



Beyond Compliance: Harnessing accountability  
measures in schools as tools for professional  
praxis

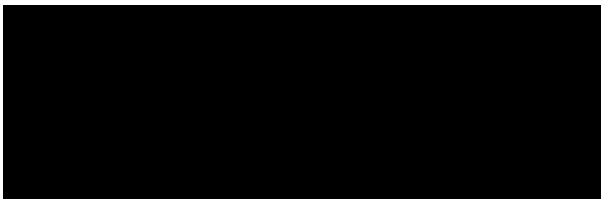
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## Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.



Emma Le Marquand

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## Abbreviations

The following are abbreviations used throughout the thesis

AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
APDF	Australian Performance and Development Framework
APTS	Australian Professional Teaching Standards
CAPA	Creative and Performing Arts
DoE	Department of Education
HSIE	Human Society and Its Environment
KHS	Kurrangang High School
NP	National Partnership
NSWTF	NSW Teachers' Federation
PDF	Performance and Development Framework
PDP	Performance and Development Plan
QT	Quality Teaching

## Abstract

This Masters of Research thesis is an evaluation of the mandated policy for all NSW Department of Education teaching staff, the Performance and Development Framework, and its accompanying Performance and Development Plan, as implemented in one school over 2017 and 2018. The benchmark for the evaluation is whether the implementation has gone 'beyond compliance' (Groundwater-Smith, Mitchell, & Mockler, 2016) to produce meaningful teacher professional development or whether it is simply resting as a compliance measure. The tool for analysis in the policy enactment in the one site of Karragung High School is the practice architectures framework (Kemmis et al., 2014), which was employed through a case study involving whole staff surveys and focus groups.

The findings indicate that endeavouring to reach compliance whilst not seeking to impede teacher autonomy at the site studied, has in fact rendered the Performance and Development Plan as a functional irrelevancy for most staff and the potential for enhanced teacher praxis has not been harnessed through this policy. There is clear evidence that many of the staff are self-reflective teachers keen to develop their skills and capacity, but the link between this and their engagement with the Performance and Development Plan has not been made possible through current school leadership practices.

## Introduction

This research project is firmly grounded in my professional identity. I am a mid-career teacher and school leader working within the NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) public education system.

In this period of increasing accountability measures, school leadership can often feel like an exercise in performativity. Such things as having an active Twitter profile, showcasing carefully selected vignettes to display your school as 'Insta-worthy' and selecting data to prove you 'know thy impact' (Hattie, 2013) are sometimes seen as the success criteria of school leaders.

Many teachers and school principals are feeling bogged down in administrivia (Deloitte, 2017; McGrath-Champ, Wilson, Stacey, & Fitzgerald, 2018), feeling that their production of data is more valued than their actual teaching. All this within a culture of greater scrutiny and the increasing politicising of education policy and funding. One of the key policies in this suite is the NSW Performance and Development Framework (PDF) and its core practice the Performance and Development Plan (PDP).

Even within such conditions, my commitment to seeing my career through as a teacher in a NSW DoE school is unwavering. The daily extraordinary work happening in schools, the lives that are enhanced year-in and year-out and the thrill of working with amazing young people has never diminished for me. For me, it became a key concern to determine how to continue to work in a deeply essential system whilst remaining critical of the call to evidence-based practice that functions within an echo-chamber of dominant 'experts' and ever-increasing accountability measures.

This thesis, therefore, is an exercise in insider-research. It is guided by the desire to develop a researcherly disposition in my role as a school leader whilst seeking to make the most of the educational system within which I work. It is framed by two key ideas. The first being the notion of 'beyond compliance' as posited by Susan-Groundwater Smith, Jane Mitchell and Nicole Mockler (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2016). This represents a means of evaluating the success of school leaders through their support of professional praxis, as opposed to simply acting as gatekeepers ensuring compliance. Secondly, the project utilises practice architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014) as an analytical



tool to investigate the enablers and constraints on the achievement of working beyond compliance in one site.

The research questions I have chosen to focus on are limited in scope, given the focus on one site. This allows me to maintain a purist insider-researcher stance. Additionally, it provides for a close analysis of the complexities of a school within a limited research project. Finally, it allows for an emerging framework for school evaluation, one which meets accountability requirements but also honours the need for understanding the unique characteristics of a school. In this way the research, although only focusing on one site, presents a way in which this practice may be applied in other settings, beyond a single school or schooling system. As such, I established a set of research questions that encompassed the setting, the educational practice, an educational aim and an analytical tool to employ in this evaluation.

### **Key research question:**

Is the mandatory policy, the NSW Performance and Development Framework, being implemented at the level of compliance or beyond compliance at Karragung High School in 2017-2018?

### **Sub Questions:**

How can practice architectures assist in analysing which arrangements at KHS are enabling and constraining praxis in the practice of NSW Performance and Development Framework implementation at Karragung High School?

How can this analysis allow for strategic planning to harness the potential of the NSW Performance Development and Framework policy in enacting praxis at Karragung High School?

### **Approach**

A case study approach was employed to consider the research questions. Firstly, I looked at the emergence of the NSW PDF as a policy framed by the political and policy rhetoric of Teaching Quality within Australia and NSW and how this has positioned both its content and its reception by teachers.

Two whole staff surveys were administered utilising Qualtrics online. The first surveyed attitudes and completion rates of the PDP for 2017 and the second, administered 6 months later, was the same survey for 2018. The purpose of the surveys was to establish whole school trends, check against personal bias or confirmation bias within the focus groups and to see if the data trends were changing as staff became more familiar with the process.

A focus group of 5 participants was established through volunteers. They were a cross faculty group and covered staff at different point in their careers. Three sessions were held, with the focus of each session being one of the stages of the PDP: Goal Setting, Observation and Self-Reflection. Questions were open ended and utilised the practice architectures framework, without specifically using the terminology of the framework. The transcriptions of the focus group were coded according to participant input, first impressions and the 3 actions and 3 arrangements within the practice architectures framework.

A specific focus of analysis was to explore what aspects of the web of ecologies at play in Karragung High School were enabling or constraining the level of implementation of the PDPs. Both the surveys and focus groups demonstrated both deep scepticism for the policy of the PDF but also a recognition for the potential of the practices embedded within the PDP to be professionally meaningful. This inherent contradiction is a challenge for school leaders. It must be embraced and not dismissed as a necessary reality. Instead, it is inside this tension where the concrete work of a school leader will be evident. It is here that the ways in which the practice architectures in schools contribute to this incongruence and thus limit the potential of teachers to operate beyond compliance, within a place of praxis can become evident. As school leaders begin to see this occurring, they are afforded rich professional agency and meaning. This analytical process is one that can readily be extended to other practices, other sites and other systems readily and allow for authentic understandings of how to fuel praxis in the lived-reality of teachers' professional lives.

## Policy Analysis

In order to understand how the NSW Performance and Development Framework (PDF) and its mandated practice, the Performance and Development Plan (PDP) has been taken up within the practice architectures of KHS, and teachers' understandings of PDP processes, it is necessary to broaden the scope of discussion to the wider reforms that have brought teacher quality to the foreground in Australian education. Following this, the thesis will turn to how teachers perceive the regulation of quality through the PDP at the case study school, as expressed in the mediated spaces of the focus groups.

Any observer of current education debate in Australia would be aware of two dominant themes: funding, and the supposed decline of academic results due to the limited quality of teaching. The policy context of NSW makes very evident how state and federal government discussions and policies on education have led to a tightened focus on 'Quality Teaching' and, simultaneously, how the functional definition of 'QT' has narrowed within these same conversations. The following discussion takes as given the premise that the NSW Performance Development Framework is a policy with the fundamental aim of improving teacher quality.

In order to understand the policy context that has led to the implementation of the PDF in NSW, it is necessary to consider the developing state polyscape and its dialectical intersection with national policy and policy conversations. Whilst considering the effect of earlier key policy, I will be primarily considering the time from the Melbourne Declaration to the present, as this period has seen the intensification of discussion and the narrowing of the complexity.

In a recent comprehensive Australian review of teacher quality, Bahr and Mellor (Bahr & Mellor, 2016) draw on an unexpected source to highlight the nebulous nature of 'Quality': Pirsig's 1974 novel, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*:

*What I mean (and everybody else means) by the word 'quality' cannot be broken down into subjects and predicates. This is not because Quality is so mysterious but because Quality is so simple, immediate and direct ... That is why Quality cannot be defined. If we do define it we are defining something less than Quality itself.*

This inherent contradiction has long been acknowledged by educational practitioners who have shied away from simplistic articulations of highly complex principles and practices. In 1999, the national associations for English, Science and Mathematics teachers began to develop subject specific teaching standards created through close engagement and conversation with practising teachers. This model of development was considered essential as:

- professional standards only have validity when grounded in teachers' own knowledge, experience, skills and values;
- teachers' knowledge, experience, skills and values are, in important respects, discipline-specific (AATE/ALEA, 2002)

Later models of QT, including Productive Pedagogies, The NSW Quality Teaching Framework, Steve Dinham's work and the MeE framework from the Fair Go Team, (DET, 2008; Dinham, Ingvarsson, & Kleinhenz, 2008; Gore, Griffiths, & Ladwig, 2001; Munns et al., 2006) all required the articulation of the intersections of equally important and complex components of quality teaching, including personal attributes, contextual skills and ongoing professional learning. In an attempt to summarise, I will make use of the 2007 work of Zammit and colleagues who stated that 'in much of the literature, quality teaching and school leadership is identified as a set of professional attributes and practices that have an influence on student outcomes and the school community.' (Zammit et al., 2007) Reading these documents establishes a certainty that Quality Teaching is significantly more than it is stated to be in the 2016 Australian Government document *Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes*:

*Teachers need to be able to understand what each of their students can do and what they need to be able to do next. Students need constructive feedback on the things that they are doing well and where further attention or improvement is required (DET, 2016)*

The development of the notion of teaching quality as an inhibitor of student outcomes has broadened to its representation as the *cause* of Australia's 'failing education system' (Bita, 2015; Cook, 2017; Garrett, 2011; Hattam, Prosser, & Brady, 2009; Job, 2012).

In 1989, the Hobart Declaration of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council identified ten Agreed National Goals for Schooling focusing on

outcomes for students and a range of other areas for collaborative focus. At the very end of the document was this short paragraph:

### Improving the Quality of Teaching

*In recognition of the importance of the quality of teaching in assisting schools and systems to meet the educational challenges of our age, strategies to improve teacher education, particularly in science and mathematics, will be developed with a view to endorsement at the 61st meeting of the Australian Education Council. (COAG, 1989)*

Clearly, nearly 20 years before the Melbourne Declaration, the changing nature of our world and the newly arriving challenges inherent in this, were identified as the pressing issues which could be address by teaching quality and supporting the profession. Teachers and teaching were more a solution than a problem.

In 1999 the Adelaide Declaration again had a lengthy list of agreed upon goals and a series of dot points to establish areas for collaboration, including ‘enhancing the status and quality of the teaching profession’ (COAG, 1999)

In 2008 came the most referenced of these national declarations, The Melbourne Declaration. It had two clear goals:

*Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence*

*Goal 2: All young Australians become:*

- Successful learners*
- Confident and creative individuals*
- Active and informed citizens (COAG, 2008)*

A list of processes to support these outcomes included ‘supporting quality teaching and school leadership’ amongst them, without highlighting it as a greater priority or a particular challenge. The importance of teachers was framed in terms of how ‘they provide an additional source of encouragement, advice and support for students outside the home’ and the importance of governments role to ‘support high-quality teaching and school leadership, including by enhancing pre-service teacher education.’ (COAG, 2008)

It is from this point that the idea of 'teaching quality' as a challenge to solve, becomes emphasised. Consequently, it is possible to observe the narrowing and the simplification of the problem through its repetition and the increasing pressure applied through the Gonski funding debate and falling PISA raw scores and ranking.

In 2009 the National Partnerships for School Improvement (NP) were introduced by the Gillard government (Gillard & Garrett, 2012). They addressed the first goal of the Melbourne Declaration through the NP for Low SES Schools. The first and the second Melbourne goals were explicitly addressed through the NPs for Literacy and Numeracy. Highly telling was the fourth NP, the National Partnership for Improving Teaching Quality. Within this nomenclature there is an apparent shift - an amplification - in rhetoric. The national declarations had placed teaching quality as a subset within a range of national initiatives that could be used to achieve the desired outcomes for students. But the title of this NP implies that the problem of the quality of teaching is of a piece with such significant and complex, even intractable, political and economic issues as social and economic disadvantage.

Since the turn of the last century there have been a range of landmark papers looking at the importance of teaching quality including *Teachers Matter* (OECD, 2005), the Teaching Australia evidence review and synthesis (Zammit et al., 2007), the Australian Government's evidence review (Naylor & Sayed, 2014) and the ACER education review into quality in teaching (Bahr & Mellor, 2016). There are consistent themes throughout such papers around the complex nature of teaching, including: the ongoing need for decent professional learning for teachers, support to encourage the 'right' people into the profession, recognition of the complex role of teachers through articulated standards and the importance of school leaders.

The AITSL Professional Standards for Teaching (AITSL, 2011) and the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (APDF), (AITSL, 2012) were created as an attempt to codify and control teaching quality. A press release by the then Minister for Education Peter Garrett, emphasised that 'teachers will have a clear understanding of what they will be expected to achieve every year, and a clear understanding of how their performance will be measured' (Garrett, 2012), creating a sense that great rigour and clarity are needed and the expectation that these will only be achieved through governmental means.

The implementation of this policy in NSW schools commenced in 2016 with the NSW Department of Education and Communities and the NSW Teachers' Federation taking joint responsibility for producing training packages, and collectively rolling these out to principals. It was my experience of attending such training, as well as through staff meetings and conversations in my school, that this collaboration was met with surprise and scepticism by some of the Federation membership. Whilst no statement has ever been released by the NSWTF to support the following supposition, I am proposing that is reasonable to hypothesis that their support was due to the PDFs place in the National Education Reform Agreement. It states that:

47. The Parties commit to continue effort in existing reform areas:

e. improve the quality of, and access to, professional development and performance feedback, through adoption of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework and the Charter for Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders in Australia. (COAG, 2013)

This is the same agreement that commits to the so-called 'Gonski' funding plan. Using circumstantial evidence, it is reasonable to surmise that it was in the NSWTF and the NSW DoE's pragmatic interests to agree to roll out the PDF in order to secure this significant extra funding, as articulated in the National Education Reform Agreement NSW Budget 2013/14:

The NSW Government will continue to implement its key reforms including: Local Schools, Local Decisions; Great Teaching, Inspired Learning; Connected Communities; Every Student, Every School; Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan as part of the National Education Reform Agreement. (NSWDEC, 2013).

Whatever the reasons for the collaboration of these traditional foes, the resulting NSW Professional Development Framework (PDF) is clearly a product of negotiation and compromise, affecting the possible methods of implementation in a school setting. There are 3 key phases for the Professional Development Plan process:

Phase	Description	Participants	Timeframe
Plan	Set 3- 5 professional goals Outline anticipate professional learning to meet these goals List possible evidence to indicate progress towards meeting goals	Teacher Supervisor	Term 1
Implement	Two observations throughout the year by a peer or supervisor	Teacher Observer	Throughout the school year
Review	Mid year review – self-assessment reflection on progress, need for any adjustments to plans  Annual review – structured discussion between supervisor and teacher leading to an agreed formal written assessment	Teacher Signed by supervisor  Teacher Supervisor	Mid year  Term 4

Table 1: The Performance and Development Cycle (NSWDoE, 2015)

The tone of the framework is one that emphasises negotiation and collaboration as opposed to compliance and supervision. Three to five goals for the year are required from each staff member. These are to be set in conjunction with ‘support and guidance from their supervisor’, and guiding discussions are to occur in a ‘collaborative and supportive environment’ (NSWDoE, 2015). Two lesson observations a year are mandated. It is advised that these be aligned with a pre-planning and post-observation meeting between both the observed and observing teachers. For non-executive teaching staff, these observations may be made by a peer, not a supervisor, and the supervisor does not have the right to know anything about the process, other than that it occurred. It is emphasised that participation in the PDP is an acknowledgement that a teacher is meeting the demands of their job. If a supervisor is concerned about the performance capacity of a



teacher, the concerns are to be addressed through formal performance management processes.

The formal agreed assessment for the final stage is meant to inform the following year's plan. 2018 is the second year of full implementation of the PDF, with a six month pilot occurring in 2016. Every teacher in the school is required to have one (including the principal) and it is a requirement for continued employment by the NSW Department of Education.

The PDF has the potential to be a powerful dialogical tool to enhance teacher praxis. Equally, however, it may be readily reduced to a box-ticking compliance process.

## Site Description

Karragung High School (KHS ) is located on the outskirts of Western Sydney. In 2015 its enrolments sat at just over 500 and in 2018 was approaching 900 students. This growth is the result of the remediation of its reputation within the local community in the last few years.

The current principal has been there for 6 years and I have been Deputy Principal for the last 5 years. For the first 4 years I was the only Deputy Principal but as numbers have grown, we now have 2 substantive Deputy Principals. The school also funds a third Deputy as well. My portfolio has a particular focus on teaching and learning and managing whole school priorities. The other two Deputy principals focus on managing student wellbeing and the daily organisation of the school.

The school has a Support Unit with 6 classes. The intake for this unit is diverse, including students with significant physical needs as well as students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and behavioural, intellectual and emotional disorders.

The school has 7% of students who identify as Aboriginal and around 30 students with a EAL/D background. In 2017 its ICSEA rating was just above the national average of 1000. This indicates we are average in terms of our socio-economic advantage. The two closest government high schools are around 35 kilometres east and 40 kilometres west, with three independent schools within that area, one Christian, one grammar and one Steiner.

