Performativity, fabrication and trust: exploring computer mediated moderation.

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Based on research conducted in an English secondary school, this paper explores computer mediated moderation as a performative tool. The Module Assessment Meeting (MAM) was the moderation approach under investigation. I mobilise ethnographic data generated by a key informant, and triangulated with that from other actors in the setting, in order to examine some of the meanings underpinning moderation within a performative environment. Drawing on the work of Ball (2003), Lyotard (1979) and Foucault (1977, 1979), I argue that in this particular case performativity has become entrenched in teachers' day-to-day practices, and not only affects those practices but also teachers' sense of self. I suggest that MAM represented performative and fabricated conditions and (re)defined what the key participant experienced as a vital constituent of her educational identities - trust. From examining the case in point, I hope to have illustrated for those interested in teachers' work some of the implications of the interface between technology and performativity.

Keywords: ethnography; performativity; fabrication; moderation; technology; trust

Introduction

This paper explores how technology contributes to the overall performative agenda in an English secondary school through investigating a conferencing model (Klenowski and Adie, 2009) of coursework moderation. Performativity can be seen as the legitimisation of that which contributes to the maximal performance of a system (Lyotard, 1979). Relying on measurable indicators of accountability, progress and success, performativity

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implements models of performance management borrowed from commercial situations (Ball, 1998). This paper focusses on moderation conducted under performative conditions at the small scale. Through looking at one teacher's experiences, my intent is to probe what might be learned from the interface between technology and performativity. Rather than claim universal meanings from the work, I suggest that the experiences of the key informant reflect local conditions of performativity which might resonate with those of teachers in other settings.

The major theorist on performativity in English schooling is Stephen Ball, most prominently in his 2003 paper *The Teachers' Soul and the Terrors of Performativity*. Ball (2003, 215) outlines how, for its proponents, performativity endorses management techniques where practitioners are organised, and organise themselves, in response to 'targets, indicators and evaluations'. Ball (215) also explores how critics of performativity suggest it promotes 'opacity rather than transparency' and the elevation of 'fabrications' (224). Ball (1998) has identified at least three ways in which performativity works. First, as a disciplinary system; second, as part of the transformation of education, schools and teachers; and last, that it resides in – and shapes – language. Drawing on Ball's characterisation of performativity, I suggest that these three areas are prominent in the focus school's approach to moderation, whilst also encapsulating the wider field of performativity research.

For the key informant in this study, technology mediated[1] performative tools defined the culture of the school *and* (re)defined a fundamental condition of her educational identities - trust. Trust can be seen as the degree of confidence in the reliability of people and systems regarding a given set of outcomes or events (Giddens,

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[1] Mediation is the interaction between human beings, tools and historical, social and cultural environments (Kaptelinin & Nardi, 2006).

1990). Mobilising Giddens' definition I examine how, for the key informant, technology mediated moderation resulted in diminishing levels of trust.

Technology consists of materials, hardware, software, knowledge, skills, people, organisations, structures, social relations and culture (Fleck & Howells, 2001). The technology investigated is the Module Assessment Meeting (MAM) which is mediated by a range of computer technologies. Moderation in English schools is the administrative practice used to standardise marks for coursework and is part of requirement made by the Office for Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OfQAL, 2011) for the external moderation of examination marks. In a conferencing model of moderation students' work is initially graded by individual teachers. After this initial marking is complete, a sample of work representing different grades is then selected, and discussed, by teachers in a group forum with the aim of reaching consensus (Klenowski and Adie, 2009).

The majority of research regarding moderation has investigated professional development provision (Hipkins and Robertson 2011). There has been comparatively little research which considers teachers' experiences of the process, and even less exploring how technology mediated moderation (see Adie, 2008) supports performative conditions. To address this, I build on the tradition of ethnographic research of educational technology (Ward Schofield, 1995; Ward Schofield and Davidson, 2003; Monahan, 2005) and performativity (Jeffery and Woods, 1998; Troman, 2000; Perryman, 2009; Jeffery and Troman, 2011, 2012). Through moblising ethnographic data generated by a key informant, I argue that the degree to which performativity has become entrenched in the moderation model under investigation is revealed. I go on to theorise that in this particular case, performativity has profound negative effects on such practices, teachers' 'educational identities' (Moore, *et.al*, 2002, 551) and sense of self.

