & Gillard, 2008), Ball (2003), Meng (2009), Luke et. al. (2013) and Burnard & White (2008) discuss the constraints on both teacher and student creativity under performativity pressure. Favouring measurable outcome goals, as occurs in a performance culture, intransitive and transitive goals such as educational knowledge,

spiritual insight, mental and social well-being are neglected. This does not negate the importance of measurable goals, but rather points to the imbalance and restricted focus which invalidates more fluid types of cognitions and therefore narrows the scope of education (Meng, 2009). Therefore, teacher professionalism is affected as knowledge is restricted for both students and teachers. This knowledge is needed to inform encounters with unpredictable and complex situations.

As it is clear from the literature that in the global knowledge-based economy there is a need for creativity (Hartley, 2003), teachers must accommodate performativity and creativity into their teaching practice (Burnard & White, 2008). In addition to a shift in leadership style, a change in the types of professional learning for teachers to address this need is an important part of the proposed rebalancing solutions.

Lack of Trust

A theme of trust dominates the literature on professionalism in the face of performativity (Sachs, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Although strong measures of accountability are perceived as a measure of trustworthiness, it is shown that teachers can experience strong feelings of distrust from school leaders. These leaders rely heavily on authority to face the challenges of adopting the most productive levels of centralisation, standardisation and formalisation in their attempt to meet benchmarks of performativity (Sachs, 2001, 2016). From a teacher's perspective, performance cultures imply a lack of trust (Sachs, 2016) and although rules are necessary in schools, an over-proliferation of mechanisms to guide behaviour is likely to impair effectiveness (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Response to tight restrictions can lead to alienation and disloyalty which can actually serve to increase dishonesty (Kramer & Cook, 2004). Teachers' professionalism is therefore compromised with this irresponsible behaviour.

The forms of dishonesty invoked by constant surveillance and performativity

are termed *fabrications* by Ball (2003) and *pretenses* by Meng (Meng, 2009), and are the made-up responses to performativity requirements. Ball (2003) cites examples where teachers are overwhelmed with feelings of inauthenticity and confusion with the countless measures of performance that surround them. Like Stroud (2018), these teachers complain of lack of time and energy to work effectively and authentically with the students and this drives increasing numbers of teachers away from the profession. The stresses or ‘terrors’ of performativity actually have the capacity to change the teacher’s identity as it narrows thinking down to performance goals, inhibiting more natural fluid, rich, and flexible thought (Ball, 2003; Meng, 2009). Alongside changes in leadership and professional learning, teachers will require skills to develop their self-regulated evidence-based practice as they experience a sense of regained trust.

Implications: Possible Solutions for the Future

The review of literature revealed some possible solutions to these threats to the autonomy, creativity and trust of teachers caused by the culture of performativity. These will be discussed under the headings; Collaborative leadership, collaborative professional learning and informed, evidence-based practice.

Collaborative leadership

Leaders have the role in schools to ensure that policy around curriculum, assessment and teacher standards are mediated smoothly to staff. A shift from a *bureaucratic orientation* with centralised control and heavy standardisation towards a *professional orientation* with flexible rules and shared decision making is advocated (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Browning (2010) recommends the three essential elements of school culture, trust and collaboration for successful leaders in this time of performativity. This

is a form of the aforementioned *democratic professionalism* with its focus on positive collegial relations and collaborative work practices. It will give teachers the autonomy and agency to use their professional judgements wisely in the classroom.

[Figure 1: here]

This model would be a *professional bureaucracy* (Tschannen-Moran, 2009) illustrated by the overlapping pyramids in **Figure 1**. Here power and authority flow evenly between teachers and administrators as work is organised around the skills and needs of the professional teachers. Teachers exercise discretion in responding to the diverse needs of their students as well as the managerial demands of running a workplace. In summary, in answer to the focus research questions of this paper, performativity leads to a compromise of teachers' professional autonomy and trust and a shift of leadership style is offered as a solution for the future.

Collaborative Professional Learning

Professional learning for teachers in Australia is currently characterised by control rather than collaboration. Under the claim of improving teacher quality under the current neoliberal influences, the enforcement of professional teaching standards has been introduced within performance cultures and are seen to have damaging effects on professional identity and teacher autonomy (Mockler, 2012). Mockler notes that in Australia over the last decade, there has been a shift away from *teaching* quality to *teacher* quality and this focus has affected professional learning as the emphasis is taken away from the excellence of the practice of teaching and towards a surveillance of the teachers. The move to link accredited teacher professional development with standards

and accountability emphasising technical and instrumentalist approaches to teaching, leads to standardisation of practice and compliance. To preserve the creativity and knowledge of our teachers, it is essential that teacher professional development is used as a strategy to improve practice and drive change rather than to standardise practices (Sachs, 2016). This can be done by ensuring that the professional learning of teachers is steered away from the current over-technical approach where many ‘one-shot’ professional learning courses are completed as teachers ‘tick off’ the required professional standards obligations for accreditation (Mockler, 2012).