KHS is a truly comprehensive high school, encompassing a large range of capacities, family backgrounds and interests. KHS has little staff mobility, all staff who left in the last 5 years retired. Due to increasing student numbers KHS is now employing several new staff each year, allowing us to staff both the core subjects and the growing demand for specialist subjects.

## Literature Review

This project was born from a strong desire to explicitly explore, and potentially untangle, the professional nexus in which many teachers and school leaders presently find themselves. Namely, the strong intrinsic motivation to do their job well, the external demands placed on them by government and school polices and the lived professional realities that help and hinder them from meeting their professional ideals.

As such, this research project has three aspects which are considered separately in this literature review, before being re-woven to consider their ramifications in practice: Beyond Compliance, policy mediation, and practice architectures.

'Beyond compliance' is the yardstick by which to measure the praxis of school staff and the effectiveness of the school leadership in instilling or sustaining this praxis through one project in one setting. Policy mediation is the practice which is being evaluated within this project, whilst practice architectures is the analytical tool by which the effectiveness of the policy mediation will be evaluated.

### Compliance in an age of teacher quality concerns

This project seeks to both acknowledge and work within the bounds of mandated school and teacher improvement measures in NSW, and consider lived experiences of these in schools for teachers. Consideration of the effects for students are not discussed in this project, due to the need to manage its scope. This is a significant absence and must be noted.

The specific compliance tool being considered in this project is the NSW Professional Development Framework. Due to the very early stages of implementation of the NSW Performance and Development Framework (PDF) and its accompanying compliance document the Performance Development Plan (PDP), there is only literature anticipating their impact and implementation practices. However, there is international and Australian research literature on the role of teaching standards in shaping the professional reality and public perception of teachers that has the potential to anticipate the framing and reception of the PDP.

For example, in much of the literature considering national and international legislative compliance measures, Foucault's ideas of surveillance (Foucault, 1979, 2008) and Power's notion of an 'audit culture' (Power, 1997) are both highly influential ideas in the international discursive space. Power's seminal work has been used to track the increasing obsession with quantifying educational outcomes and the resulting harm to diversity of educational policy practice (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2016; Price, 2014; Shore & Wright, 1999; G. Thompson & Cook, 2013; G. Thompson & Mockler, 2016).

The literature demonstrates the danger of surveillance, particularly the power of the standards to 'bring the tutelary gaze to bear, making the teacher calculable, describable and comparable' (Ball, 1990, p. 118), whilst simultaneously highlighting its potential to provide opportunity for the teacher to become the centre of the process. In this latter, more hopeful understanding, Gunter posits the possibility of maintaining a 'humanist appraisal' process in which the teacher is an active participant (Gunter, 2001, p. 245) and not simply reduced to being the subject of appraisal.

### Compliance as reification

One high-risk outcome of the standardisation of teaching is the simplification, or reductionist view, of a highly complex and nuanced skillset. The mathematical premise of the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' is where an abstract is treated as a concrete object (Whitehead, 1933). This is also known as the 'reification fallacy', which has its foundations as a rhetorical device, a form of metaphor. Again, it operates as a device to make concrete an abstract idea (Britannica) allowing for complex ideas to be understood more readily. My argument is that as an expression of the political need to demonstrate the acting upon 'Teaching Quality' in an increasingly performative landscape, in which 'teaching quality' is being rigorously addressed, acts of reification are becoming all-pervasive. One example of this is the metamorphosis of the complex lived-reality of quality teaching into the Australian Professional Teacher Standards. In a clear act of reification the very standards are now cited as evidence that teacher quality in Australia has improved when politicians are discussing improved teaching quality (Birmingham, 2017; Garrett, 2011). Here the logical fallacy is exposed, as the measurement becomes the *thing*, not the complex, abstract practice. The danger of the reification fallacy is that the tangible, simplified object *becomes* the complex, abstract idea in the public domain.

This often remains unproblematised in policy documents where “the meaning of the policy is taken for granted and seen unproblematically as an attempt to ‘solve a problem’”. (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011, p. 585).

Practitioner concerns about this reductionist approach are often felt on an emotional or instinctive level, however, they are also articulated strongly in cross-sectoral contexts. John Nelson, a Senior Researcher and Policy Consultant for the Catholic education system in Western Australia has noted that without serious embedding of collaboration and reflective practice within school culture ‘substantial individual reliance on addressing teacher performance through a framework such as the Standards may be incomplete and risky’ (Nelson, 2013, p. 22). Informed by his experience of policy mediation in school settings and the tendency of teachers to be highly suspicious of teacher review processes, he also warns that a reality could easily develop where the standards simply become a case of ‘tick box compliance approach which further isolates the Standards from the whole-school improvement context’ (Nelson, 2013, p. 22). Such practitioner concerns articulate how many teachers have experienced policy mediation in practice.

Embedded within the standards is language that can be seen to encourage both collaboration and reflection. Both Standard 3.6, ‘Evaluate personal teaching and learning programs using evidence, including feedback from students and student assessment data, to inform planning’ and Standard 6.3, ‘Contribute to collegial discussions and apply constructive feedback from colleagues to improve professional knowledge and practice’ are encouraging reflection on practice and collaboration with peers (AITSL, 2011). As will be discussed later, these standards and other aspects of the PDF could open up possibilities for teacher-directed reflection and collaboration that will allow the policies to be much more than one example of standardisation and compliance.

However, these standards can equally be interpreted as ways of ensuring self-surveillance of the profession. As “the phrase ‘reflective practitioner’ is now normalised within the discourse of ‘good teacher’, and threatens to become another layer of behaviour demanded of their staff by school leaders” (Perryman, Ball, Braun, & Maguire, 2017, p. 748), this expectation moves from being part of a teacher motivated and determined practice to becoming a mandated exercise in futility. As such, and despite rhetoric to the contrary, the terms of reference by which a teacher understands their

practice can be solely driven by system and school discourses and so removed entirely from a teacher's own sense of professional identity. As the reification of teaching practice into the standards and the PDF become more embedded in the daily life of teachers, there is an increasing risk that their primary function will become 'ensuring that teachers articulate themselves and their professionalism within the discursive field of policy in relation to and through the cult of self-reflection in teaching' (Perryman et al., 2017, p. 748), whereby the focus becomes not the practice but the artefact.

Having established the dangers of these compliance measures, it is now timely to note that simply ignoring them or dismissing mandated policies is not only unrealistic, it is not pragmatically wise. A greater challenge to the reductionist element and the initiatives being called into question here is to instead re-embrace and more fully articulate the inherent complexities of the profession.

### Beyond Compliance

In considering the potential ramifications of the Australian PDF, upon which the NSW counterpart is based, Mockler noted that due to the ambiguous nature of much of the wording, there is room for diverse interpretations. This encompassed 'a range of implementation possibilities, from surveillance of teaching practice at one end of the spectrum to ongoing and generative formation of teachers at the other (Mockler, 2015, p. 117) are made possible. This interpretation makes a clear case for school leaders to evaluate this powerful mandated policy within their own setting and to consider the consequences of the policy mediation decisions they and their staff make.

Referring to previous work with a collaboration with Susan Groundwater-Smith, Mockler proposes a model for understating the potentialities for the implementation of the APDF in the form of a heuristic, which she acknowledges is a 'a crude depiction of a complex concept' (Mockler, 2015, p. 119). This acknowledgment is of the utmost importance, as it prevents this heuristic from being received as another reductionist approach to understanding the professional work of teachers.

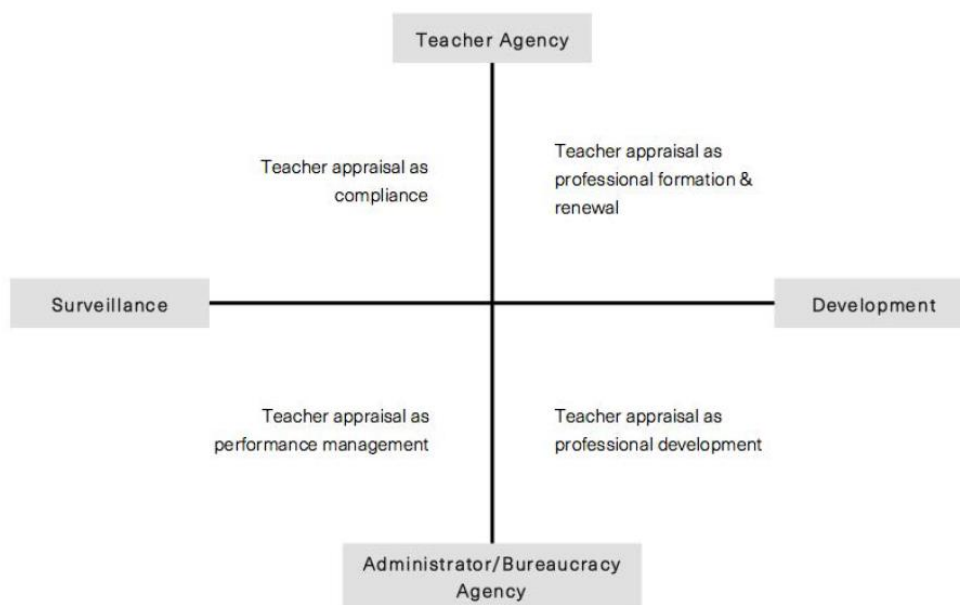


Figure 1: A heuristic for considering teacher appraisal (adapted from Ground-Water Smith & Mockler, 2009) (Mockler, 2015, p. 119)

The heuristic, and a substantial part of the work of both Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, highlights the key role of teachers as active agents in their own work, moving ‘beyond compliance’ (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2016). This compelling notion suggests that school leaders need to harness the policy framework under which they are to compelled to operate with a view to meeting the higher-order needs of teachers. Mockler challenges limited and limiting understandings of what it is to *be* a teacher, on the grounds that ‘identity is demonstrably complex and interwoven between various dimensions of teachers’ work’ as opposed to adopting the notion of “‘role’ (which) more comfortably fits the technical-rational conceptualisation of teaching that lies at the heart of neo-liberal education agendas” (Mockler, 2011, p. 525). In so doing she warns against the ‘tick-a-box’ approach to policy implementation already foreshadowed. In always striving to open up the complexity of teacher identity, rather than to contain it in a reification, the moral necessity of operating ‘beyond compliance’ remains visible.

The PDF ‘quietly position[s] teachers as the recipients of appraisal and review while school leaders are assumed to be the *de facto* ‘drivers’ of the process’ (Mockler, 2015, p. 123). As such, the demands on school leaders to be informed and open-minded about

the possibilities inherent within these policies – both positive and negative - is emphasised. It demands of them ‘a critical orientation’ challenging them to not simply *do* policy but to hand over or share control over the ways in which these policies come into being within a specific setting. This ‘commitment to teacher agency, formation and renewal’ elevates the aims of professional development beyond performance management (Mockler, 2015, pp. 128-129). Such an aim is an evaluatory yardstick for both school leaders and teachers. Is the performance development at the heart of internal practices and are these internal practices *seen* by classroom teachers as motivated by a real desire to enrich their professional being and not simply or as tools for performance management? Without a positive affirmation in response, any implementation of the PDP will be prohibitively limited in its effectiveness it will not rise above being a compliance tool in the service of governmental ends.

## Policy Mediation

Policy mediation is the consideration of how policy becomes *enacted* in settings. (Braun et al., 2011) A significant body of research in relation to educational policy has evaluated the roles of different participants in the mediation of policy, the factors within different settings which can lead to the rejection or embracing of policy, and the variety of ways in which policy can be seen in action between and within settings.

Ball and colleagues are perhaps the preeminent thinkers on policy mediation/enactment in schools. Throughout their work there is a consistent message of a need to consider policy in terms of the complex sites in which it is enacted, rather than simply accepting any policy as a mere reification. They clearly and consistently state that ‘policy ... cannot be reduced to an algorithm ... and the school cannot be reduced to policy. (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011, p. 637). As such, there is much work to be done at a school level to make policy work for the school rather than vice versa. For this project, understanding what work needs to be done at within in specific site, rather than following a formula, is a core research question. These contextual understandings are not simply about the geographic placement of a school, its size or sector, but also a recognition ‘that every school is defined by some sort of charism, belief system or educational philosophy; a set of protocols/rules/processes/expectations’ (Nelson, 2013, p. 23). These cannot be set



down in a governmental implementation guidebook but instead require a robust understanding of school leaders in the art of policy mediation for their site.

Ball et al. identified these internal idiosyncrasies as 'logics of actions', seeing them to be 'conditioned by the interaction between internal (school narrative identity, principal strategy, school intake and micropolitics) and external factors (position of the school in the local space of competitive interdependence and policy interventions)' (Ball & Maroy, 2009, p. 99). These logics of action are not necessarily understood by school leaders and teachers to be as significant as they are, and it appears that the whole effect is larger than the sum of the parts. This piecemeal approach can be highly damaging for the successful building of school culture. In solving one problem, a school leader can in fact be working incongruently within their espoused school culture. Through a clear analysis of school logics of action, it is possible to see where the different policy enactments are working coherently together or when they are not. For example, enrolment processes may or may not be in line with the practices behind class formation. This would be evident when a principal makes a commitment to a 'streamed' class placement for a student in an enrolment interview when this sits outside of a school policy that allows faculties to determine class composition.

Policy enactment in schools is therefore seen as a negotiation between government policy and the culture of a school, as mediated by school leaders. Finding pathways between competing values around education can be fraught and will succeed to varying degrees. With the obvious fact that 'there are potential dissonances between embedded institutional values and national policy trends' (Braun et al., 2011, p. 591), comes the need to tease out localised competing demands such as 'teachers' ethics, the style of leadership and the 'narrative identity' of the school (Ball & Maroy, 2009, p. 105). In addition, there are pragmatic questions relating to funding and the distribution of resources.

This project seeks to understand how much influence school leaders really have on policy enactment and how much of this influence is strategic and deliberate. Ball and Maroy argue that the enactment of policy is an 'active and political process' (Ball & Maroy, 2009, p. 106), but this is not always considered by school leaders as they move between a

smorgasbord of demanding and complex tasks requiring urgent attention. A vacuum can result, diminishing the intellectual and strategic coherence and this will significantly affect the internal school culture and enactment of policy.

It is clear that one of the key ways this coherence of purpose can be derailed is through attempting to appease 'burnt out' teachers without necessarily providing them with the required supports that can potentially be found in these policies. '[Teachers] are engaged, coping with the meaningful and the meaningless' (Ball et al., 2011, p. 625) and so, at times, in attempts to minimise additional demands on over-worked teachers, school leaders reduce the policy demands, selecting aspects of policy or re-designing it to make it more palatable to the staff (Ball et al., 2011, p. 625). In so doing, school leaders may actually introduce increased compliance demands (such as proformas to be completed) that actually have become completely removed from any meaningful work and only address the performative demands of the policy, so that the policy can be *seen* to be implemented. Essentially, policies 'may be subject to 'creative non-implementation' and/or 'fabrication', where policy responses are incorporated in school documentation for accountability reasons, rather than for reasons of pedagogic or organisational change' (Braun et al., 2011, p. 586). When this occurs, the artefacts of the school's reification of the policy exists, but little else, and the opportunity for meaningful work engaging with professional practice and identity, thereby working 'beyond compliance', is lost.

Past research canvassing teachers' feelings about policy explores how teachers found the need for policy compliance to be in direct conflict with their understanding of their work, with some teachers articulating that the need for compliance hampered their capacity to do "'proper' teaching, to engage with students in exciting ways, and to grow and develop themselves through creative and productive policy work" (Ball et al., 2011, p. 630).

The complexity of the task before the school leader in meaningful policy mediation that manages to meet the complex values and needs of a school, without adding more work to a burnt-out profession whilst engaging staff in powerful opportunities for praxis, demands a school leader who has an understanding of their site which exceeds an intuitive reading of their own experiences. There is a need for school leaders to employ strong evidence-informed practices in developing a rich and robust understanding of their site.

## Place-Based Research

The contributing complications inherent to an understanding of policy mediation create the necessity of a place-based approach in this project. Place-based research, in its various manifestations seeks a nuanced exploration of the factors at play in personal narratives of teacher identity, how ‘the process of ‘storying’ and ‘restorying’ has the effect of both claiming and producing professional identity’ (Mockler, 2011, p. 2) and also how the school context assists in the expressions of these stories.

Teacher identity is a product of the interaction between the self, experiences within different schools and policies and other influences such as personal politics. All of this follows from the teacher being, a ‘socially situated self’ (Hardy, 2014, p. 499). This means that ‘members of school communities construct stories about their school that are based on their experiences but also on some broader generalisations’ (Braun et al., 2011, p. 589).

Unearthing these stories and the complex and competing influences upon their creation, is arguably best served by long term engagement with place-based research where they can become ‘fleshed out, interrogated and nuanced’ (P. Thompson & Hall, 2017, p. 161). There are many archetypal beliefs about the culture and workings of schools and ‘in these archetypal imaginings there are significant truths’ (P. Thompson & Hall, 2017, p. 8) yet, schools as Thomson and Hall remind us, are simultaneously ‘patterned and unique’ (P. Thompson & Hall, 2017).

NSW DoE data regularly incorporates the idea of Statistically Similar Schools to enable comparison of performance measures. Researchers regularly attempt to consider clusters of similar schools, with reference to geography, socio-economic status, size and other considerations. However, the ‘nuances of local context [can] cumulatively make a considerable difference to school processes’ (Braun et al., 2011, p. 587) and place-based research allows for consideration of this nuances including the ‘power-geometries at work between – and within – them’ (P. Thompson & Hall, 2017, p. 18), as well as a range of contextual dimensions such as situated and professional contexts. (Braun et al., 2011, p. 588)

It is, however, important to consider the limitations even of such nuanced understandings of schools. Thompson and Hall point out that many place-based research projects are 'based on research designs which position schools as islands, so that the ways in which individual schools are connected...are left out of the scope of the inquiry (P. Thompson & Hall, 2017, p. 9). I would argue that this can also extend to considering the impact on teachers from their experiences of other schools as students, teachers and parents.