Mobilising performativity

This paper draws on the work of Ball (2003), Lyotard (1979) and Foucault (1977, 1979). Three areas of these theorists' work particularly relevant to this paper are now examined - the legitimation of knowledge; governmentality and normalisation; fabrications and surveillance.

Crucial to performativity is the 'legitimation of knowledge' (Lyotard, 1979, 27). For Lyotard, performativity is defined by what constitutes knowledge, what knowledge is of worth and whose, knowledge has legitimacy. Further, Lyotard argues that knowledge has become increasingly legitimised through the epistemological boundaries of science and technology. Lyotard's claim is that 'scientific knowledge' is replacing 'narrative knowledge' (27) via the 'computerization of society' (7). Performativity negates the importance of narrative knowledge based on experiences, values and beliefs which, and not coincidentally, is difficult to transform into technological data (see Postman, 1992). Instead, technology mediates performativity through the production, storage and analysis of scientific, and therefore legitimate, knowledge in the form of easily quantifiable forms of data.

Performativity gives rise to the commodification of knowledge through a 'context of control' (Lyotard, 1979, 46-7). Teachers' professional lives are controlled through the legitimation of scientific knowledge at the expense of the narrative. Moreover, the 'use value' (Jeffery and Troman, 2011, 168) of knowledge is paramount, as knowledge is valued as an indicator of performative requirements rather than having value in itself. Consequently, under performative conditions knowledge becomes located in the market, governmentality and normalisation.

Governmentality (Foucault, 1979) reflects the ways that government policy is incorporated into the day-to-day activities of individuals and organisations. Governmentality is the meeting point between governmental practices and practices of

the self (Dean, 1999), and involves technologies of power - of which governmentality is one – mediating the construction of different forms of social belief and values (Jeffery and Troman, 2012). Performativity is underpinned by governmentality through the establishment of power relations at the micro-level. Schools and teachers have to demonstrate success in the market place and in doing so reproduce government led 'performative dominant discourses' (Jeffery and Troman, 2012, 85).

Normalisation (Foucault, 1980) is the process through which (a) ideas and actions become 'natural' within an organisation and (b) the behaviour of members of an organisation are modified so as to reproduce socially acceptable standards. Such standards are reflected in the effective school (see Sammons, Hilman and Mortimore, 1995) and what Perryman (2009, 614) calls the 'rigid recipe' which prescribes how an effective school should be run. As a result, normalisation raises fundamental questions regarding power and control and as such underpins disciplinary power (Foucault, 1980).

For Foucault, disciplinary power involves the construction of rules and norms of conduct where individuals are rewarded, or punished, for conforming to or deviating from these norms. Foucault positions normalisation as a tactic for exerting the maximum organisational control with the minimum input of resources. Increasing the efficiency of control through disciplinary power supports a culture of compliance which 'stresses normalisation and standardisation and punishes deviance' (Shore & Roberts, 1995, 14). Normalisation, and with it disciplinary power, underpins the constituent conditions for performativity and reflects a homogenous power effect (Foucault, 1977). Performativity is the tool through which schools demonstrate normalisation, and surveillance is the examination of how successfully normalised a school has become (Perryman, 2009).

A corollary of a normalisied and performative environment is the rise of what Ball (2003) calls 'fabrications'. Fabrications represent '…versions of an organisation (or

person) which does not exist' (224) and become 'embedded and reproduced' (225) by the systems which report on teachers' practice. In Ball's analysis, underpinning fabrications is the requirement for teachers to evidence best practice and regular development.

Crucially however, Ball (2003, 224) suggests that 'truthfulness is not the point' of fabrications as they only represent an organisation, or teacher, in order for accountability to be apportioned. Thus, fabrications conceal, as much as reveal, the very auditable process under inspection due to the 'improvement game' (225). Perryman (2009, 622) describes a school 'fabricating the stage', that is, presenting documentation for inspection which reflects a fabricated and normalised view rather than what happens in actuality. Fabrications result in documentation becoming increasingly 'reified, self-referential and dislocated from the practices they are meant to stand for or account for' (Ball, 1997, 319). Accordingly, moderation conducted within a performative and fabricated environment becomes dislocated from the practices it supposedly reflects.