Once more, a collaborative, inclusive approach is proposed as the solution to quality professional learning to restore professionalism for teachers. These would focus on attitudinal development as well as functional development to achieve performance standards. There is increasing evidence of the vital contribution that cultures of collaboration make to improvements in teaching and learning. These are necessary because of the rapid change of curriculum content, the increasing social work and knowledge of pedagogy required, and the integration of special needs and multicultural diversity (Hargreaves, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Teachers who are continually undertaking relevant professional development, chosen by themselves as being appropriate to their students’ needs, will individually and collectively strive to determine the most responsible pedagogies for their classroom. This collaborative energy is best utilised in the organisation of formal, professional learning communities where colleagues will work together to discuss and undertake the necessary research to inform best practice (Sachs, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). It is imperative that allowances in the school timetable be made so that this collaborative work is seen as a priority, enabling its constant development, and that there is established a clear structure for shared decision-making.

Conversely, when it is forced and controlled, collaboration can be used to exploit teachers (Hargreaves, 2000). The challenge for leadership is to develop professional learning communities emphasising the social dimension of teaching. This could be done by incorporating contextualised, continuous approaches to develop learning opportunities which are self-selected by teachers with emphasis on inquiry-based learning and action research. This would avoid the compliance issues leading to risk-adverse teaching which is decreasing the creativity of teachers in schools. In summary, to answer the focus research questions of this paper, performativity leads to a compromise of teachers' professional autonomy, creativity and trust and a transformation of professional learning for teachers is offered as a solution for the future.

Responsibility before accountability: Informed, Evidence-based practice

To restore teachers' professionalism, it is important that responsibility is a precursor to accountability to avoid the dishonesty and lack of authenticity experienced by teachers. There is a marked difference between the externally enforced accountability in the current performance culture of Australian schools, and the responsible self-regulation by valued and trusted professional teachers. Teachers who are part of a collaborative leadership model and are given the autonomy to choose their own professional learning will feel valued and trusted as professional teachers. According to self-determination theory (Reeve, 2002), teachers granted the autonomy, competence and relatedness associated with this framework, will be intrinsically motivated to provide the best possible learning environment for each student in their care. It has also been shown that teachers who are less self-determined toward teaching are more controlling with students and vice versa (Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque & Legault, 2002). This, once again,

reinforces the necessity of creating the environment for teachers to enable the education of students who are self-determined, innovative and life-long learners. Teachers without autonomy, creativity and responsibility in the classroom are unlikely to be able to nurture these qualities in their students.

The importance of the relationship between teachers and students and their accountability to each other is what really matters. Authentic learning and authentic assessment matter. These important elements are embedded in the Australian Professional Standards for teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2017). None of those things are facilitated in the pressure cooker of high stakes testing. A responsible teacher who is valued for his or her own judgement will be able to honour the accountability to their students. To restore teachers' professionalism in Australia, a higher level of trust and confidence in teacher judgement needs greater official recognition. An example of this is the recent proposal by the Queensland assessment review board which suggests equal weighting to teacher judgement and external assessment in final year assessments for tertiary entrance (Matters & Masters, 2014).

Although accountability is central to performance cultures, this top down approach does not achieve the aims of improving the quality of teaching in schools. As mentioned already in this paper, this performativity push is based on the premise that high performing teachers will produce high performing students. Australia's NAPLAN results have not shown a great deal of improvement, if any, since the testing was introduced, and patterns of inequality have continued (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017). A Queensland Government NAPLAN Review 2018 is underway (Queensland Department of Education, 2018)

and PISA results have actually declined (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2018). Therefore, this move away from the excellence of the practice of teaching and towards a surveillance of the teachers has not been successful according to these measures. As NAPLAN is not aligned to the Australian Curriculum and has developed into high stakes testing causing stress to both students and teachers, I suggest that the implementation has not been a success.

It is recognised however, that due to the rapid changes in all areas with globalisation, it is imperative that schools have the ability to be flexible and educate students to work in an unknown future. This requires a transformative view of teacher professionalism, where teachers have the agency to be innovative in the classroom and creative designers of curriculum (Mockler, 2012). Teachers therefore, need to be educated towards an openness for constant transformation. Skills in research to validate and support their classroom practices are essential for the provision of quality teaching and the accountability necessary for all professions in the 21st century. As most Australian teachers do not understand the difference between evidence-based research findings and subjective opinion, and do not use objective, standardised diagnostic tests to inform their teaching (Rowe, 2006), I suggest empowering teachers to take responsibility for using evidence-based practice as a solution to the restoration of trust that is compromising teachers' professionalism.