## Practice Theory

Practitioner inquiry, as a form of place-based research, allows for a longer term understanding of school culture to inform the research. Moreover, it is 'a highly successful vehicle for the cultivation of reflective practice and teacher inquiry in a range of contexts' (Mockler, 2015, p. 124).

More particularly, practice theory 'provides lenses which make examination of practices possible, and in doing so enables useful accounts of how practices happen, how they are mediated, and their role in the constitution of social life' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, & Lloyd, 2017, p. 4). Considering the policy implementation of the PDF through a practice theory lens could allow for an illumination as to how pre-existing practices have come to be within the school culture, and how these pre-existing practices have enabled or hindered the meaningful implementation of the PDF.

Practice theories are a broad church but it is possible to point to some common features and assumptions amongst the various practice theories as they 'share a basic tenet that practices are situated, social, and relational' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 5). Theoretically, this allows for consideration of the complications of varied reception and the multiplicity of interactions that inform these receptions.

## Practice Architecture

The considerable body of work of Kemmis and his colleagues, explores the inherent complexities of schools and how these limit the authenticity and veracity of other research in these spaces. Kemmis asserts that it is essential for teachers to be part of educational research, as they are uniquely positioned with genuine, lived knowledge of the exigencies at play in school life (Kemmis, 2005, 2010a, 2010b, 2012; Kemmis & Grotelueschen, 1977; Kemmis & Stake, 1974, p. 10; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 2015; Mahon, Francisco, & Kemmis, 2017). He has explicated the relevance and pertinence of critical-emancipatory research (Kemmis, 2010a), driven by the ideal of praxis in practice. Specifically, he argues that 'not all social phenomena are individual constructions and foreground phenomena outside individuals, such as discourses or social systems (Schatzki, 2005)' (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 2015, p. 343).

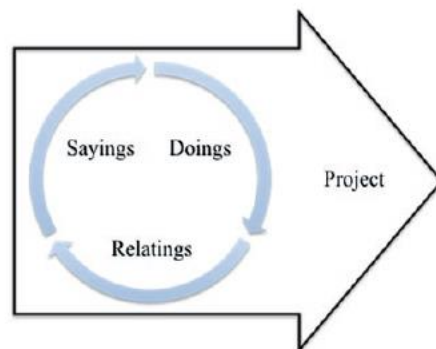
Kemmis explains that praxis has two geocentric functional definitions. The contemporary Anglo-American-Australian usage has its roots in the Aristotelian understanding as 'morally-committed action'. The European understanding however, is informed by Hegel and Marx and encapsulates the notion of 'history making action' (Kemmis, 2010a). In turn, these definitions can also be seen to reflect in cultural definitions of pedagogy with an 'Anglo-American understandings of pedagogy as "method" and the continental European understandings of pedagogy as "human science"' (Smith, Edwards-Groves, & Brennan Kemmis, 2010). The increasing need to consider how to ignite praxis within an 'audit culture' is one way of moving 'beyond compliance' (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2016) and to use it as 'a resource for understanding pedagogical work through re-igniting a sense of the *doubleness* of education as both an ethical and a practical ideal that addresses the needs and purposes of students and their communities' (Edwards-Groves & Grootenboer, 2015, p. 150). This exceeds understanding and representing pedagogy as the simple weighing of outcomes. As such, it is the responsibility of school leaders to consider how 'leading praxis is played out, particularly in the context of broader meta-practices of government policy, which privileged performativity and economic imperatives, rather than principles of collaboration and social justice' (J. Wilkinson, Olin, Lund, Ahlberg, & Nyvaller, 2010, p. 68).

Practice architectures, developed by Kemmis and colleagues is a way of bringing the complexities of site ontologies and the pressing need to foreground praxis into a theory that allows for both a highly complexed and layered understanding of how things become possible or not in schools, opening a potential pathway for this understanding to be used to create or enhance praxis as a moral imperative.

Practice architectures theory is multi-layered and explicated in a manner that demonstrates the educational background of the creators. This thesis will not explore or do justice to the multiple facets and depth of the theory, but I will attempt to outline the key aspects pertinent to this study.

For the first layer, the theory considers the notion of practices. These are composed of sayings, doings and relatings, which hang together in a project. 'Moreover, that the sayings, doings, and relatings that comprise practices *happen together* means that practices cannot be reduced to any one of these actions on its own' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 8). The interrelationship of these parts, or why particular sayings, doing and relatings hang together within a project are of particular interest under a practice architectures framework (Mahon, Francisco, & Kemmis, 2017).

**Fig. 1.1** Practices are composed of sayings, doings, and relatings that hang together in projects. From Kemmis et al. (2014b, p. 33) (Copyright 2014 by Springer Science + Business Media Singapore. Reprinted with permission from Springer)



**Figure 2 : Practices (Mahon, Francisco, & Kemmis, 2017, p. 8)**

These practices are given their affordance through specific practice architectures. In fact, each practice has its own practice architecture. Even at this level of comprehension, it becomes clear how this model allows for a genuine engagement with the almost overwhelming, near-impossible to navigate, complexities of factors at play in school culture and practice.

Practice architectures is conceived as a dialogical and reciprocal framework in which the components are both subject and object, acting upon and being acted upon in a recursive 'infinity loop'. 'The theory of practice architectures holds that practices are social phenomena, and, as such, are located in circumstances and conditions that occur in particular locations in physical space-time, and in history' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 9). The framework provides a pathway to chart these different components. It also acknowledges that 'a practice extends beyond what the individual enacting a practice brings to a site as a person (e.g., beliefs, physical attributes, and abilities); it also encompasses arrangements found in or brought to the site, arrangements with which the individual interacts, and without which the practice could not be realised' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 9). This dialogic, reciprocal component is threaded throughout the theory.

There are key arrangements which enable and constrain practices.:

*Cultural-discursive arrangements* are the resources (in the broad sense of the word) that prefigure and make possible particular *sayings* in a practice, for example, languages and discourses used in and about a practice

*Material-economic arrangements* are resources (e.g., aspects of the physical environment, financial resources and funding arrangements, human and non-human entities, schedules, division of labour arrangements), that make possible, or shape the *doings* of a practice by affecting what, when, how, and by whom something can be done.

*Social-political arrangements* are the arrangements or resources (e.g., organisational rules; social solidarities; hierarchies; community, familial, and organisational relationships) that shape how people relate in a practice to other people and to non-human objects; they enable and constrain the *relatings* of a practice.

(Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 10)

The dialectical aspect of this model, represented through the intersubjective space/medium and visually through the infinity loop, demonstrates the intellectual coherence in the design in working towards the goal of praxis. Freire argued that praxis was the pairing of critical reflection with action. He asserted that 'functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (Freire, 2014, p. 7). The ways in which individual practices can be seen to work on practice architectures, in turn making new practices possible, shows the power of this reflection and action. By understanding 'the fluidity and volatility with which practices engage with the particularities of arrangements in sites, and also recognises the variation, improvisation, and innovation with which practices are enacted' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 10) provides enhanced possibility for teachers and leaders to see the potential in how 'new practice architectures can also be brought to, created in, and/or reconstituted in a site, prefiguring the practice in new, adapted, innovatory, or otherwise transformed ways. (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 12). Equally, this potentially informs the power of policy enactment to shift culture in unexpected ways.

The roles of school leaders and teachers are interrelated in significant ways. Individuals may move between the two roles in their own sense of teacher identity and the practices of both will create the practice architectures and shape policy enactment in any particular site.

Specifically considering the 'power' of school leaders, it is clear that 'they are in a position to influence both the conditions and practices in which their own educational praxis, as well as that of educational practitioners, may flourish or be constrained (J. Wilkinson et al., 2010, p. 68). Yet, without a strong understanding of the practice architectures at play in their school setting, leaders may not understand how to support praxis, or simply be unaware of how their sayings contribute to the creation of a cultural-discursive arrangement; for example, the language they use to discuss students who require specific support. Are they remedial, outside the mainstream, or just students? In such a way a 'leader may be able to influence the teachers' *sayings* in regard to pupil learning



and potentially reshape their teaching practices to be more inclusive.’ (J. Wilkinson et al., 2010, p. 71)

The ideal is when school leaders are able to find a balance and ‘on the one hand, [bring] together the sayings, doings and relatings of legitimate, positional authority of principal and executive team members, while on the other hand, they also generate a shared language, set of activities and commitment to more humanistic relations between teachers, positional leaders and students’ (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 2015, p. 349).

# Method

## Towards a Practice Architectures Method

Practice architectures is clearly articulated in the research and theory as a three-pronged tool: theoretical, analytical and transformational. Despite the comprehensive nature of the theory and its growing body of research, a particular method is deliberately not articulated for the application of the framework. I believe this is in acknowledgement of the need for site-based methods and a commitment to the notion of research *as and for* praxis, not simply *of*. However, in seeking to observe and map sayings, relatings and doings happening '*situated* in time and space' (Kemmis et al., 2014; Schatzki, 2005), specifically in the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements operating in a ecology of practice, a case study approach allows for a diversity of artefacts which can help reveal the tapestry of the practice architecture.

In practices architectures, it is essential to consider the practice as the subject of the research, not the individuals. Bill Green has argued that is it time to 'think again about the nature and value of "the case" (for) the single bounded instance of attention to professional practice' (Green, 2009, p. 14). This call for a reconsideration of this methodology acknowledges that such an approach is out of vogue in an era of evidence hierarchies and narrowing view of both data and research, and a powerful reminder that it may well be 'how best to understand and research practice in and of itself, and hence in generating a rich account of practice, as a distinctive social phenomenon.' (Green, 2009, p. 1)

The Pedagogy, Education and Praxis (PEP) network is the international groups of researchers who have developed and are utilising practice architectures in a range of site considering diverse practices from early childhood (Salamon, 2017) through to doctoral education (Rönnerman & Kemmis, 2016) and many stages and places in-between. Often, a comparative case study is employed, with an academic partner considering the site through the framework. The case studies often employ observations, document reviews and interviews in different forms and are examined to make clear the arrangements at play, from an ontological perspective.

Some PEP participants have also generated the following table which highlights how methodological approaches can produce both rich data and enable praxis in a participant's when consideration of praxis:

Practices	Arrangements that enable or constrain restrain approaches developing praxis
Sayings in the use of words such as <i>praxis</i> , <i>participation</i> , <i>insider</i> ...	Cultural-discursive arrangements such as participatory, democratic language; interest in and respect for insider knowledge
Doings such as researching with participants	Material-economic arrangements enabling research approaches facilitating praxis, such as dialogue cafes, study circles, focus group interviews etc;
Relatings that challenge the power relations in research methods	Social-political arrangement that appreciate a variety in methods of collecting data AND variety in ways of establishing the research/nurturing praxis, eg, 'doing' democracy rather than talking about it.

Table 2: Practices and Research Arrangements (Langelotz, Wilkinson, & Kaukko, 2018)

Although the aim of this research was to use practice architectures as an analytical tool, not a tool for transformation, this table is still reflective of methods employed when preparing this 'case'. The three key research instruments used were a policy analysis of the Professional Development Framework in terms of its pathway to being, two whole school surveys and three focus groups with a smaller group of five staff.

My position as an entirely insider researcher clearly gives rise to ethical considerations that necessarily place limitations on the formal scope of the case study. I have not made use of other significant pieces of data pertaining to the scope of my interest, including access to the PDPs of other staff and other surveys of staff, student and community have completed for these sources were not accrued under the ethics approval being collected within the normal scope of school evaluation. More particularly, the project design originally included more data collection with the case study groups, including classroom observations matched to the teachers' articulated professional goals, in line with the PDP process. The complexity of ethical consideration in practioner-research when the researcher is also in a school leadership role, significantly limited my capacity to continue with this research design. Although these types of professional dialogue and activities are entirely within my role-statement, there were significant concerns about them being included in this project and, accordingly, I re-designed the scope of the data collection.

This has raised very complex questions for me about how to remain committed to my own dual identity as researcher and practitioner, invested in evaluating and improving my own practice, whilst also seeking to publish my work. Without the publication element, such self-reflexive activities would not be problematic, but without the publication element, there remains a gap or silence in the relevant literature, which is the voice of the insider researcher.

## Survey

The pre and post surveys were included in the method design in order to ameliorate potential bias from the researcher. Whilst practitioner researcher is at the heart of this research project, having the researcher as: a) a teacher who is required to complete the mandatory PDP, b) a teacher working at the subject school and c) working as a school leader at the site, allows for potential bias in the design, implementation and analysis of the data. The survey was thus designed to reveal trend data concerning how staff valued the PDP as implemented at KHS during 2017 and 2018 and the effects they believed it had on their professional practice. Just under 50% of eligible staff completed the first survey, making it a valid sample to cross reference with themes and ideas raised in the focus group.

The surveys were designed and delivered using Qualtrics software. The surveys were identical, with the first evaluating the PDP process in 2017 and the second evaluating the PDP in 2018. The purpose of the two surveys were to ensure that the results of the first survey were not simply because of the relative newness of the policy. Significantly fewer staff elected to participate in the second survey, but the responses did follow the same trend.

Staff were provided with a written information form and a recruitment script delivered by the principal. This was followed up with an email by the researcher with the link to the survey (see Appendix page xvii).

The design of the survey and the testing processes were implemented to minimise the risk of 'poor measurement of cases that are surveyed (*errors of observation*) and

omission of cases that should be surveyed (*errors of nonobservation*) (Groves, 1989)' (Check & Schutt, 2012, p. 241).

Social Desirability was a phenomena that I was particularly keen to minimise. As such, the anonymity (not just de-identified) nature of the survey was emphasised in all communications to staff, and no questions that could lead to identification, such as teaching subject, were asked. Whilst this obviously has limited the filtering options for the data, validity and reliability of general trends were of more importance. The power issue of my position as Deputy Principal was a highly critical feature in the method design and staff concern that they would be judged on the basis of not completing a mandatory task, not taking it seriously or being critical of DoE policy were concerns. Additionally, faculty groups are often full of complex dynamics, and as faculty head teachers have significant responsibilities in the implementation of the PDF process, it was important staff could answer the questions without concern for the professional reputation of their supervisor.

As part of the survey design process, expert feedback was sought from my university supervisor and Dean, who is deputy chair of the Ethics committee. Feedback identified the need for greater clarity through simplicity in a couple of questions, avoiding being 'too wordy' or 'too tangled'. This feedback factored in my attempts to produce a 'friendly', judgment-free tone. The questions were subsequently altered to reduce ambiguity or confusion.

Embracing the idea that 'the only good question is a pretested question. (Check & Schutt, 2012, p. 244) a cognitive interview test of the survey was implemented. The subject was a teaching staff member who was not eligible to complete the survey as he had not worked at KHS in 2017. He completed the survey, speaking aloud as he answered the questions. Two questions were changed to increase clarity, but the primary form of feedback was his intense scepticism about the entire PDF policy and he stated at the end that he really enjoyed doing it because it gave him 'an honest way to give feedback on something that's a pain in the arse'. He was happy to 'vent'. Although I anticipated significant amounts of negative views on PDPs, this did make me do a check to ensure that the language in the questions did not create an overall tone of negativity. The questions were a mix of Likert scale statements and groups of statements from which multiple options could be selected to reflect attitudes towards PDPs. The language in

these statements was casual and highly evaluative but there was a balance between negative, neutral and positive responses.

## Focus Groups

Focus groups are the primary empirical data source for this project, as it is 'an 'ideal' approach for examining the stories, experiences, points of view, beliefs, needs and concerns of individuals' (Liamputtong, 2011a, p. 7). In order to determine the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements at place at KHS which enable or constrain the sayings, relatings and doings within practices, both deep understanding of the stories of teachers' lived experiences and observation of dialogical processes creating these stories are required.

'Focus groups "tap into" the authentic communication processes that people engage in their everyday life, such as joking, teasing, boasting, arguing, disagreeing, challenging and persuading (S. Wilkinson, 2004, p. 275)' (Liamputtong, 2011c, p. 5). As such, the social hierarchies and the prevalent discourses are exposed through both the natural exchanges between participants as well as the on-topic conversation. The formation of an opinion is a crucial aspect of the research, driven by the theoretical framework of practice architectures, and 'focus groups allow the examination of social interaction in opinion formation and expression' (Fern, 2011, p. 24).

The bringing together of staff from different faculties and with different professional experiences, allows for an observation of the dialogical and reciprocal nature of practice architectures. A practice is not simply what pre-existing beliefs, experiences or attributes individuals bring to their workplace, but is formed through how the sayings, relatings and doings hang together within the project of the PDP. A focus group allows the researcher to not simply hear a variety of perspectives on PDPs, but allows them to watch the co-creation of these practices at work. 'The hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group'. (Liamputtong, 2011b, p. 2)

In order to follow the pathways built through conversation, broad and open-ended questions were prepared before the focus group and the moderator used cues and

phrases from the participants input to continue the discussion. These pathways provided opportunities to establish points of difference in perspective, as well as 'the group's shared experiences of everyday life, language and culture. Interaction takes place because the participants are not only the products of their own environment, but also influenced by others around them' (Krueger, 2014). This allowed for an understanding of how different practice architectures are at play within the one school setting, thus allowing for the potential to consider the differing influence of faculty culture versus whole school leadership for example.