Surveillance has a significant role in performativity, as well as being an important technology of disciplinary power and normalisation (Perryman, 2009). Foucault (1977) explores the processes of surveillance through using the metaphor of the Panopticon (Bentham, 1787). In the Panopticon, the threat of being constantly observed is successful at controlling the actions of those under surveillance. With advances in technology come advances in Panoptic surveillance. Through tools such as Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)[2], technology increasingly mediates surveillance with such overt scrutiny rising in English schools (see Selwyn, 2010). Technology supports the rituals and routines (Ball, 2001) of performativity and is an example of 'paraphernalia of control' (Ball, 1990, 155).

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[2] The research school has 40 internal and 15 external CCTV cameras.

Through overt tools such as CCTV, and covert tools such as data analysis, technology mediates increasing opportunities for surveillance and with it control.

The surveillance inherent in performativity might be expected to be resisted. However, Priestley *et al* (2012) examine the lack of such resistance and highlight that teachers see surveillance as both normalised and desirable. Performative regulation requires groups to submit to mutual observation in an inmate culture (Scott, 2010), and collude in their own disempowerment (Alexander, Anderson and Gallegos, 2005). Consequently, the normalsiation of surveillance, and the interface between technology and performativity, has fundamental ramifications for teachers' work and educational identities.

Later in the paper I revisit some of the points raised here. In the following sections I present a brief biography of the key informant, outline the context and setting for the project and discuss the research design and methods.

The research project

Nicola Howard has taught at Brampton High[3] for three years and this is her first post. She is a 35 years old Science teacher and head of year. Nicola is a biologist and teaches across all key stages although most of her classes are Key Stage 4[4]. She has a busy social life outside school where she sings in a jazz band and enjoys social networking with her colleagues. Nicola is a Labour party activist and National Union of Teachers representative. She is critical of both the Labour party and the Coalition Government's educational policies and the focus on performance and results. Nicola is smartly dressed

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[3] The names of all informants, and the school, are pseudonyms

[4] Key Stage 3 is the age range 11-14 years, Key Stage 4, 14-16 and Key Stage 5, 16-18 of schooling in maintained schools in England and Wales.

at work where she wears a suit. She claims it is important for her to look smart and that her clothes are part of being professional as well as a mark of the respect she has for her job. Nicola, although softly spoken, can project her voice and use subtle changes in intonation to make a point. She is approachable for both students and staff.

Nicola was one of two key informants who participated in the larger project from which this study emerged. Initially I focused on a group of six informants who volunteered to participate in a pilot study after an email was sent to staff at the school outlining the project. On completion of the pilot I re-approached these teachers to ask if they would consider extending their participation. For reasons outside the scope of this paper five of the original six informants withdrew from the full project. Working with a single key informant was considered and rejected (again outside the scope of this paper). Consequently, a further email was sent in an attempt to contact anyone who had not been part of the initial project which Nicola replied to and agreed to participate.

Nicola suggested that she participated in the research because she had a general interest in technology. However, she was also intrigued, and frustrated, by the changing conditions of her work. Nicola was concerned as to how a mechanistic and data-driven approach to representing learning, and with it the success of the school, did not map to what was happening in her, and her colleagues, classrooms. For Nicola, the changing focus from learning to the representation of learning, and the role of technology in mediating this, was increasingly fundamental to defining what Moore, *et.al* (2002, p. 551) call 'educational identities'. Her participation in the project was part of engaging with, and to an extent making some sense, of this changing focus.

Brampton High is a two site school with key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4-5 centres. The Key Stage 3 centre is a two level construction of floor to ceiling glass and stainless steel with a central promenade running the length of the building. All classrooms have a

liquid crystal projector and interactive white board and teachers use these frequently. Staff use their laptop computers for mediating teaching as well as for administrative tasks. There is limited outside space which consists of a small sports field and all-weather basketball court.

The Key Stage 4-5 centre has a range of facilities with an emphasis on technology. Every faculty has access to interactive white boards, projectors and laptop computers. An outside study court is surrounded by the rest of the building which is on two floors and accessed by numerous stairways. The corridors are carpeted and there are display boards with presentations of students work. There is a large sports hall as well as an off-site sports facility which is about a 15 minute walk away. Other than the central study court there is very little outside space.