The issue of the need for a balance between control and collaboration is essential to restore trust. All accountability systems should include good judgement, rather than merely a test score (Ravitch, 2016), and research-knowledgeable teachers are empowered to gather data in their classrooms for formative and summative assessment. This will enable teaching practices to be context specific in this self-regulatory method of accountability. Educators must work collaboratively in a trusting, open relationship

where they are both producers and consumers of research into education (Sachs, 2016). It is also important that teachers are educated to make informed, context-based decisions about their practice. This is required to enable discernment of the ‘one-size-fits-all’, overly simplified, and de-contextualised documents about evidence-based practices which have flooded the current neoliberal educational environment (Lewis & Hogan, 2016). In summary, to answer the focus questions of this paper, performativity can be a challenge to teachers’ trust, and informed teacher research for responsible accountability is offered as a solution for the future.

Conclusion

Gabbie Stroud’s experience of a loss of professional respect as an effect of performativity is one that is being felt by many teachers in Australia. This paper has suggested a solution to the serious damage of teachers’ professional autonomy, knowledge and responsibility under the current neo-liberal managerial style of performativity existing in Australian schools. This solution represents a rebalancing away from control and towards collaboration and trust in teachers. Firstly, the current predominant top-down leadership style, a response to the pressures of performativity, is replaced with a professional bureaucracy where teachers and leaders share in the responsibility of serving the needs of students and families. Secondly, a system of professional learning is advocated. Here, teachers collaborate at school to choose learning experiences for the development of creative pedagogies, rather than travel to ‘one-stop’ professional development courses. Finally, the need for research-literate teachers is highlighted to provide responsible accountability of teachers to their students and to inform evidence-based teaching practices in a rapidly changing educational environment. Each part of this solution is interlinked. When teachers are given more autonomy and trust from a shift in leadership style, and greater skills and knowledge

from professional development, this will lead teachers to act responsibly in their professional work. This sense of shared responsibility for service to the students will not need bureaucratic enforcement, as it will be monitored by the teaching profession itself, and therefore restore their professionalism. Teachers will be encouraged to maintain their passion to teach rather than to lose their motivation and leave the profession.

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Figure 1: Model of a Professional Bureaucracy, Adapted from (Tschannen-Moran, 2009)

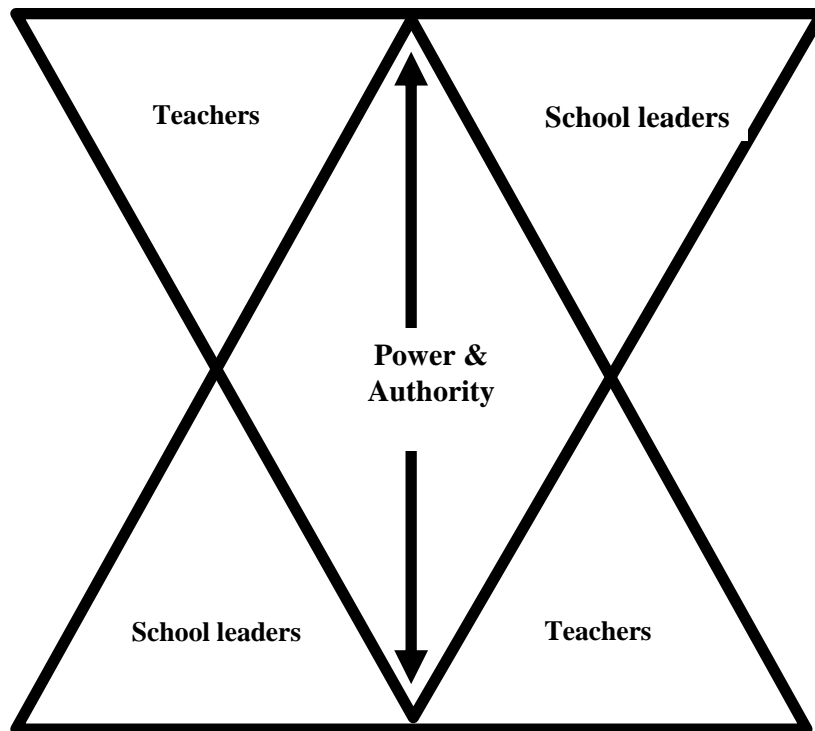


Figure Caption

Figure 1: Model of a Professional Bureaucracy, Adapted from (Tschannen-Moran, 2009)