The focus group was recruited from the whole staff. Survey participants were asked to indicate in the final question of the survey if they were interested in participating in a focus group led by myself and willing participants then indicated their interest to me through email, return of a slip or in person. Six people indicated in the survey that they were interested and six people then indicated their interest to me through either a follow up email or note in my pigeonhole. Due to the entirely anonymous nature of the survey, this follow up was required. I was originally concerned that these numbers might not correlate as people would reconsider their decision. Having the interest indicated in the survey was a secondary way to check if the focus group participants as a collective were more or less critical of PDPs in the surveys.

One participant had to withdraw before the focus groups started due to ongoing absences for other commitments.

The focus group was comprised of

- 2 Head Teachers
- 1 Early Career teacher
- 1 Year Advisor
- 3 females
- 2 males
- 2 HSIE teachers
- 1 CAPA teacher
- 1 Maths teacher
- 1 Science teacher
- 2 teachers new to KHS in 2017

The focus group was homogenous in terms of occupation and workplace setting, but diversity was, fortunately, naturally forthcoming from the volunteers. The focus group met three times for around an hour on each occasion. The main topics for discussion at each meeting were outlined in the first session. The meetings took place during school time in the Deputy Principal's office, which is a new office, light and comfortable and removed from passing traffic, affording privacy. The sessions were audio recorded.

Protocols for the group were established in the first session, particularly focusing on the sessions being free of judgement and the importance of maintaining confidentiality outside of the session. However, I recognise that 'the researchers can ensure their own confidentiality, but cannot promise that other participants will do the same. (Liamputtong, 2011c, p. 14). The protocol was articulated that personal criticisms of other staff were not to be made, and this was adhered to completely throughout the process. As moderator, I did not perceive this was ever an issue for the participants. It was also made clear that differences of opinion were entirely acceptable and that we would 'not aim to reach consensus on the discussed issues' (Liamputtong, 2011a, p. 4).

The focus groups topics were arranged around three discrete phases of the PDP – Goal Setting, Observations and Self-Reflection. Open ended questions were prepared to guide the participants through the material-economic, cultural-discursive-arrangements and social-political arrangements at play. Occasionally these were used as prompts for conversation (such as, 'Has much time being spent in faculty meeting discussing your PDPs) but for the vast majority of the time, conversation was free flowing and naturally covered the different arrangements.

## Analysis

The audio for the focus groups was transcribed and I listened to the audio whilst making notes on the transcription. I called this my 'first impression' reading and I responded with my normalised lens, making notes of points of interest and recording where stories of teacher identity were emerging powerfully as well as moments of collegiality and collaboration, both of which were plentiful.



I then checked the transcriptions for balance of voice between myself and participants, the participation all the participants, gender balance and classroom teacher versus head teacher. Neil, the male Head Teacher, spoke the most and Frida, the new female Head Teacher, spoke the least, with a significant difference between the two. This also meant the males spoke disproportionately more. I do feel that Frida contributed significantly and was able to strongly articulate a differing point of view throughout the focus groups.

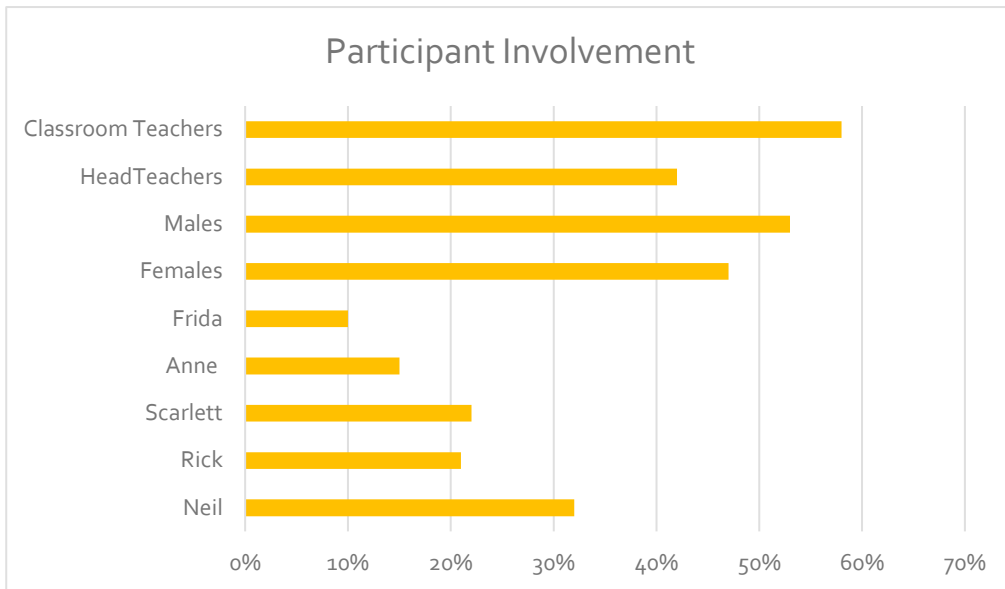


Table 3: Participant Involvement

I coded the three focus group transcripts by hand for six categories: sayings, relatings and doings, and for references to cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. Whilst understanding the arrangements allowed for the actions to happen, I was interested to see where there was overlap and where the difference between the actions and the arrangements were naturally occurring.

saying relationships doing

cultural-discursive material-economic social-political

S: Well, it kind of should be, because in the classroom on their own, I certainly feel that I could... there's value in someone looking at me and going, bit more to the left, bit more to the right? Yet he is looking great, though. But it feels like it should be outside the PDP process.

F: why?

S: Because it doesn't feel it's necessarily related to your performance goals. This is LA and also a feels more like it should...because the PDP feels like supported personal goals, whereas lesson observation just feels more like a light management, you know? Like everyday light management?

F: So who does your observations?

Q: Well, I should, I will.

F: so you so why does Tony do them?

S: Well, I'd like the idea of a chosen colleague doing them and then my HT doing them. I think that's the way they should be done.

F: And do you have the conversations around what they're looking at?

P: Well, you've got the pro forma so you state...

F: Which pro forma do you use?

P: There is a lesson observation one. I don't know where we got it from but we have it, and it's like we write out what we're trying to do, what they want us to look at and then we observe that lesson. It's only for like 15 minutes. We just come in when they want us to and then just leave. That's how we've done it.

K: Ours was quite different at my previous school. So it was a full lesson and you would be there from the beginning, from when you'd walk the students into the classroom because it was a tough school and there were lots of behaviour problems. So it was very planned and you would have to pick one of your goals, written in there as a goal that you're being observed on.

S: so there was a bit of prep...

K: And what you would like the observer to watch what you're doing and also sometimes, I think was great for inviting someone in your staff that may need some help up whether it's organisational skills in the classroom or certain things that the observer can learn a lot in the lesson and they have someone else does something differently as well. So it could be an art teacher go into science pressure lesson for instance and see how they...so the observer learns as much as the person.

F: And were staff okay with the fact that it was a whole period? you did anyone ever complain about that?

K: When someone was so capable and a great music teacher, I could kind of walk out and back in again and know that he would have that whole thing so down pat so but it'd be nice to think courteous to watch the whole thing. See how they wrap it up. No. No, they weren't.

F: And did you have the meeting before hand to discuss what you're looking at? And then the meeting afterwards...

K: Yeah, like, how can we can you know, how could you do this better or how could you, could ideas as well?

F: So has everyone in this room had a pre-observation conversation?

K: No, not at this school.

F: Okay.

T: So we did the same as K, but we were actually videotaped which I was...I was very uncomfortable...so I felt really uncomfortable with my being videotaped but we had the meeting afterwards.

F: Why did you have a problem with the video?

T: I think it's that whole, I don't like listening to myself being recorded. You did that wrong

Figure 3: Coding Sample

## Discussion

### Practice Architectures in Situ

In applying practice architectures as the analytical framework for analysis of data in this research project, it is important to first define the terms of practice architectures in relation to this project.

The Project is the implementation of Performance Development Plans (the key component of the Performance Development Framework) at KHS in 2017- 2018. The *project* of a practice includes:

- a) The intention that motivates the practice (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 8). In this case the aim is the implementation of mandatory policy. This research also seeks to determine if there is a more 'lofty' aim within the school, faculties or individuals that elevates their aim 'beyond compliance'.
- b) The actions undertaken in the conduct of the practice (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 8). Specifically, how does the aim (compliance or beyond compliance) inform the tone and colour of the actions? Equally, how do the sayings, relatings and doings undermine or reinforce the aim and its limitations or potential for opening up praxis?
- c) The ends the actor aims to achieve through the practice. This allows for consideration of how the arrangements at play have been mediated by an individual and what they hope to achieve. Practice architectures theory also acknowledges that these aims may not be met (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 8)

One of the markers that differentiates practice architectures from other practice theories is the recognition of the way in which sayings, relatings and doings *hang together* in the pursuit of a practice, including their inherent tensions and contradictions (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 23). The analysis of these actions happening together is a core reason why a case study is the most effective method of employing practice architectures as an analytical tool. Close consideration of one practice, in one site, at one time allows for the threads of sayings, relatings and doings to be considered in their interactions. In fact, those working with the theory go so far as to argue that 'practices are social phenomena,



and, as such, are located in circumstances and conditions that occur in particular locations in physical space-time, and in history' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 9).

Practice architectures extends beyond individual aims, sayings, relatings and doings and considers the dialectical and reciprocal relationships between these components and the larger 'arrangements' that inform, enable and constrain them (Kemmis et al., 2014). In this study, this translates to a consideration of how these arrangements enlarge or contract the aims and actions of individuals within their work on PDPs. Do teachers embrace the opportunities afforded by the policy, feel supported in doing so, or is it reduced to a matter of professional pragmatism?

### The PDP as Policy

The first consideration of how these arrangements - the cultural-discursive, the material-economic and the social-political - are functioning with this practice architecture is to consider how these arrangements framed the PDF within KHS right from its introduction to the staff. In my role as Relieving Principal in 2015, I was responsible for introducing the Performance Development Framework (PDF) and the Performance Development Plan (PDP) to the staff of KHS. At each DoE school in NSW there is a staff elected Teacher's Federation. As the policy was a joint initiative of both the DoE and the NSW Teacher's Federation, each school Principal went to training along with the Federation Representative. In this training the policy was unpacked and participants were trained in the delivery of the staff training for the PDF. This training was delivered by the NSWTF local organiser and a Regional Office DoE staff member. The staff training package was entirely scripted and was delivered to the staff in a joint presentation by the Principal and the Federation Representative. As such, through the layers of shared preparation and delivery, the clear social-political message was being reinforced: The PDF is the product of a partnership between two institutions that were historically considered to be in a combative relationship. The training delivered to Principals and Federation Representative included this declaration in its introductory statement: 'The collaborative development of the Framework, the Performance and Development Plan (PDP) template and associated support materials demonstrates the agreement between the Department and the Teachers Federation that a consistent and robust approach to performance and

development for all teachers in our schools is central to supporting teachers to improve student outcomes.’ (NSWTF & NSWDOE, 2016)

A key part of this collaboration was the commitment by Federation to support the policy and the DoE increased by 50% each school’s Professional Learning budget. As such, the cultural-discursive rhetoric of ensuring that all staff are supported in their professional development was supported by the material-economic reality of increased targeted funding. The training package acknowledges that ‘the development of the Framework has been informed by the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework*’ but frames this policy as being part of the Great Teaching Inspired Learning suite of reforms implemented by the NSW DoE in 2013. A notable silence in any of the paperwork, training materials or sayings within the training is the deal made with the Federal Government. As previously explained, in signing up to these reforms, NSW was able to access ‘Gonski funding’ which meant a significant funding increase.

It is reasonable to assume that a commitment to the Gonski funding model from both the NSW government and the NSW Teacher’s Federation was a central part of their motivation in developing and implementing this policy together. A key result of this partnership has been the establishment of arrangements for the implementation of the PDP and the resulting sayings, relatings and doings. In the training package, consisting of 30 slides, ‘negotiated’ or a variant is used 12 times and ‘agreed’ or a variant is used 13 times. There are three key phases of the PDP (goals, implementation and review) and each phase has its own negotiation stage. The training outlines that goals are agreed upon, lesson observation aims are negotiated, the observer is an ‘agreed colleague’, the annual review of a teacher’s performance is an ‘agreed, written assessment’ (NSWTF & NSWDOE, 2016).

### The Survey Results

The results of the survey reflected many of the ideas pre-empted in the literature review as well as echoing the sentiments raised in greater detail in the focus groups. Out of 55 eligible staff, 27 completed the first survey, which was canvassing their experiences of the 2017 PDP process at KHS. Staff needed to have completed the PDP at KHS in 2017 in order to meet the criteria for survey completion. Only 12 staff completed the second survey, which was focused on the 2018 process. There are a couple of possible explanations for this decrease in participation. The first is survey fatigue and poor timing

in the workload cycle of teachers. Being just after Semester 1 reports were due, the survey period was never going to be a good time to get a large participation rate. The other potential reason is that several staff commented to me after the first survey how much they enjoyed getting to provide feedback on what they consider to be a deeply flawed process. I believe that after having had this opportunity there was little motivation to participate in the follow up. Nonetheless, the first survey provided some interesting data and the trends seem to have been confirmed in the follow-up survey.

In the first survey, seven individual comments referred to the PDP as a 'box-ticking' exercise, as foreshadowed by John Nelson when referring to the APSTS (Nelson, 2013). These seemed to cover two different themes: firstly, that the participants themselves did not value the process, 'It was a necessary procedure to "tick the box"'; and secondly, those who felt the faculty and school leadership had reduced the process to box-ticking, as they observed the process to be 'lacking drive and or commitment from executive making it a priority to see the process completed'. I believe this is probably a reasonable comment and reflects the observation that fear of escalating teacher workload can impede the motivation of school leaders to enforce policy compliance (Braun et al., 2011a). Within the school, as Deputy Principal, I set due dates for each component of the PDP with the faculty head teachers who supervise the PDPs for their staff. I then set checks on progress for school executive meeting agendas. However, neither myself nor the principal have ever formally checked off a staff list to ensure they are completed, nor received complaints from Head Teachers that they are struggling to get staff to comply. This is quite clearly reinforced when considering the numbers of staff who actually completed the legally mandated components of the policy in both 2017 and 2018 (NB, the 2018 data was collected at the mid-point of the PDP cycle, meaning the goals, one observation and the self-reflection should have been completed, but not the whole process).

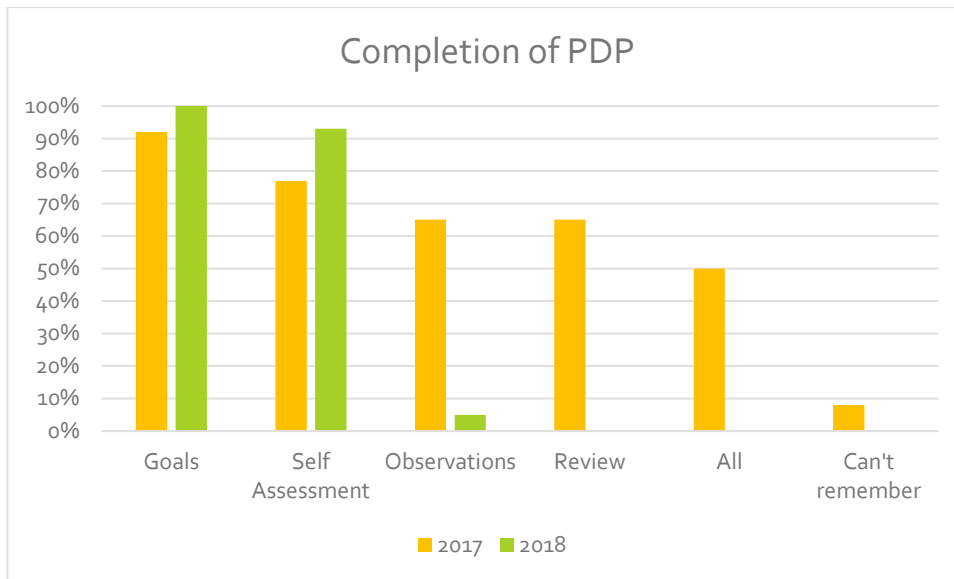


Table 4: Completion of PDP

Almost 50% of staff did not complete their mandated PDP in 2017. This speaks to a lack of compliance culture within KHS, and certainly the school leadership team would articulate not being predominantly focussed on prioritising compliance tasks. Perhaps most interesting about these numbers is that some staff managed to complete the self-assessments, observations and review components without having set any professional goals. This raises the question of how seriously the other elements could have been taken given there were no goals to evaluate. The completion rates in 2018 do seem to be increasing, suggesting that as custom and practice evolve, they are becoming more an accepted part of work life, despite the lack of a heavy-handed approach re compliance.

Whilst PDF compliance was not necessarily a governing priority at KHS, developing staff and a strong focus on whole school goals was articulated as a priority. One survey comment noted that '[The] PDP was seen as a box ticking exercise that had no merit, [but] I feel that I was given exemplary support in developing skills that were relevant to whole school programs ... However, support given outside of the PDP framework was strong and collegiate'. This separating of the PDP from actual teacher development was further discussed in the focus groups and aligns with the Mockler and Groundwater-Smith heuristic, wherein teacher professional development without teacher agency is not valued or effective (Mockler, 2015). It is possible to posit a correlation and a potential causation between the valuing or perceiving of professional development within the school as sitting outside of the PDP.