The centres are less than three quarters of a mile apart and serve the same catchment area. With 1623 students on roll, including 272 in the sixth form, Brampton High is a large and expanding school. The majority of the students who attend live within a one mile radius of the school. Brampton has a small but increasing number of students who are from families of asylum seekers or refugees; 15% of students at the school have a first language other than English. The number of students who are eligible for Free School Meals is 36% and increasing year-on-year. Office for Standards in Education[5] reports indicated that the proportion of students with English as Additional Language and Special Educational Needs is above the national, and city, average and increasing. Brampton has a school population, which is over 50% non-white – despite the catchment area being 70% white - with the majority of non-white students being of Pakistani, Indian and black Caribbean ethnic origin.

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[5] The details of the reports used in this section have been removed so as to preserve anonymity.

The Module Assessment Meeting (MAM) was a form of conferencing moderation (Klenowski and Adie, 2009) and consisted of fortnightly 45-minute meetings. Prior to MAM, teachers undertook an audit of their classes' coursework through the marking of individual pieces of work. The data from this marking process was entered onto spreadsheets on the Learning Gateway[6]. From analysing the spreadsheets, examples of work representing different grade boundaries were brought to the MAM for group discussion. MAMs were held between September and June until all the required work had been moderated. At the beginning of July a sample of students' work representing different grading bands was sent for external moderation.

MAM data was managed by Common Management Information Service software. Spreadsheets converted the module score data into an overall grade for each student in a particular class and mediated a comparison between the actual scores attained against predicted scores to produce an overall residual score. This process of comparison was then continued within faculties to compare students with students and classes with classes, and then mapped across the entire school to compare the residual scores of students in different faculties.

MAM data was stored as read only files which enabled different levels of editing access. Read only files prevent the accidental, or unauthorised, editing of files and can have varying levels of sophistication. For example, files might have restrictions on editing for teachers and faculty heads, but editable for members of the leadership team. MAM was a forum for the public presentation of student data. Teachers projected their MAM spreadsheets containing the coursework data onto an interactive white board and conducted a short presentation around the data. After the presentations and examination

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[6] The Learning Gateway is the school's intranet system.

of work submitted as grade boundary exemplars, there was a discussion about the performance of individual students and whole classes.

Methodology

Ethnographic research of educational technology focuses on how technology supports teachers' activities, tasks and classroom culture (Ward-Schofield, 1995). Drawing on Ward-Schofield's definition, my ethnographic approach had a general focus on performativity and technology which I developed, refined and altered through examining the setting holistically (Johnson and Johnson, 1990). Crucially, ethnography is not simply a case of 'hanging around' in a research setting (Woods, 1996, 52). I employed a systematic approach to data generation, recording and analysis so as to develop a deep understanding of the research context.

I took on the role of part-time science teacher at Brampton High and completed both teaching and non-teaching activities. In the first year of the project I was in school three days a week. As well as teaching I participated in tutor sessions, break time duties, report completion, and attended parents' evenings. During the second year I was again in school for three days a week, sometimes four and continued with the same teaching commitment as in the first year. In the final year I visited the school two days a week. Interviews and observations were conducted during all three years of fieldwork.

I employed 'reflexive interviewing' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, 113) and acknowledged that interviewing is a social practice (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009).

Data Source	Interview	Observation	Field notes
Nicola	47	73	80
Leadership team	10	4	8
Faculty head	9	17	21
Teaching Staff	30	54	65
Support Staff	4	12	15
Students	5	8	8
Parents	2	0	0

Table 1. Data sources

Interview data was generated by a number of informants (see Table 1) which I used to cross check claims, through diverse vantage points (Banister, *et al*., 2001).

Observation was unstructured (Delamont, 1976) and consisted of two strands. Firstly, I used observation to triangulate informants' claims. Secondly, I used observations to generate data in their own right without reference to previous events. Observational data was catalogued as a reflexive recording of an observed event which outlined the setting, time of day and context of the observation. Analysis followed the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I used theoretical sampling to develop questions, and generate hypotheses. After rereading interview transcripts and fieldnotes, coding was used to separate and label data (see Charmaz, 1983).

It is important to be as explicit as possible about ethnographic data to prevent misunderstanding or ambiguity (Hamersley and Atkinson, 1995). In most cases interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. However, on occasion I was unable to make overt notes or audio record (see Woods, 1996). Consequently, I have identified in the text whether data was generated from an interview (i.e. a transcript of an audio recorded interview); a field note (i.e. a reflexive recording of a conversation) or an observation (i.e. a reflexive recording of an observed event).

Moderation as a performative technology

Three overarching categories emerged from my analysis – moderation and control; moderation and fabrications; moderation and trust – which are the focus in the following sections.

Moderation and control

MAM was ostensibly about the performance of students. However, Nicola interpreted MAM as a means of monitoring the performance of, and controlling, teachers:

> Nicola - As soon as MAM turns into a comparison of teachers' effectiveness rather than a comparison of students' grades there is a big problem. And then on top of this the data is 'locked away' as read only [files] and this makes it even worse…The data we used for the kids' scores has now become a way of scoring us.
> Interview, Key Stage 4 science lab, after school

In Nicola's view, MAM was not only a performative tool of control it was also a means of surveillance. This notion of control and surveillance was supported by other teachers. Katie for example, claimed that surveillance was becoming more prevalent in her day-to-day work, both through physical lessons observations and data analysis:

> Katie – MAM seems to be about checking up on us. It's about looking over our shoulders, not trusting us, and controlling what we're doing in our classrooms. It's like we're always being watched, when I enter a grade in a spreadsheet that data becomes part of me being watched.
> Field note, Key Stage 4 science lab, after school

Katie's comments were echoed by Nicola who also outlined how MAM data had become part of a control and surveillance culture:

> Nicola - I hate feeling that a system has become something that's controlling what I do. Because of MAM I'm thinking all the time [in the lesson] about how does this feed into assessment rather than asking what are the kids learning here.

Ethnographer –How does MAM control?

Nicola – Because I actually set it up to control. All the data I put in, which is supposed to be about moderating kid's coursework, is also used for assessing me. All the data can be used to keep an eye on what I'm doing and controlling what I do in my room.

Ethnographer – Has that had an effect?

Nicola – Yeah! A huge effect…my practice has become about being a module score factory...data can be examined, edited and cross referenced with other teachers. That makes me feel like I'm being constantly checked up on and watched. I hate it.

Interview, Key Stage 3 class room, after school

Both Nicola and Katie suggested that MAM was a tool which not only changed their working conditions but also changed their educational identities. These comments resonate with Ball's (2003) claim that educational reform, of which performativity is a part, does not only change what teachers do but who they are. For example, Sara talked about how MAM had become a "show" and how this re-kindled experiences from a previous career:

Sara – …when I was getting ready for MAM I just thought 'I'm doing a pitch here'.

Ethnographer – Like a pitch for new business?

Sara – Yeah, exactly. I hated doing that…But presenting my moderation results to the rest of the department took me back…We're not pitching for new business, and I know education is becoming more market driven, but who are the new clients here? We're all in the same department, and in the same school, so we should be working together.

Ethnographer – You seem really unhappy with this?

Sara – Yeah, I left my last job to get away from all this dog-eat-dog stuff. It's like I sold my soul before and now I have to do it again.

Interview, Key Stage 3 science lab, lunch

Sara's experiences echoed with Ball's (2003, 216) suggestion that teachers struggle with balancing 'the care of the self against duty to others'. Sara's self-care was attempting not to re-engage with a performative and output driven working culture which she had moved

into teaching to escape. However, for her, self-care was in tension with her duty toward the school.

Nicola was also concerned that the moderation process had become a "sales pitch" where teachers were positioned as competitors. For her, MAM set teacher against teacher as if they were demonstrating their 'value' (see Menter *et.al*, 1997). The imposed competition inherent in MAM was another technology of control:

> Nicola - The whole purpose of moderation has changed…It's not about us being a team and supporting each other to get the best result for the kids and the school. What we do is becoming more directed. Even since I've been teaching, I've lots less autonomy. It's like things are being imposed on me all the time and I don't see why. Well, not at first. Now I think I can see why we have MAM. It's about performance management and controlling what happens in classrooms.
> Field note, Key Stage 3 classroom, lunch

Nicola's view was that the control implicit in MAM was counter-productive:

> Nicola - I mark the kids' work, I really believe in the importance of respecting the work kids have done by giving some meaningful feedback about it. I don't have to be told, controlled, instructed or whatever to do it.
> Interview, Key Stage 4 classroom, before school

MAM appeared to suggest 'controlled de-control*'* (DuGay, 1996, 61). Nicola claimed that rather than MAM empowering, it constrained and controlled her practice. Nicola's position was that the greater the illusion of de-control and de-regulation, the greater the reality of technologically mediated performative control.