To delve deeper into this apprehension, the surveys asked about teacher perception of their involvement in a range of professional development activities in 2017 and 2018, and whether staff felt they were more or less involved in this in those years than in previous years. A follow up question asked if they perceived this as being connected to their PDPs. The results were as follows:

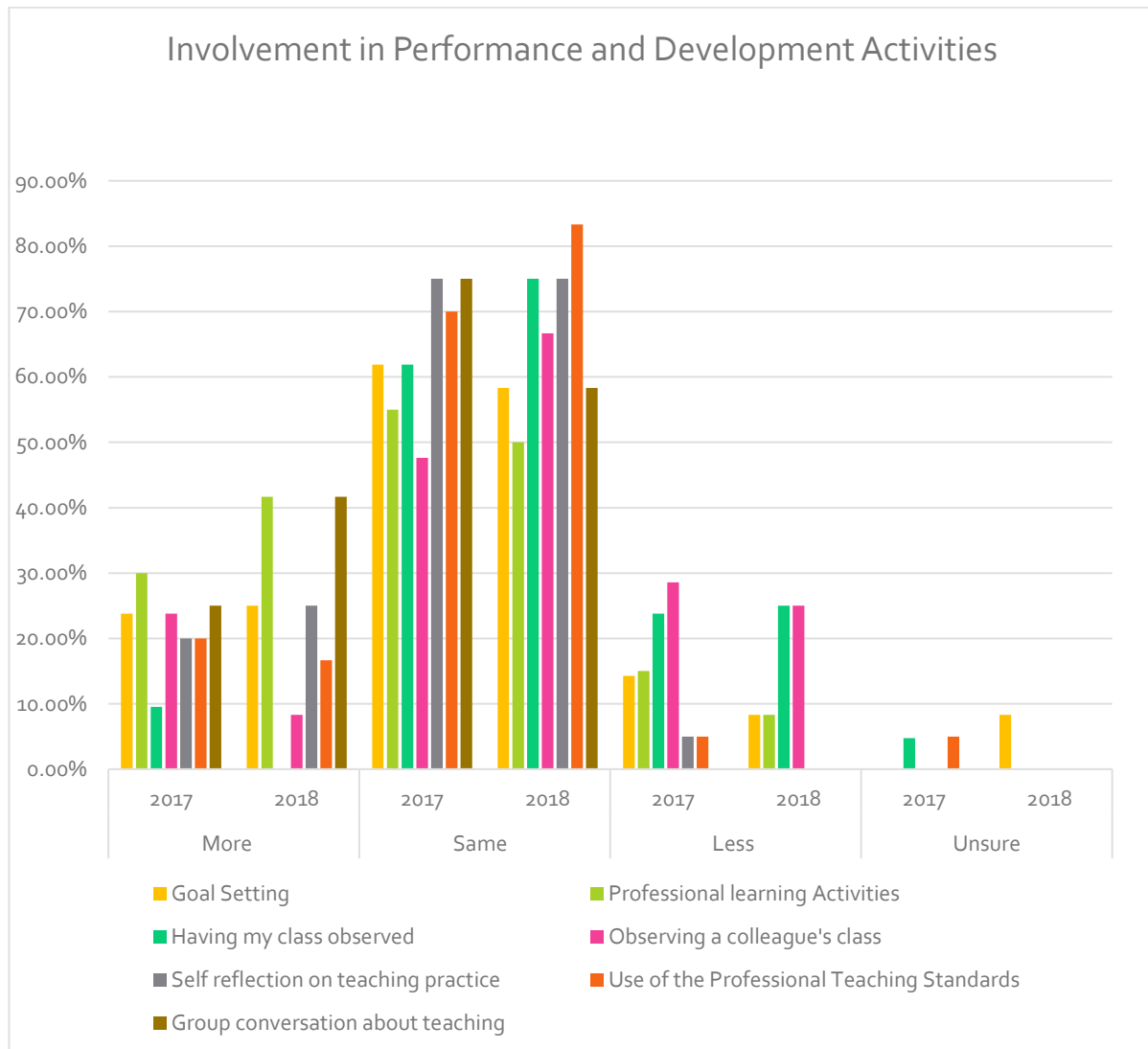


Table 5: Involvement in Performance and Development Activities

Classroom observations is one of the most specific developments in teacher performance and development through the PDF. Whilst some schools have developed a robust culture of peer and supervisor observation, KHS has largely kept this as part of beginning teacher accreditation. However, in 2017 there are actually more staff claiming to have had fewer



experiences of being observed or observing a colleague’s class than those who believe they have had an increase in this activity. Whether this is an example of ‘creative non-implementation’ (Braun et al, 2011, p.586) of policy or whether the mandating of observations has reduced the frequency of observations as the process has been made complex, I have not ascertained. However, observation clearly poses a significant challenge.

When directly asked if their relative involvement in the performance development activities were due to the PDP, more staff seemed to feel this wasn’t the cause of the shift in their practice, although some did think it played a part.

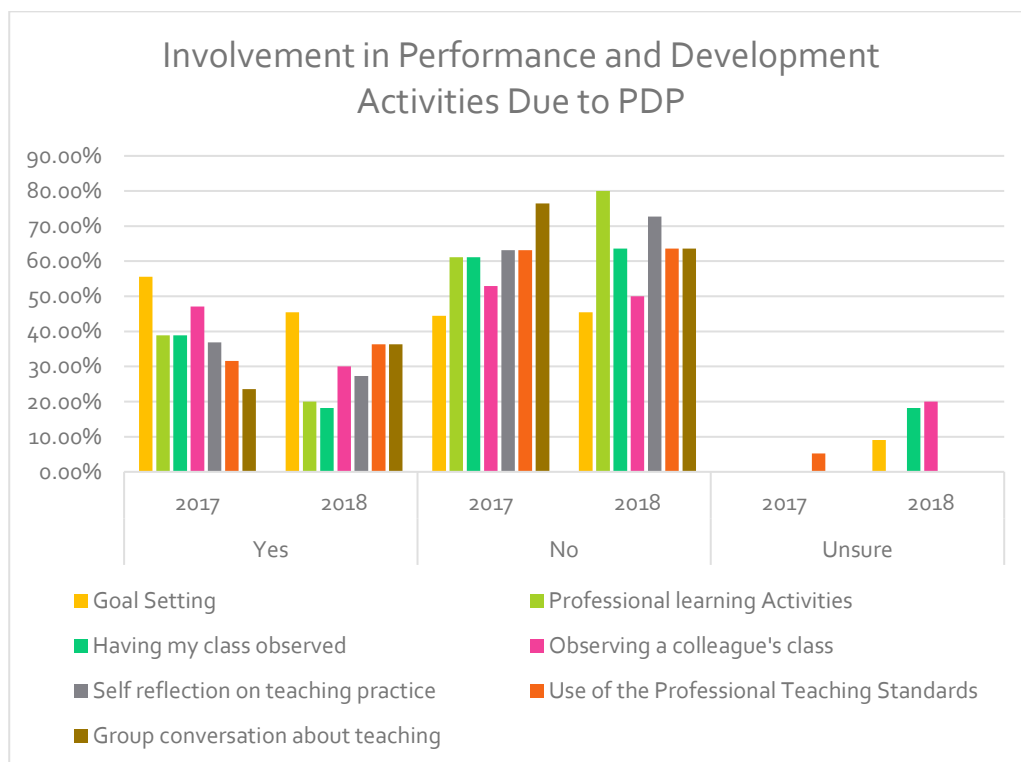


Table 6: Involvement in Performance and Development Activities Due to PDP

Certainly, the clearest correlation is goal setting. I would argue that I should have phrased this as ‘Formal Goal Setting’ for greater clarity in the data. As was made clear in the focus groups, staff regularly set professional goals, but they don’t necessarily write them down or verbalise them to others.

Perhaps the most interesting set of results was to a series of comments positing an opinion of the PDP. I generated this list through observations I had heard staff make about the PDP over the course of the previous year.

## Feelings about PDP Process

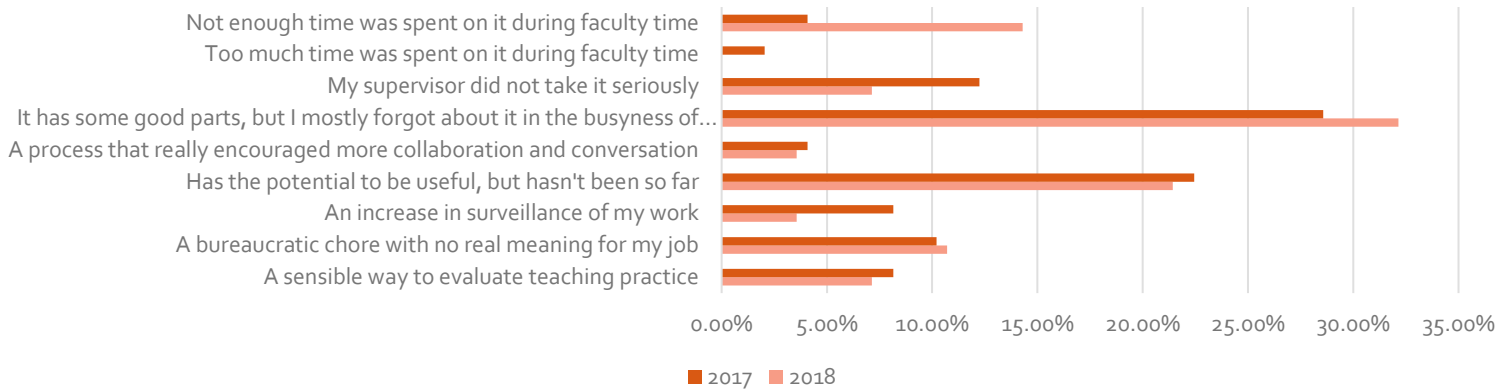


Table 7: Feelings about PDP Process

Staff were also given the opportunity to make further comments, but almost all of these were elaborations on the above point. To generalise thematically about these comments, it would seem that staff had low levels of overall scepticism about the policy, and did see the potential usefulness. However, school-life, whether through busyness, lack of leadership or poor implementation, have constrained its perceived effectiveness. As I now move to analysis of the focus group conversations, framed through the use of practice architectures, these constraining elements will be considered. What is immediately clear though, is that handing all decisions and control to teachers is not the same as teacher agency. If the arrangements surrounding the practice of decision making do not support teachers having professional confidence, control and genuine choice made available to them, it is effectively just a devolution of school leadership responsibility without a commensurate increase in supportive and enabling teacher development.

## Negotiation

The framing power of the cultural-discursive arrangements in the reception of the PDP into KHS is perhaps most powerfully demonstrated through the discursive thread of 'negotiation'. This message of negotiation is still flowing strongly through the sayings operating as part of the PDP practice at KHS. One of the participants in the focus group is Neil, a Head Teacher. He has been Head Teacher for over 10 years at three schools.

He came to KHS in 2015 as Head Teacher and had previously worked there as a classroom teacher. His children also attended as students at the school. This is the second school at which we have worked together, both times in the respective roles of Head Teacher and Deputy Principal. Neil is highly respected by the students, staff and community. He is a highly charismatic teacher who is willing to be critical of the department or school leaders in a constructive manner. He is suspicious of fads in education, and despite threatening to retire soon, is still deeply invested in his work.

About 6 minutes into the first focus group, he articulated that

All the conversations around it and all the trainings, used to drive me mad for that. Because all the language around it, was you know, this can't be imposed, it's negotiated, it comes from you... I understand all the negotiations the Federation and the Federation has to tick off...but the language is so painful around this, you know, it's just that it has, that is, this is you know...everyone who comes and speaks said no, no. It's got to be a negotiation...

Neil's clear frustration is motivated in part by what he wants to be an aim of the project, working with teachers to improve elements of their professional practice. As such, he finds the current cultural-discursive arrangements to be limiting the potential of the PDF and in direct conflict with the notion of Performance Development.

### External versus intrinsic motivation

One of the consistent contradictions or tensions at play in this practice architecture is how the participants view their actions in relation to the PDF. Whilst they seem to value some of their actions related to the PDP, their sayings, relatings and doings hanging together in the frame of the mandatory policy the PDP become more negative or cynical.

They all seem unified in their deliberate ignorance of DoE Strategic Plans:

Neil: to be honest, I wouldn't even know what a department goal is.

Rick: I don't want to know.

This exchange was accompanied by much laughter and an absolute absence of professional shame. At other times through the discussions, each participant (myself included) acknowledged something he/she felt that they should have or would have liked to be on top of but presently do not feel they are in fact so. No one appeared to value DoE Strategic Plans, even begrudgingly.

While some participants value the actions afforded and encouraged by the PDP they recoil at them hanging together with the policy. In effect, the actions of the project are inherently limited by the presence of the PDF as the project, intrinsically altering the very nature of the sayings, relating and doings, as part of the 'system-lifeworld doubleness in teacher's lived experiences' (Kemmis et al., 2018). The clearest articulation of this disconnect between intrinsic motivation or commitment to saying, doings and relating and its place within the PDF was made by Rick. This intrinsic motivation was frequently referred to by participants as 'innate professionalism, and the general perception was summed up as 'and if they're innately professional, then they will have goals that reflect that and they'll put that thought and energy into the process' (Neil). Rick is 'a beginning teacher', in his first year of permanency in the HSIE (Human Society and Its Environment) faculty after having spent two years on temporary contracts as a teacher of History and then Timber. He is a mature-age teaching graduate, well-liked by his colleagues for his sometimes biting wit and outgoing nature. He articulates his professional identity as being heavily informed by Paolo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and is highly self-reflective and hard-working. Within these conversations he was also the most vocally sceptical about the effectiveness of mandating meaningful self-reflection:

I don't feel that there's been any member of staff that I know who doesn't have ambitions and goals to set within the teaching for the year. There's no one I know who doesn't really have that. Maybe one or two people...but I think what happens is when you have to formalise in a PDP, people just go, why? What am I doing this for? What is the point of this? Is this just a mandated Departmental thing that we have to do? Okay, I'm not going to take it very seriously, but I don't think that this detracts necessarily from people's teaching practice and what they want to achieve.

This seems to be a different strain of concern to Neil's, which was focused on the language surrounding the policy, and seems to spring from the social-political arrangements at play. These arrangements 'shape how people relate in a practice to other people and to non-human objects' (Mahon et al., 2017, p.10). In this instance the relation between the human practitioners and the non-human DoE, as perceived by teachers, is quite an ingrained dissonance which immediately constrains not only the relatings of the practice, but the doings. Instead of the PDF allowing for rich practices of goal setting and self-reflection, 'It just feels like another hoop to jump through and I'm not sure what the point of it is' (Rick).

A couple of the participants actively showed their attempts to move beyond this distrust, or dismissal of the mandated sections of the PDP, including occasionally challenging the statements of other participants through gentle reframing. Scarlett is an experienced teacher who is in her first permanent year at KHS, having transferred from another school. She is also currently transitioning into another subject area, from Science to Maths. Whilst not as passionate on this point as Neil, she was also very open to the idea of more direction from the Head Teacher or supervisor, indicating that she felt it was a way of being more supported in her developing skills:

that should be [the] conversation you know, here are your goals type thing, how are you going with your goals, you know, I've noticed that you've maybe your goal is this and I've noticed, you know, maybe you need even more support.

Considering this through a practice architectures lens, it is clear that her aim in the project of PDP is one that moves beyond compliance and is fuelled by a professional desire for praxis.

### Influence of school leaders

These issues staff have with the PDF seem potentially to be beyond the scope of influence of school leaders – the role of the DoE far outweighs the influence of a senior executive (Principal and Deputy Principal/s) at a school. However, practice architectures theory also acknowledges that while practices are 'enmeshed' with these arrangements, they are also fluid and moveable (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 10). This allows for a possibility of school leaders being able to shape the ways in which teachers experience the arrangements. Careful consideration will be needed to manage this, as

some staff appear to perceive the PDP as toothless, whilst others view it as intrusive. As school leaders we need to accept these conflicting positions not as exclusive binary, but as a reflection of the dissonance between the arrangements and the actions at play, giving cause or consideration as to how this can be shifted.

The ability for practice architectures to shift is demonstrated through the experiences generated for and by two new Head Teachers. Frida was newly appointed as Head Teacher Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) at the start of 2018. She has spent the last 15 years at a highly disadvantaged high school in Sydney's west which she describes as 'a tough school ... lots of behaviour problems'. While finding some aspects of that school challenging, she was a highly successful teacher there and was accustomed to a school being focused on constant improvement through processes led by school executive and with staff willing to try new things to improve outcomes for students. KHS culture is quite specific. It is a truly comprehensive high school and sits right on average for social advantage in NSW. There are few neighbouring high schools and the school has received an incredible boost in community perception, going from the last school of choice for most of the community to the first choice for the vast majority. This has seen a significant increase in student numbers, allowing for the employment of new staff, increased funding and opportunities for students. Teachers do not have significant challenges from the student body or from the parent body. There are certainly instances of both, but they are not unrelenting. Additionally, many staff have been at the school for large stretches of time and many are ex-students or parents of current or past students. Very few staff leave KHS for other settings. These factors all form part of the Practice Landscape (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017), meaning the sense of urgency for pedagogical innovation and the acceptance of school executive or DoE interference in professional practice is low.

A theme for Frida was the fact that she is very much the outsider coming in and when she raises with her faculty the PDP process and ways of implementing it, she feels they shut her down quite quickly. She's very understanding of this, recognising that they are all 'able teachers,' but she is not used to this environment. When discussing the practices around the two mandatory observations she noted that:

And then I suggested a pro forma that I had which I find a really nice... It's not you know, my old school, we had a four page and it was cumbersome and crazy and you don't want to walk in there with that booklet, you know, make people feel funny. So it's nice little one just with stating the goal and things to look for. It was very much, no, we've done it, we've got our own.