Moderation and fabrications

Nicola claimed that underpinning MAM was the onus to get students passed by "hook or by crook". Data was so representative of teachers' abilities that it had become part of the increasingly fabricated image of the school:

Nicola – The pressure on the school…just keeps increasing. And the measures the school has, and I have, to show how well I'm doing are becoming more and more important. So that means that we're changing what we're doing because of the measures rather than because of learning and the kids. That's got to be the wrong way around. And what's worse is that the measures don't tell the whole story anyway.

Interview, Key Stage 4 science lab, after school

Nicola talked about "good faith" and went to great lengths to dispel any notion that she, or her colleagues, were cheating. For her, fabrications were more nuanced than 'making up' scores:

Nicola – I don't make up scores so that I look good. And I really don't think anyone does that…what I do is play the game…I give out revision sheets and set revision for homework. I go through the areas the test might be on before the test itself. I give out past questions.

Ethnographer – That sounds like good practice…

Nicola – No! It's teaching to the test. The kids get good marks because I've trained them. But I don't think the test means anything other than they've been trained…I make sure the kid's do well on the tests. That's what I mean by saying it's all made up.

Interview, Key Stage 3 staff base, after school

The fabricated view of the school represented by MAM was central to what Nicola experienced as the undermining of her professional opinion and with it a (re)definition of her educational identities. Moreover, Nicola suggested that such a fabricated view disempowered teachers and impacted negatively on the students:

Nicola - We all sit up when the data suggest something isn't right, when a kid, or a class, is off target. And that's right. But I could just be teaching to the test, and all my classes are on or above target, but ask the kids anything not on the test paper...they don't understand how to link things together...Just because my MAM data looks OK might only mean that I'm good at getting the kids to answer the test. I'm playing the game.

Ball (2001) suggests that fabrications are based upon a single, or multiple, representations of a person or organisation. Nicola described how MAM appeared to be a tool which both represented what was happening with regard to moderation whilst also being part of "playing the game" where teachers produced the data which most suited the conditions;

> Nicola – We present data in MAM but there's no dialogue about what's presented. So that means that MAM ignores the story behind the data. It also means that we talk about 'best practice' like it's always transferable.
>
> Ethnographer – And you don't think it is?
>
> Nicola – Good practice is transferable, yes, but only with an understanding of context. MAM is all about hard data, and sharing effective practice, but it stops conversations. So what happens is that the way MAM is set up influences not just how we moderate but what moderation means….Because there's no dialogue, other than about what works and what improves the scores, there's less open conversation. It's made the whole thing look on the outside more open...but it's actually less open.
>
> Interview, Key Stage 3 staff base, lunchtime

Nicola's comments resonate with Ball's (2003, 225) suggestion that performativity reduces transparency because of teacher's having to become 'whatever is necessary to succeed':

> Nicola – MAM is just a symptom of what's happening in the school and in education. It's having effects on relationships and communities but it's also making me change. It's making learning a process with outcomes that are measured at the end. The more I think about it the more it's like we're all missing the point.
>
> Field note, KS4 staff base, after school.

Moderation and trust

Nicola wanted to give MAM a chance before passing comment. However, after only one MAM, Nicola's opinion had altered and she was particularly critical of data being stored as read only. There were two points; first, that data seemed to be held in such regard that

it was more important than her professional opinion; second, the storage of MAM data as read only signaled distrust:

> Sam – You been to the moderation meeting?
> Nicola – Yep and I'm pissed off about it.
> Sam – What bit!
> Nicola – Most of it really. No that's not fair, I agree that we need more consistency but at what cost?
> Sam – What about the data access restrictions?
> Nicola - I can't believe all the MAM data is read only. What does that say about me as a teacher?
> Field note, Key Stage 4 corridor, after school