This comment made me reflect on the fact that when I was overseeing the original implementation of the policy, I deliberately did not mandate an observation proforma, knowing the social-political arrangements at KHS would ensure that this mandated observation template would immediately be professionally dismissed by the staff as a simple compliance tool. I did not think that this cynicism would be only at classroom teacher level, I know that Head Teachers prefer greater professional autonomy. Following the logic of the Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, it was an imperative to attempt to keep the process in the 'Teacher Agency/Development' quadrant and thus minimise the level of 'surveillance' (Mockler, 2015). Instead, I provided Head Teachers with 6 different examples and we discussed the relative advantages of each and the circumstances in which they would be appropriate to use. Two Head Teachers modified the samples and then we shared these as well. This now appears to have created a strong sense of ownership in the CAPA faculty as they had significant autonomy over the template they use. However, this teacher agency also has been questioned in the survey comments and in the focus group, as perhaps creating incoherence in the 'logics of action' (Ball & Maroy, 2009, p.32) to draw on the language of the field. Is there alignment between the school's commitment to teacher development and agency that is actually being undercut by not privileging the place of the PDP if they are expected to complete it? One survey comment alluded at this need to move it beyond compliance to being meaningful (and thus completed), 'the process is valuable only if it is intended to build teacher capacity rather than as an accountability exercise.' Finding the balance here is a tricky judgement call.

In the Science Faculty is Anne, who has been teaching around 10 years and is the current Year 11 Year Adviser. Again, she is a highly-regarded teacher and often very self-critical. Her old Head Teacher recently retired and she relieved as Head Teacher for a term before the appointment of a new Head Teacher at the start of 2017. Her new Head

Teacher also came from a highly disadvantaged, strongly regulated school and when he began, he implemented his own observation proforma and mandated that he would do one observation but the second could be a peer-observation. For the first 12 months there was some limited resistance to his methods within the faculty, but the faculty generally worked with him. Anne reflected on this first round of PDPs with her new head teacher as something that had already shifted now they have worked together for longer and built greater professional trust:

Last year was a bit different because I think we had a new head teacher, so just learning the ropes but this year, if we have it, I think it'll be different. I might be more forthcoming with ideas.

Anne's comments reflect both an idea of him having to learn the ropes, the practice architectures which are at play at KHS, and equally her own willingness to alter her sayings, doings and relatings as her practice architecture has shifted to allow her to be more relaxed and less defensive. This shift is at the very heart of what can be learnt from applying a practice architectures lens to school policy mediation, as it shows the reciprocal softening and shifting as practices interact with one another – the practices of the head teacher's leading and the practices of a faculty responding and seeking to maintain autonomy and the status quo.

### Intersubjectivity

Moving from the project and its practice and actions, to their relation to the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements in practice architectures takes us then to the consideration of the 'three dimensions of intersubjectivity' For cultural-discursive arrangements these are realised in the *semantic space* (Ball & Maroy, 2009, p. 32). As previously discussed in Neil's frustration, this is predominantly realised in the discursive space surrounding the policy, in the shared delivery between NSW Teachers Federation representative and the school principal, in the ensuing emphasis on negotiation. However, in considering the *intersubjectivity*, it is also important to consider how teachers use language to act upon the PDF. Almost every focus group participant referred to the PDP as a 'box-ticking exercise' at least once throughout the conversations. While significant in itself in terms of the representation of the PDP as a mere compliance



measure, it is also interesting to consider how this expression gained such currency – a question to which I do not have an answer. It may generate from faculty and whole school discussions, or it may have been latched upon within the focus groups as a phrase of resonance, although it also featured heavily in the survey responses.

Rick, rather more colourfully, remarked that his old head teacher described the PDP as an ‘arse-covering exercise’ on more than one occasion. This evokes more than abject compliance, instead exemplifying the reductionist reification of performance development to the completion of a Word document template. In effect, he was positing that completion of the document = performance development. This rhetoric has the potential to act so powerfully on the practice architecture that the practice becomes simply about the act of writing, and so that the deeper actions of reflection and innovation will not be invoked in the process.

Neil also noted that in some of the goals he read from his faculty he felt that the language used was deliberately acting upon the policy mediation, ‘the language was quite cynical and my suspicions would be it’s just sort of having a go at the whole process’. He also felt that as Head Teacher he was disempowered to speak back to this cynicism and thus it held the semantic space.

In the material-economic arrangements the intersubjectivity is realised in *physical space-time* ‘where people encounter each other as bodies ‘in the medium of activity and work’ (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32). Before the focus groups I found this to be the hardest element of practice architectures with which to come to terms. To be overly general, I find each of the specific elements of the theory to be clear, but find the complexity to come with the interplay between the elements. For me, the notion of bodies encountering each other aside from the social and the semantic was challenging, and I was leaning towards limiting my understanding of the material-economic to buildings and finances. However, in the focus groups, participants discussed an idea that opened up the notion of ‘bodies in the medium of activity and work’ when discussing classroom doors.

Rick: ...Teaching’s kind of funny because you are set off, you’re in the room on your own, you’re autonomous and you could be telling them any old shit.

Anne: People cover up little windows here in their rooms.

Frida: My door is often open, but I need to close it because poor English are opposite me and my big classes but I do feel like it’s nice to be open.

Rick: I think if I close the door, it's a noise issue.

Frida: Yeah. Or you don't want to keep walking near...

Mutiple: ...yeah, yeah...

Neil: The layout to the school isn't friendly...

Scarlett: Those stair wells...those stair wells are just hard.

Neil: You've got rooms opposite each other in one corridor.

Anne: Ukuleles and guitars, we can hear drums, we're directly across..

Rick: The Scandinavian Prison Complex look isn't an ideal layout for a school.

Whilst ostensibly this conversation is about the design of the school, it also shows how teachers at work on their core activity – teaching – are conscious of their interaction with and on other teachers and classes and the physical environment. They are not discussing these experiences in terms of individual teachers or students but as generalised people, places and noises. The fact that each participant quickly jumped in on this exchange and even agreed with Neil even before he finished his sentence about 'walking near' highlights how much a part of a teacher's day is spent being aware of these things, even if they are not a priority.

Inevitably, these interactions are one of the many features that help create the intersubjectivity of the social-political arrangement the *social space*. Here, the intersubjectivity is realised 'in the medium of power and solidarity' (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32). Before beginning the discussion of how this was demonstrated throughout the case study, it is necessary to note that that none of these aspects operate independently, they are all in relationship with each other, 'bundled together in practice and places' (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 5) in a dialogical relationship, each aspect informing and affecting the other, and being informed and affected in turn by the others.

### The power of the social-political arrangement

It is important to note at this time, the social-political arrangement emerged as the most dominate concern within the focus group, but it is always informed by and through the other arrangements. The first consideration when exploring this arrangement at KHS is to consider how my role, my professional identity, is informing both the data collection and my analysis of this data. In schools it is quite typical for staff to play dual roles which

do not naturally sit together: mentor/supervisor, colleague/supervisor, friend/supervisor, parent/teacher etc. I have the dual role of researcher/practitioner. In fact, it was Kemmis' assertion that it is essential to have a practitioner as researcher, as *only* they have knowledge of the barriers and exigencies at play (Kemmis, 2010a, p.12) that first led me to practice architectures. Having 'someone on the inside' who can understand the multitude of implications contained within a casual phrase, the machinations of the internal politics and the history of individuals and the collective within such a large, busy and complex place such a school allows for a deep understanding of a case study. However, it also allows for a range of complexities and potential influence on the research. My reading of a 'casual phrase' may in fact be coloured by what I perceive as the inferred meaning when this was not the intended meaning. My experience of individuals and collectives will not be a universal experience, and my knowledge of the history is both subjective and limited.

An additional complexity is the institutional hierarchy at play. During the research design phase of this case study I was the Deputy Principal and thus the supervisor of each participant in the focus group and survey. This means that my interactions with each participant for the time I have worked with them is shaped by this. The role of a Deputy Principal is not simply that of being someone's 'boss'. Certainly, at KHS there is a consistent philosophy of distributed leadership and a flattened hierarchy. Most of my interactions with staff rest on my supporting them during times of difficulty with classes, students, parents or peers. As such, I am often with staff through periods of great vulnerability and difficulty, and I like to think that I am compassionate and supportive. However, the reality exists that if a difficult conversation about professional efficiency or conduct were to happen, there is a very good chance that I would be the one to lead the conversation. For the period of data collection and analysis I was in the position of relieving Principal so this part of the dynamic was intensified.

A final complexity loading, perhaps the hardest to quantify, is the inevitability of personal relationships that have developed between myself and the participants. Two of the staff members I have worked with previously (the two Head Teachers, who both followed me to KHS) and I would consider 4 of the 5 participants to be good (work) friends with whom I socialise. Scarlett, the newest staff member, I have mentored and advocated strongly for the school to continue to employ because of the quality of her work. All focus group participants were volunteers and their professional and personal relationship with me

likely would have been a factor in this. At the same time, their professionalism and desire to reflect on teaching would have been motivations. Such qualities have enabled us to work well together, and so we have recursively built professional and personal closeness. This is a double-edged sword in the focus group. It meant that conversation flowed freely. There was much laughter and a quick and ready collegiality and willingness to share, sometimes quite vulnerably. No one person dominated the conversation and differences of opinion were embraced and considered.

However, I cannot be sure what was left unsaid. There may have been some self-censoring. There were certainly a few instances of staff apologising for not having done something, and me having to reassure them that I was not operating as their supervisor. For example, this exchange with Frida:

Frida: I need to chase that up.

Facilitator: No, it's all right. It's all right, when I ask these questions, it's not a challenge.

Frida may have been as much making a mental note as apologizing, but it was important for me to have honesty about things that weren't completed.

Equally, it is essential that the surveys were anonymous so that staff could be honest about their lack of engagement with the policy and indeed, 42% of staff acknowledged in the survey that they did not complete every aspect of the PDP in 2017. Without complete anonymity I could not guarantee that I would get such an honest response, as admitting to your supervisor that you are not technically compliant on mandatory processes for your ongoing accreditation as a teacher is potentially of professional concern.

The focus groups indicated that relationships are key to their accepting the practices of the PDP as a whole, as well as each of the actions that are required. Despite Neil's frustration at the continued use of the word 'negotiation' it became quite apparent that in fact each stage does need to be built on relationship of trust and respect. When discussing professional feedback and its potential to lead to meaning self-reflection, Rick observed that this worked for him when the external social-political arrangement was clear and enabled this:

But that was someone very senior to me or quite senior to me when I was not a teacher. So, in that relationship, that was my expectation, that relationship was supposed to be about that, supposed to be a mentor.

Scarlett took this idea and furthered it by establishing that their also need to be trust between the two in a mentoring relationship.

Scarlett: :if \_\_\_\_\_ came to you and said you need some additional work in this, then that could be very, very negative. But if I found it useful because I trusted the person that told me, this would be a good goal for you to do. ..but it could be very negative.

Rick: Depends on the relationship, I think between the person.

Scarlett: It depends on the relationship. If you ask say, your head teacher because they're your immediate supervisor and you felt that maybe they weren't there to support you as much as they should do, then it's a very different conversation or feeling, than if I say I've got a great rapport with you for example, as the deputy and I say, can you come and do my observations? It depends, I think ultimately on that relationship.

Scarlett was the most vocal throughout the all the sessions on her desire for self-reflection and improvement in her professional practice, but she was equally willing to show her vulnerability in this exchange and show that her confidence can be shaken.

It also became apparent though that the social space is created through more than institutional power roles and the construction of the social-political arrangement is also predicated upon the role of the semantic. When discussing the ways in which a teacher would respond to professional team work, Scarlett expressed the need for careful wording to protect the professional insecurity that most of the participant's expressed at some point.

Scarlett: I think the way you have worded it, it depends on how you word it. Like if you had come in and said, you're not marking it, you have to mark, we have to give feedback is very different from I mean, you're the way you would have that conversation, it wouldn't be that way. Coming the way you would probably come

in, oh! what a great idea. I hadn't thought of that...but depends again on the personality of the teacher, depends on how you have that conversation.

This insecurity seemed to be a shared experience as Anne mentioned that each and every time a colleague wants to speak with her she wonders what she has done wrong. Equally, when it was established that her colleagues asked her to be their peer observer, I questioned her as to why they would ask her. I know that this is because she is highly-respected for her teaching and her decency, but she was dismissive of any significance to this, saying simply, 'Because I was available? I honestly don't know.'

This vulnerability is an essential part of the social-political arrangement and this social space needs to acknowledge it in order to be effective. As the group put it, teaching is 'a funny little world' (Rick).

Frida: It's personal.

Scarlett: It is personal, teaching is personal, you're investing your heart in it.

In fact, the awareness of this and a school leader's respect for this proved to be challenging for Neil. Even as he wanted to live up to his own professional expectations of his role, he felt constrained by this reality of the social-political arrangement of teaching and noted that:

Neil: And everyone is different, because everyone's personality is different, everyone runs their classroom slightly differently and you're only seeing one lesson...so it is, I find that really, really hard in my role to sort of impose and say no, sorry, I've got to come to do it.

I think this has also affected our implementation of PDP's school wide, as a senior school leadership team we are very wary of stepping into others' professional space. This has quite possibly left a vacuum for Head Teachers.

## Professional Identity

This battle between professionalism and autonomy frames both the cultural-discursive and social-political arrangements making up the practice architectures of the PDP. This

battle is not just external, but is also an intrinsic conflict about our professional identity. Rick is the participant least enculturated in school environments and he notes that

The world is heading towards a professional, that professionalism in the workforce is paramount and I think it is important to be professional but sometimes it homogenises a little bit as well. And I think it's good, teaching's great because it's full of freaks ... the art and the science and I think teachers pride themselves on not being part of that broader societal change, the sort of neoliberal sort of thing, you know, everyone's got to tick it. You've got KPIs you got to tick off, you've got to report back, I've got to do this...I think the autonomy of teachers should be protected but not at the cost of people being more professional.

The cultural-discursive framing of teaching has been heavily politicised recently and this can be seen to be having a dual effect in this case study. On the one hand there is deep scepticism about policy reform and its understanding of the profession, but equally there is a desire for greater professionalism in the work place. As one participant noted, 'we can't keep covering for other people'.

As previously stated, I have worked with Neil over the last 8 years and have observed him become more focused on working with staff to develop their skills and capacity. When I first met him, he was highly resistant to executive interference in teaching practice but now he expresses that, 'I've come to the conclusion over the last couple of years and I don't want to talk about particular people or whatever...there's got to be a middle ground'.

I feel that the imperative of 'balance' is probably the most important insight this analysis has afforded me as a school leader. Whilst issues of workload and resourcing are not to be dismissed, I think one of the great barriers to keeping a cohesive faculty on teaching practice is balancing teachers' need for strong professional identity whilst retaining significant autonomy. To attempt to remove this autonomy is to destabilise one of the great foundations of the practice architecture and is actually probably a complete waste of time and effort. Instead, if a school leader believes that the PDP process has the potential to work beyond compliance then a case needs to be built with staff for it being a mandatory policy that is best implemented in ways which are co-created by teaching

staff and school leaders. Identifying which elements of the practice architectures can and should be tweaked in seeking to reinvigorate praxis is therefore crucial.

As already noted, one of the defining features of practice architectures is its capacity to lay bare the practices and arrangements in a school without ignoring the complexity of schools. One key aspect of this is the acknowledgement of the scale and scope of practice architectures at play in a school. There is not *one* practice architecture for a school. In fact, there is not *one* practice architecture for *one* project in a school. From the discussions we can see that they vary from faculty to faculty at the very least. CAPA are currently highly attached to their self-devised actions, Science are warming to those more strongly led by their Head Teacher, TAS are given 30 minutes in a faculty meeting to write their goals 'as an arse covering exercise' and HSIE have a Head Teacher who feels disempowered by the whole process. Equally, though, we can see from the discussion an expectation that these practice architectures will shift.

Anne's own reflection on her warming up with her Head Teacher are mirrored in the expectation of Frida that time will allow her more scope to work with her staff. Her experience in schools allowed her to wisely not to be overly hasty with her faculty, instead taking a more measured approach:

Frida: And because it's my first time I don't want to come in...you know

Rick: Too hot.

Anne also experience this when she was relieving Head Teacher for a period, moving from peer to supervisor.

Anne: I had that when I was acting head teacher. The relationship I had to have was difficult at times because making the distinction between being a friend but also being 'I'm your boss and you've got to listen and do what I've asked you to do.' It's not much but I need you to do it, it is just difficult and that is very hard in a faculty when you've got a step up or when you're new and you've got to assert, you've got to be a friend but you've gotta be the leader as well. And you've already got set values, the faculty's got set values and you come in with different and try to mould it. It's difficult to at the time...

Frida: There's the time factor too,



Anne: You've got to play the long game, but you still want to see results in meantime.

Anne articulates her understanding of the faculty's 'set values' as an intrinsic part of the practice architectures at play. She knows that she has to work with them, not against them to get change. These 'set values' can also be understood to be the *practice traditions* (Mahon, Fransisco, Kemmis et al., 2017, p. 12) of a school. An outsider or newcomer feels their absence of understanding these keenly, whilst for more established staff it is simply the air they breathe. The residues of the old, the past sayings, relatings and doings inform the practice architectures of which a newer staff member is still a part. They can also present both opportunities and hurdles to school leaders. In my time at KHS I have worked actively to ensure there is more focused time for staff on in-house professional learning. This is in response to their need for 100 hours of recorded professional leaning every 5 years to maintain their Teacher Accreditation and to meet the goals of their PDP. But it is also more generally informed by the research on collective teacher efficacy. As a consequence, staff meeting time has become much more focused on professional learning. Some staff are frustrated because they feel this is over turning a fundamental practice tradition for them – that of the open floor for staff concerns at staff meetings. As time passes and more and more new staff begin, this concern is shrinking. But this actually makes those who hold onto the practice tradition of which they were a part feel more and more displaced and de-valued, as part of an old-brigade. This needs to be acknowledged and not dismissed by senior executive, even as we try to shift this material-economic arrangement.

On the other hand, it has also meant that significantly more time has been given over to faculty time for collaborative programming and critical professional discussion. In NSW the first day of Terms 1 -3 and the last two days of Term 4 are designated School Development Days. There is a need to spend some of this time on mandated training such as Child Protection, but these days are for schools to use as they see fit. There is the possibility for schools to reschedule the final two days into blocks of time throughout the year. When I first started at KHS this was not considered a sensible option for staff who still valued the practice tradition of those days being about tidying up and having celebratory lunches. I considered these two days of time without students, just for teachers to work together on their practice, to be far too valuable to not utilise

productively. As such, the Principal and I considered how the emotionally and practically significant sayings, doings and relatings in this practice tradition could be held onto but a new practice architecture be reconstituted. As such we introduced a School Service Day in the last week, where all students and staff give the day over to their cleaning and renovating projects. This often unofficially flows over into the next day or two. Multiple skips are filled, classrooms and storerooms tidied and the school feels physically ready for a new school year. I then adjust the timetable for the last day to ensure that a lengthy staff luncheon is held. This retains speeches for departing staff, and gift giving and other practice traditions integral to the maintenance of essential cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements upholding these practice traditions, albeit in a new format.

In turn, this has allowed me to hand over the 12 hours of professional learning time to faculties to program as they choose. In a school, this is a significant physical space-time investment and reshapes the framing arrangement of the sayings, doings and relatings that are set around the PDP goals at both a faculty and individual level. Most faculties organised either 4 sessions of 3 hours after school or two days on weekends and holidays to meet for these times. Most faculties expressed a real difficulty around managing the social-political arrangements to allow the actual scheduling of this time. This negotiation around time was essential to let staff feel an element of control and not put up that cultural-discursive barrier they seem to feel about mandated practices.

Scarlett: We came in the second Monday or something for the day and it was negotiated, so it took us probably a couple of hours to work out who's happy to come in and not come in.

Anne: it's just getting everyone on board is the struggle sometimes.

Throughout the three years we have been utilising this option, there has been a gradual but steady increase in the numbers of faculties option for this method of delivery. In the first year it was about 50% opt in but this year it was 100%. The first year a faculty does it seems to be the hardest to manage for scheduling and I have had a couple of highly frustrated Head Teachers come to speak with me. But in the subsequent years it seems to slip into the practice architecture and staff anticipate it and plan together in a timely and willing manner.

All participants in the focus group expressed their professional pleasure in participating in these sessions, and the sense of shared purpose they created.

Scarlett: It was really useful because it was purely just faculty time. And it was the whole faculty, it wasn't just, 'I'm going to plan one lesson type thing for the next term.' It was really useful for us.

Anne: So, we're coming together and being a bit collegiate, working it out and stuff, which is good because I kind of like programming.

Frida: I think the general response before we went, was a little bit, 'Why the hell are we doing this? We do this anyway,' and there was that kind of vibe. I think by the end of it and after listening to F speak and looking at our work, I think we left quite happy that we all learnt something and took it back. I think it was hugely valuable.

Neil: I like the flexibility we've got here and I don't see any impediments to it. We get generous allocated faculty time. That's understood.

Scarlett: The faculty time, the staff development days are so useful. I've never had so much faculty time.

These comments highlight the recursive nature of the practice architectures framework, this time, not just through the different arrangements, but also between the different layers. The shift in the material-economic arrangement allowed for the medium of activity or work within a physical space-time to alter the sayings, relatings and doings of a project. Whilst not without flaws or hiccups, it is a powerful example of how practice architectures can be altered to enable praxis. Each of these reflections from staff is not simply about having time to do the essential: they give voice to the joy of their doing.

## Conclusion

### Praxis

Praxis is the ultimate goal of moving 'beyond compliance'. Seeking improvement for the sake of it, or for external data assessment lacks the rich moral purpose that gives meaning to teachers in their work. Praxis has always been my personal yardstick for professional happiness and this has been true also for many of my colleagues. In practice architectures theory (as in other theories) praxis takes on a specific meaning. It works as a noun to denote a 'special form of practice' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 14). The special-ness of this action comes from both the neo-Aristotelian notion of an action "that is *morally committed and orientated and informed by traditions in a field* and in a post Hegelian and Post Marxian manner to denote 'history making action'" (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 14) . Acknowledged here is that practices of teaching are technical and also hold a moral dimension. There are also practices which simply ensure compliance and those that enact praxis and elevate them beyond compliance. In a profession that is being increasingly policy-driven to governmental ends 'a teacher's praxis has a significant influence on understanding and enacting teaching as neo-liberal policy regimes gain momentum' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 150).

As a recognition of this dimension of practice architectures it is important to also note that the theory 'politicises practice' (Edwards-Groves & Grootenboer, 2015, p. 16), not just the policy, but the practices and their hangings together. In considering this aspect of practice architectures we can see the role of language, work and power in '*constitution* (emphasis mine) of practice', working together to determine the very nature of a practice. Therefore, in considering practice architectures as a tool for analysis is an imperative to embrace the complexity and inherent tensions, to acknowledge the enablers and constrainers within practices and to be self-reflexive in considering one's own role in establishing the intersubjective arrangements. Without modelling or establishing structures for teacher autonomy in valuing the PDPs, KHS will not move this practice beyond a 'box ticking' exercise.

When considering the next step of practice architectures, that of its utilisation as a transformational tool, the moral dimension needs to be closely considered. How can a

shifting of the constituent parts of practice architectures to meet school or department goals be formed to enable rather than constrain praxis? It is clear that mandated policies that appear removed from the lived experiences of teachers in specific sites will potentially be met with disdain at best and rebellion at worst. This is starkly evident in the different reactions of the focus group participants to the abstract and the actual reality of the PDP. Whilst enthusiastic about learning from other teachers in observations and expressing satisfaction in meeting their goals, focus group participants were equally wary of intrusion and authoritarianism in their professional lives, as indicated through 'more paperwork' (Frida). Praxis is dependent upon the grounding of sayings, doings and relatings in the 'right' intersubjective arrangements.

As such, the notion of praxis ensures that practice architectures remains a humanising theory, for the actor is not taken out of the act. The acknowledgement that a teacher is investing their 'heart' (Scarlett) also allows for this aspect to form part of the ontological orientation of practice architectures, rather than undermine it or work at cross-purposes. When considering how practices happen, are shaped and constrained, the interplay between people in their relatings, sayings and doings are an essential component.

Practice architectures as an analytical tool allows for the complexity of a school, even an individual practice to be honoured but still makes them tangible and empirically manageable.

### The Research Questions

The primary research question 'Is the mandatory policy, the NSW Performance Development Framework, being implemented at the level of compliance or beyond compliance at KHS in 2017-2018?' has generated an interesting, if non-absolute, answer. Firstly, it is clear that is not possible to state that KHS has implemented the PDP to a level of compliance. In 2017, only round 50% of staff completed their PDP. Two staff members actually couldn't remember if they had or not, indicting an even stronger level of disengagement. In 2018 this has risen to a completion rate of over 90% for the first two stages, which is a significant improvement.

It is through consideration of the second question 'how can practice architecture assist in analysing which arrangements at KHS are enabling and constraining praxis in the practice of PDF implementation at KHS?' that this answer becomes more interesting.

Essentially, it is through the establishment of a practice architecture for compliance that the goal of beyond compliance becomes near impossible and praxis is definitely constrained.

As discussed, there is a strong thread of cynicism towards the policy, which have different threads of argument. One line of argument is a suspicion of the policy and its aims. Another is seeing it as non-genuine policy, the only function of which is reification. Another addresses the lack of genuine engagement with teacher's professional needs in the name of 'negotiation'.

I would argue that each of these threads means that teaching staff at all levels are not taking ownership of the policy and making it serve their needs. Instead, teachers are aiming to meet the policy requirements. In doing so, compliance, not professional development, becomes the defining theme throughout the arrangements. Within the cultural-discursive space we see the 'box-ticking' semantic cues shaping the conversations. Within the material-economic arrangement, time is the most powerful resource available. When time given to the PDP is limited to allowing for goal setting and compliance activities alone at the start of the year, purposeful professional development appears to quickly slide off the list of priorities. As such, at the end of the year, staff scramble to complete the reviews and observations without time being afforded for rich conversations.

Within the social-political arrangements, a culture of compliance means that supervisors schedule conversations in-line with due dates of mandatory components of the PDP and staff push back, ensuring that there is no sense of 'over-reach' into performance management.

In my own personal experience, teachers have a well-developed skill for passive resistance, and the practice architectures at play at KHS for the PDP is enabling this. This is out of respect for teacher autonomy and a resistance to neoliberal reification policies that challenge teacher professional identity. However, this dominant discourse of 'box-ticking' and meaningless policy means that staff are not completing all the parts of the policy, as the busyness of school life takes over and it is 'dropped in the mayhem of other priorities' (survey response). How can the priority of completing a mandated form take precedence over the 150 students for whose education you hold responsibility?

Equally though, it is very important to consider the influence of the Head Teacher as the leader of the faculty, along with others in school leadership roles in setting the tone for the practice architecture: how do school leaders help establish the arrangements and set up the semantic, social and physical-time space? This is especially significant when we consider the dialectical relationship between the practitioner and the practice within the site. How does the practitioner work on the practice and alter the sayings, doings and relatings, leaving a residue?

Considering examples already raised, we can see the residue left for staff from previous sayings, doing and relatings. Neil cannot get past the idea of 'negotiation' and feels powerless to guide staff, despite other staff talking about being open to guidance from supervisors. Rick's reflections on the suspicion of his faculty towards the process would surely have been informed by the language used by the head teacher and the cursory use of faculty time to establish goals without any sense of excitement or purpose. If such influences have helped shape the practice architecture, it is also possible for them to 'evolve in response to various kinds of natural and social forces and through human intervention' (Mahon, Francisco, Kemmis, et al., 2017, p. 12). These forces can be (re)shaped by school leaders as they develop a careful semantic space of positivity, but not blind adherence to DoE policy, and resourcing time, programming and collaboration to foster a collective praxis and the building of social solidarity. Consequently, teaching staff can be empowered to harness the potential of the PDP for personal professional praxis.

On reflection, I would argue there is an inherent fallacy in my original research question it is based upon the assumption that compliance/beyond compliance exist upon a continuum, and that first having reached compliance, a practice can move beyond it. In fact, beyond compliance is an entirely different practice landscape and within it social-political, cultural-discursive and material-economic arrangements are prioritising, and thus enabling, an entirely different set of actions.

This then leads to a very preliminary answer to the final research question, 'How can this analysis allow for strategic planning to harness the potential of the PDP policy in enacting praxis at KHS?' At a simple level, this practice architecture analysis shows that beyond compliance must be an integral part of the arrangements, shaping the actions at play, removing compliance from the shaping arrangements. Praxis needs to be a core of the

cultural-discursive arrangements, elevating the conversation about the PDPs to the level of a meaningful professional discussions that could be occurring. The notion of praxis needs to become an essential element of the semantic space. Praxis discussions appear to be happening in a separate physical space-time to conversations involving the PDP. It is necessary to weave this practice architecture more deftly into existing meaningful practices that exist already around programming and pedagogy. Finally, the social-political arrangements at play need to be more transparently negotiated and aired. Head teachers feel disempowered and teachers feel under surveillance. This is an impasse that is serving no one. Questions of solidarity and power are always at the heart of teacher identity and, in a profession feeling increasingly under surveillance, this needs to be acknowledged and managed.

This project was highly limited in its scope. It did not consider in detail the practice landscape or attempt to venture near the web of ecologies of practice at play at Karragung High School. Instead it sought to evaluate a practice within a two-year time frame. Inevitably, it has raised more questions than it has answered. However, it has clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of using practice architectures for insider research. The richness of the theory as an analytical tool validated and compelled consideration of the myriad of threads, patterns and stories enacted in the tapestry of a school. It acknowledges the interplay of the lived-history of the school and the ongoing politics, external and internal, in schools and the significance of language, time, space and power. As such, while personal bias will always be at play within insider research, it allowed such factors and considerations to be tested and explored within a robust theoretical framework.



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# Performance and Development Framework

March 2015



PEOPLE AND SERVICES



## Performance and Development Framework for Principals, Executives and Teachers In NSW Public Schools

NSW Department of Education and Communities | Performance and Development Framework

[www.dec.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au)



## Introduction and context

The NSW Department of Education and Communities is committed to attracting, inducting, developing and recognising a high performing workforce.

Effective performance and development requires a collaborative and supportive workplace committed to a positive culture of ongoing learning by individuals and teams.

All teachers have a right to be supported in their professional learning, as well as a responsibility to be involved in performance and development processes that facilitate their professional growth and the provision of quality teaching and learning, consistent with the NSW Department of Education and Communities' policies, aims and strategic directions and school plan.

This Performance and Development Framework is referenced in the Terms of Settlement (27 November 2013) for the Salaries and Conditions Award 2014-2016 for teachers in the NSW Teaching Service. It replaces previous processes outlined under the Teacher Assessment and Review Schedule, Executive Assessment and Review Schedule, Principal Assessment and Review Schedule and Officer Assessment and Review Schedule.

The overarching purpose of the performance and development process is to support the ongoing improvement of student outcomes through continuous development of a skilled, effective and professional teaching workforce.

The performance and development process for the principal, executive or teacher is a positive developmental activity that is intrinsically linked to the policies, aims and strategic directions of the NSW Department of Education and Communities, and reflected in school planning processes.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, as referenced in the Terms of Settlement (27 November 2013) for the Salaries and Conditions Award 2014-2016, form the basis for guiding development and assessing performance.

Probation, induction, accreditation, career pathways and leadership development are all features of a teacher's career cycle that are supported by ongoing performance and development processes.

This framework provides simple, adaptable information and tools that support principals, executives and teachers to sustain a positive and collaborative performance and development culture in their workplace.

## Performance and development process

Effective performance and development processes are based on three distinct yet interdependent phases:

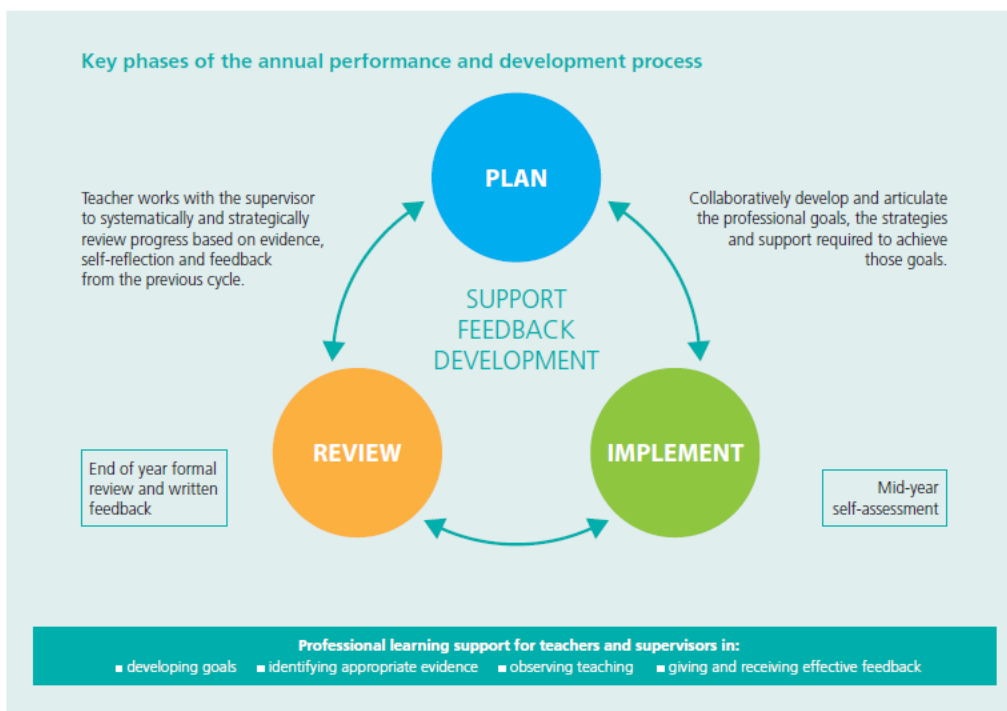
- Phase 1: Plan
- Phase 2: Implement
- Phase 3: Review

The phases encompass the various activities teachers, executives and principals are already undertaking in the normal course of their work, rather than create separate and additional processes. This includes streamlining the processes around teacher accreditation. Care should be taken to avoid checklists and proformas that create unnecessary paperwork and detract from teaching and learning.

## Applicability

Performance and development processes are applicable to permanent, temporary and casual teachers, executives and principals working in NSW public schools. These processes are applicable to specialist teachers such as school counsellors and school liaison officers, and to teachers employed in non-school based teaching service (NBTS) classifications.

References to teachers in this and associated documents include all of the above groups of employees.





## Phase 1: Plan

The focus of the planning phase is to create an individual Performance and Development Plan (PDP) and a whole school/workplace professional learning plan to guide the work of each principal, executive or teacher for the year ahead. The PDP is developed through collaboration and professional dialogue with colleagues and is based on the following documents:

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers which will form the basis for guiding and assessing performance and development.

Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework on which the process will be based.

Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders which affirms that Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) is a shared responsibility that must be taken up at all levels of the education system – by teachers, school leaders, system leaders and policy makers.

### Planning and goal setting

Teachers, executives and principals should receive support and guidance from their supervisor in setting meaningful and appropriate professional goals. This process should occur in a collaborative and supportive environment. For experienced teachers, executives and principals, goals may be framed around the higher career stages of Highly Accomplished or Lead.