Giddens (1990, 100) suggests that the 'debilitating effects' of the absence of trust manifest in anxiety and dread. Nicola was both confused about the motives that underpinned the use of read only files, and anxious about the effect of these motives on her working relationships and practices. Previously to MAM, moderation data was open access as this gave the opportunity for teachers to update data whenever was appropriate. As Sheila commented, storing data as open access indicated trust in those able to access the data:

> Sheila – It's all about power really, about those that can access the data and those that can't…surely all the teaching staff should have equal levels of access with regard to amending their own data? This is a way of using technology to keep the power with a certain few in the school.
> Interview, Key Stage 4 classroom, before school

The use of read only files in MAM indicated a 'low trust society' (Troman, 2000, 331). In such a society, the separation between managers and teachers becomes accentuated by a performative climate and, for Sammy, was reflected in damaged relationships between herself and her team:

> Sammy - The culture that's here now, where we're competitors and the kids are customers, is putting a lot of strain on friendships and relationships. Moderation has turned into a thing that's about teacher's performance… It's putting strain on long term friendships I have.
>
> Sammy, Maths HOF, Field note, Key Stage 4 staff base, after school

Nicola did not claim that the "backing up" of data was not a prudent precaution, rather that there was a subtext:

> Nicola - As soon as one class is compared with another you're comparing teacher with teacher.
>
> Emma- It's less like moderation and more like quality control but with an undercurrent. We're being set up as competitors…
>
> Nicola – The way it's been set up, well, I've this feeling about how I've done in comparison with so and so. The MAM spread sheet is like a metaphor for the school. I mean it's read only what message does that give? Is one of us going to go in and sabotage it? Or amend it and change bad scores to good ones!
>
> Field note, Key Stage 3 science prep room, break

Nicola experienced resentment and even fear through what she considered to be an attack on the level to which she was trusted. Her claim was that trust was important not just in relation to data:

> Nicola - Trust is so important in this job. I can't see how keeping data so that only the leadership team can edit it indicates trust in teachers...If I'm not trusted in one setting then that sort of transfers to others. Am I going to intervene in a situation when kids are fighting with the possible consequence that I get a complaint against me? Will I be trusted when it's my word against someone else's?
>
> Interview, Key Stage 4 staff room, lunch

Nicola maintained that MAM, and the technology which mediated MAM, was designed to ensure conformity to a performative moderation model. Nicola did not consider MAM as a collegiate and holistic process of teachers engaging in professional dialogue and working together for a common goal:

Nicola - I feel so sorry for people when they have to stand at the front and defend poor residuals. It's like something out of The Apprentice[7]. MAM doesn't lend itself to people working together because ultimately we're all competitors with each other.

Ethnographer – Did you stand up?

Nicola – Yeah I did and I hated it.

Interview, Key Stage 4 staff room, lunch

The implications of the competitive elements prevalent in MAM were wider reaching than just moderation. Competition inherently challenged the unrecognised process and practices which were fundamental to the working of the school. The lack of trust in teachers mediated by MAM led to increasingly closed communities where trust and openness became defined within performative terms.

Moderation mediating conditions of distrust

In this concluding section I step back from the data to provide an explanation as to why MAM moderation impacted on the informants in this study in the way it did. From examining the data, I suggest that returning to five key areas helps to make some sense of how MAM worked as a performative tool.

First, the legitimation of knowledge (Lyotard, 1979) is echoed in MAM's mechanistic approach located in scientific knowledge. Students' learning was seen as test scores, with these scores themselves only located in the use-value (Jeffery and Troman, 2011), which represented the normalisation of the school. The narrative knowledge located in teachers' emotional and subjective understanding of learning and teaching was replaced. Not only did this replacement leave a mark on moderation it also left a mark on the informants' educational identities (see for example, Moore, *et.al*, 2002).

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[7] The Apprentice is a TV program where business people are set tasks which, if failed, results in contestants 'fired' from the show.

Second, MAM reflected Foucault's (1977) notions of governmentality and normalisation. The increased stakes for success for the school, and individual teachers, required by market conditions became such that the normalised view of what was an effective school supported increasingly dominant mechanisms of power. MAM indicated normalised conditions and, as such, was a tool which mediated the 'internalisation' of expected behaviours (Perryman, 2009). Rather than MAM sustaining 'camaraderie and communitas' (Woods, 1995, 93), it lead to what Troman (2000, 344) describes as teachers' isolationism. The teachers in this project felt isolated from their colleagues, many of whom were personal friends, due to the normalisation of performative conditions.

Third, normalsiation supported MAM becoming a form of surveillance (Foucault, 1979). In this particular case, moderation was as much a tool for "checking up" on Nicola, and her performance, as a tool for the collation and analysis of students' marks. The power of MAM surveillance was that it was omnipresent, directed teachers' work, and represented a Foucauldian Panoptic approach (Menter, Hulme and Sangster 2012) to self, and peer, surveillance.

Fourth, surveillance was fundamental in turning MAM into a system of control and tool for disciplinary power (Foucault, 1980). MAM fed into the schools performance review system. Teachers were rewarded for good performance over the year – of which MAM contributed – by being awarded a pay rise. Those who were not deemed successful were supported by the implementation of increased lesson observation, supplementary targets and increased scrutiny.

Fifth and reflecting the four previous areas are fabrications (Ball, 2003). MAM was a tool for the moderation and legitimation of fabrications. Nicola "taught to the test" and even "trained" students to answer test questions so that these scores would look

favorable within the MAM context. Thus normalised fabrications became reproduced at the heart of the school – students' learning was directed by performative demands.

These five areas contribute toward what was the most significant finding of the study, and which ought to be of the most concern. MAM and performative conditions reduced the extent to which Nicola felt trusted. Troman (2000, 339) outlines what he calls trust-distrust categories which resonated with much of the MAM data. Performativity underpinned MAM to the extent that Nicola felt she was increasingly distrusted - and as a result alienated, undermined and isolated - and under both surveillance and suspicion. These conditions lead to conflict between global influences such as performativity, normalisation and governmentality and Nicola's personal dispositions, conflict which manifested in an 'identity crisis' (Moore, *et al*., 2002, p. 554).

Conclusion

In this paper I have examined some of the implications of a performative, and technology mediated, moderation tool. I suggest that such a tool positions teachers as competitors and elevates the prominence of performative and fabricated data. It is this elevation which impacts on the extent to which teachers feel they are, or are not, trusted.

Through ethnographic study, and focusing on the experiences of a key informant, I maintain that this project reveals to some degree how performativity has become entrenched in teachers' work at Brampton High. Because I was in situ over a period of 3 years I was able to observe at first hand MAM meetings, teachers collating the data used for MAM, and to listen to informal and formal conversations regarding moderation. The ethnographic approach used here has supported the investigation of teachers' experiences of moderation in performative conditions. In doing so, I suggest the profound negative effects of such practices upon the key informant's educational identities and is exposed.

MAM mediated an increasing prevalence, and dominance, of technology in performative conditions. Without the interface of technology and performativity MAM would not be able to, or indeed have a need, operate. Teachers at the school advocated moderation and the potentially beneficial role technology might play in mediating the moderation process. However, Nicola maintained that MAM relied on fabricated data and reinforced performative conditions. Consequently, MAM, and the technology which mediated it, indicated an 'official distrust' (Troman, 2000, 346) of the key informant which had major repercussions for how she felt about her working practices.

Hargreaves (1994, 2) indicates that teachers' emotional lives are shaped by 'how the work of teaching is organised, structured and led'. In this particular case, performative structures, and the role of technology in mediating in these structures, had fundamental implications for teachers' emotional lives and levels of trust. The elevation of scientific knowledge, normalised structures of governmentality, and increased levels of control and surveillance were all prevalent within MAM. All of these impacted upon the extent to which teachers felt trusted. Investigating MAM revealed what teaching had become for Nicola, and how learning and success were represented at the school. In doing so, the extent to which she felt trust in her had become eroded was brought into focus - an erosion which had consequences beyond those solely related to the school's approach toward moderation.

Understanding performativity is high-stakes for those interested in education. The experiences of Nicola Howard and her colleagues are those of a particular group. This is research at the small scale. I am under no illusion that a project such as this will have any influence upon those who promote performativity as a constructive approach to organising the work of schools and teachers. However, it seems to me that the interface between technology and performativity described here might resonate beyond the

confines of this particular case and as such is worthy of reporting. In presenting this research I hope to have illustrated how moderation carried out under performative conditions mediates a (re)definition of fundamental conditions of teachers' work and educational identities.

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