- Goals should be constructed so that they:
  - align with the policies, aims and strategic directions of the Department and the school plan, and are clearly related to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
  - recognise the experience and expertise of the teacher, existing strengths and areas for professional growth
  - are informed by the everyday learning, teaching and leadership practice undertaken by teachers in the normal course of their work.

- At least three and no more than five professional goals are required.
- The planned goals and professional learning support must take into account:
  - system priorities (such as new syllabuses)
  - school priorities (such as the whole school professional learning plan)
  - personal teaching and career aspirations
  - accreditation requirements (where applicable).

Teachers must be able to identify a personal goal of their choice and be provided with the appropriate professional learning opportunities.

- The PDP is to be implemented on an annual basis and ideally, should be finalised no later than mid-term one of the school year, taking into account the need to be flexible for variables such as final school enrolments and staff movements.
- The PDP is finalised at a planning meeting between the teacher and the supervisor following quality discussions about teaching practice and performance. The planning meeting may be done through a team process such as stage, faculty or executive meetings.
- The PDP is to be viewed as a dynamic plan. If the need arises, teachers may amend and adjust their PDP throughout the performance and development cycle, to address emergent and unexpected issues in consultation with their supervisor.
- The PDP template is used to record the results of the performance and development planning phase.
- As a guide, the completed PDP should not exceed one A4 page.

## Phase 1: Plan (continued)

### Professional learning

Well-resourced and timely professional learning that meets the needs of teachers is an integral condition of a skilled, effective and professional teaching workforce.

The Department will provide Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) including resources to support the teacher's learning needs as identified through the performance and development planning process.

The teacher and supervisor will work together to identify professional learning activities that:

- support the achievement of established performance goals
- further develop knowledge, skills and capabilities
- build on existing strengths
- support career aspirations.

Professional learning activities are to be recorded on the PDP template.

Staff may wish to use professional learning to assist in career planning that may involve, but is not limited to:

- reflecting on one's skills, knowledge and experiences
- reflecting on achievements in other positions, for example work with agencies such as the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES), professional associations and community organisations, or as a school/local area project manager
- consideration of career goals, which may be in terms of career stages (Proficient Teacher, Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher), or school based or non-school based promotion
- identifying ways to achieve career goals (the strategies should support teachers to recognise their current and developing capabilities, professional goals and achievements)
- reflecting on and evaluating progress and modifying career planning as appropriate.

## Phase 2: Implement

The focus of this phase is to implement the planned strategies, support and professional learning that will lead to the achievement of, or progress towards, the PDP goals. This phase involves a focus on the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and leadership practice and the learning outcomes of students. Reflective practice and feedback will allow for adjustments and refinements to be made to the PDP as the annual cycle progresses.

### Identifying evidence to assess progress towards goals

Evidence will be systematically collected, sourced from the everyday work of the teacher and when considered holistically, will demonstrate the teacher's progress towards the professional goals.

The evidence should be authentic and reliable. Evidence gathered and presented through this process should not be an end in itself. The evidence should be directly drawn from the normal, everyday work of the teacher, rather than through the creation of separate and additional processes, and be sufficient to indicate the teacher's performance.

Determining the most appropriate forms of evidence should be a collaborative activity, informed by the context of the school and the career stage of the teacher. Depending on the experience and expertise of the teacher, support may be required to identify the appropriate sources of evidence for each goal.

Sources of evidence of professional practice and growth may include, but are not limited to:

- data on student learning and development outcomes (including but not limited to formal student assessment data). Student outcomes should be broadly defined in ways that include student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing; that avoid simplistic approaches that tie evaluation of teaching directly to single outcome measures; and that acknowledge that these can be assessed in a variety of ways including teacher professional judgement.

- feedback from direct observation of teaching, through agreed, collaborative lesson observations. This could be by a peer or supervisor.
- results of collaborative practices with colleagues (for example, curriculum and assessment development, feedback and evaluation from whole school and other professional learning activities.)
- self-reflection on the impact of professional learning.

The types and sources of evidence will align to the Professional Standards for Teachers at the appropriate career stage and should form the basis of accreditation and maintenance requirements. These processes should be aligned, not duplicated.

Principals will be required to present evidence to address three broad areas of professional practice:

- school planning and management
- student learning outcomes
- positive, collaborative workplace culture.

The quantity of evidence required to substantiate progress towards each goal is a professional judgement, determined in collaboration with the supervisor. As a minimum, there should be one piece of evidence to demonstrate progress towards or achievement of each goal articulated in the PDP.

The duration of meetings, collection of data, number of peer observations and documentation of this and other collaborative practice should be determined with regard to the school's organisation and the current roles and duties of teachers.

## Phase 2: Implement (continued)

The direct observation of classroom practice is an important component of the process, and is an essential element of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework. The observation should be negotiated, linked to the teacher's goals and the appropriate Standards, and undertaken in a collegial and supportive manner.

Observation processes are to be negotiated in a collegial, mutually respectful manner, undertaken by an agreed colleague and documented.

The level of experience of the teacher will inform the number of observations of teaching practice. There needs to be a minimum of two documented observations per year. In the context of a supportive culture, additional peer observations can be a valuable part of a quality professional learning plan.

Documented observations by the supervisor of leadership practices of executives and principals are to be conducted.

In the case of executives and principals with teaching responsibilities, the colleague will undertake and document a mix of structured observations of both teaching practice and management/leadership practices, as agreed between the executive or principal with the supervisor. This may occur throughout the annual cycle.

### Ongoing feedback, reflection and refinement

The PDP is a dynamic plan, open to adjustment and refinement as required in consultation with supervisors. This may include making goal adjustments or adding new strategies or support structures, or continuing with goals from one PDP to another.

Teaching is enhanced when teachers are provided with positive encouragement to reflect on their practice, and benefit from regular feedback and professional development throughout the year.

Regular feedback and reflection helps the teacher to adjust the plan so that it meets their professional learning needs throughout the year. It is the shared responsibility of individuals, teams, colleagues and supervisors to seek and provide positive and constructive professional feedback.

The frequency of self-reflection will be determined by the teacher and may be used to inform the development of the PDP.

Feedback can be provided through one-to-one discussions, through shared professional practice and in settings such as stage, faculty or executive meetings.

Written feedback may be provided following an observation of professional practice or participation in a collegial activity. The timing, location and format for providing feedback should be negotiated between the teacher and the supervisor, with due regard for workload and the responsibilities of all those involved.

## Phase 3: Review

The focus of this phase is to formally review the teacher's performance and development progress and achievement, providing explicit, constructive feedback to the teacher to inform the next planning cycle.

This phase provides the supervisor and the principal, executive or teacher with an opportunity to have purposeful dialogue that will support them in their ongoing professional growth and career development.

As the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers have been used to form the basis for developing the individual PDP, the annual written feedback (summative statement) recorded on the PDP template can be used as evidence for maintenance of BOSTES accreditation.

### Self-assessment and annual review

There are two main formal reviews in the annual cycle: the self-assessment review midway through the cycle and the annual review at the end of the cycle.

#### Self-assessment

A self-assessment review should be conducted by the principal, executive or teacher mid-way through the annual cycle. It provides the teacher with the opportunity to:

- reflect on teaching and/or leadership practice, and on progress towards the achievement of the PDP goals and related professional development strategies
- refine the PDP through the use of evidence and re-focus attention on achieving the goals, if needed.

The written self-assessment review is recorded in the PDP template and the teacher may discuss it with the supervisor and use it as part of the annual review process.

#### Annual review

Towards the end of the annual cycle, teachers, executives and principals will participate in a structured discussion with their supervisor to facilitate the provision of a review on progress towards the goals and formal written feedback, informing the next performance and development cycle.

A key feature of the formal annual feedback process will be an agreed, written assessment, recorded on the PDP template. This will show the teacher's progress towards achieving their professional goals, based on evidence and developed through constructive dialogue.

The written feedback can be developed collaboratively by the teacher and their supervisor and should inform the development of the next PDP.

The provision of formal written feedback provides an opportunity to articulate each teacher's achievements.

The formal feedback and review that occurs at the conclusion of one cycle leads to the commencement of the next cycle. Individuals will consider current, revised or new goals to reflect achievements and progress they have made in the current year and their ongoing career development.

#### Post annual review

The supervisor should ensure that:

- all documentation relating to the annual review has been provided to the teacher to whom it pertains and is electronically filed in a secure location
- her/his supervisor has been informed of the outcome of the annual review
- success is acknowledged.

#### Documentation

Teacher and executive documentation should be retained at the school and stored securely. The teacher and executive should retain the original copy of the documentation.

A copy of the principal's documentation is retained locally and securely by the Director Public Schools. The principal should retain the original copy of the documentation.

Documentation is not to be used for purposes outside the Performance and Development Framework, without the knowledge of the teacher, executive or principal to whom it pertains.

Documentation practices should be consistent with the Department's Record Management Program.

## Appendix

Further information related to the Performance and Development Framework is provided below.

### Teacher accreditation

In the case of the teachers requiring or maintaining accreditation at Proficient Teacher level, performance and development processes should be implemented in conjunction with the Department's Accreditation at Proficient Teacher Procedures (October 2014).

In the case of teachers who are voluntarily seeking or maintaining accreditation at Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher levels, performance and development processes should be implemented in conjunction with the Accreditation at Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher Procedures.

### Beginning teacher support program and Induction

Beginning teacher support funds are provided to schools for each permanent beginning teacher for their first year of permanent teaching. This is equivalent to two hours per week release time for the beginning teacher and an additional one hour per week release time for an experienced teacher to provide mentoring support. In the teacher's second year of permanent teaching, one hour per week release time is allocated.

These funds allow schools to collaboratively develop a program of induction, professional development and mentoring appropriate to the needs of the permanent beginning teacher. This will include the provision of increased, regular release time for the beginning teacher, as well as regular mentoring from an experienced teacher colleague, aligned to the beginning teacher's PDP and their accreditation requirements.

Teacher Professional Learning funds allocated to schools should also be used to support the performance and development needs of beginning temporary and casual teachers.

### Teacher efficiency process

The teacher efficiency process will be positioned within the broader context of a school's performance and development processes and professional learning platform.

The Department's obligation is to ensure that all teachers will be supported through the ongoing performance and development process.

Where a teacher's efficiency is causing concern the relevant Departmental procedures should be implemented as soon as possible to ensure the provision of ongoing quality teaching to students.

Implementation of teacher efficiency procedures should be managed separately from implementation of performance and development processes and action should not be postponed until the end of a performance and development cycle.

The following procedures should be used where a principal, manager or supervisor identifies that a teacher is experiencing difficulty with his or her performance.

- Principals – Principal Improvement Program (July 2014)
- Executives – Executive Improvement Program (July 2014)
- Teachers – Teacher Improvement Program (July 2014)
- Probationary Teachers – Probationary Teacher Improvement Process (August 2014)

### Changing duties

Where a teacher is temporarily appointed to either a school based or non-school based teaching service position for more than one school term, or the individual and supervisor expect that the temporary appointment will continue for more than one school term, the individual and supervisor should adjust the PDP in keeping with the new role / duties.

## Appendix (continued)

If a teacher is absent on unexpected extended leave during the performance and development annual cycle, following return to work, the PDP entered into before the leave commenced should be reviewed as soon as possible.

Where a teacher works in more than one school/ workplace they should have a PDP negotiated with each supervisor but managed by one designated supervisor. In these circumstances, the negotiations should not duplicate the PDP process.

Care should be taken in supporting the performance and development of teachers who are making a graduated return to work, including the assessment of their work performance. This involves the teacher being assessed consistent with their case circumstances, including the stage they have reached in their rehabilitation program.

### Confidentiality

Crucial to successful implementation of performance and development is adherence to confidentiality, where applicable, and thorough documentation practices.

It is the responsibility of all teachers involved to maintain confidentiality, to uphold the professional standing of individuals and ensure dignity and respect in the workplace.

Documentation is jointly owned by the teacher and their supervisor. Both parties should sign copies of the PDP, Self-Assessment and Annual Review, to indicate that this documentation has been sighted. Where either party wishes to make comments on the performance and development process, this should be recorded as a signed statement on the relevant document.

A principal and director will, if required, have access to each teacher's PDP. An executive director will, if required, have access to the PDP for principals within their local area. In exceptional circumstances, an executive director may need to access the PDP of a teacher or an executive, with the individual's knowledge.

### Resolving concerns

All teachers have a right to be supported in their professional learning, as well as a responsibility to be involved in performance and development processes that facilitate their professional growth and the provision of quality teaching and learning, consistent with the Department's policies, aims and strategic directions and school plan.

If teachers have concerns about the nature and manner in which performance and development processes are conducted, or the availability/ provision of professional learning, it is necessary to address these concerns in a timely and productive manner. Such concerns should be addressed with reference to the Department's Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines.



## Appendix

### Further information related to the Performance and Development Framework is provided below.

#### Teacher accreditation

In the case of the teachers requiring or maintaining accreditation at Proficient Teacher level, performance and development processes should be implemented in conjunction with the Department's Accreditation at Proficient Teacher Procedures (October 2014).

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Beginning teacher support funds are provided to schools for each permanent beginning teacher for their first year of permanent teaching. This is equivalent to two hours per week release time for the beginning teacher and an additional one hour per week release time for an experienced teacher to provide mentoring support. In the teacher's second year of permanent teaching, one hour per week release time is allocated.

These funds allow schools to collaboratively develop a program of induction, professional development and mentoring appropriate to the needs of the permanent beginning teacher. This will include the provision of increased, regular release time for the beginning teacher, as well as regular mentoring from an experienced teacher colleague, aligned to the beginning teacher's PDP and their accreditation requirements.

Teacher Professional Learning funds allocated to schools should also be used to support the performance and development needs of beginning temporary and casual teachers.

#### Teacher efficiency process

The teacher efficiency process will be positioned within the broader context of a school's performance and development processes and professional learning platform.

The Department's obligation is to ensure that all teachers will be supported through the ongoing performance and development process.

Where a teacher's efficiency is causing concern the relevant Departmental procedures should be implemented as soon as possible to ensure the provision of ongoing quality teaching to students.

Implementation of teacher efficiency procedures should be managed separately from implementation of performance and development processes and action should not be postponed until the end of a performance and development cycle.

The following procedures should be used where a principal, manager or supervisor identifies that a teacher is experiencing difficulty with his or her performance.

- Principals – Principal Improvement Program (July 2014)
- Executives – Executive Improvement Program (July 2014)
- Teachers – Teacher Improvement Program (July 2014)
- Probationary Teachers – Probationary Teacher Improvement Process (August 2014)

#### Changing duties

Where a teacher is temporarily appointed to either a school based or non-school based teaching service position for more than one school term, or the individual and supervisor expect that the temporary appointment will continue for more than one school term, the individual and supervisor should adjust the PDP in keeping with the new role / duties.



## Performance & Development Plan

The following documentation is to be completed consistent with the requirements of the [Performance and Development Framework for Principals, Executives and Teachers in NSW Public Schools \(Jan 2015\)](#), which includes three phases: Plan, Implement and Review. These processes are based on the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#), the [Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework](#) and the [Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders](#).

TEACHER'S DETAILS	SUPERVISOR'S DETAILS	ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CYCLE	
Name	Name	From	To
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
School/Work Location	Supervisor Work Location		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		



### PLAN – Performance and Development Plan (PDP)

#### A. Professional Goals – Record at least three and no more than five goals

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>
4	<input type="text"/>
5	<input type="text"/>

#### B. Professional Learning – Record the activities and resources needed to support the achievement of professional goals. (100 words maximum)

C. **Evidence** – Record the types of evidence to be used to indicate progress towards achieving professional goals. (100 words maximum)

The teacher, executive or principal and supervisor are to sign below to indicate that the PDP has been sighted and the original has been retained by teacher, executive or principal.

Teacher/Executive/Principal signature

Supervisor signature

Date

Date

*Optional comment (see Note 1)*

## IMPLEMENT

The performance and development cycle is a dynamic process characterised by ongoing feedback, reflection and refinement. Record any adjustments made to the PDP to meet the professional learning needs of the teacher. (100 words maximum)

## REVIEW

### Self-Assessment

A self-assessment is to be conducted by teachers, executives and principals mid-way through the annual performance and development cycle. It provides for reflection on teaching and/or leadership practice, assessment of progress towards achieving professional goals, evaluation of professional learning, and for the PDP to be refined and adjusted if necessary. (200 words maximum)



The teacher, executive or principal and supervisor are to sign below to indicate that the self-assessment has been sighted and the original has been retained by teacher, executive or principal.

Teacher/Executive/Principal signature

Supervisor signature

Date

Date

*Optional comment (see Note 1)*

**Annual Review**

At the end of the annual performance and development cycle, teachers, executives and principals participate in a structured discussion with their supervisor to facilitate a review on progress towards achieving professional goals. This will include an agreed written assessment, informing the next performance and development cycle. (200 words maximum)

The teacher, executive or principal and supervisor are to sign below to indicate that the Annual Review has been sighted and the original has been retained by teacher, executive or principal.

Teacher/Executive/Principal signature

Supervisor signature

Date

Date

*Optional comment (see Note 1)*

*Note 1: Where either party wishes to comment on the performance and development process, this should be recorded in the relevant section.*

*Note 2: The original copy of this documentation should be retained by the teacher, executive or principal to whom it pertains. A copy should be retained and stored securely at the workplace. Documentation practices should be consistent with the NSW Department of Education and Communities' Record Management Program.*

## KHS PDP Pre Survey

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### Start of Block: PDPs

#### **Q1 Evaluation of the Implementation of the Professional Development Plans (PDPs) at Katoomba High School**

We wish to invite you to be involved in a research project conducted by Emma Le Marquand under the supervision of Associate Professor Susanne Gannon, Centre for Educational Research, Western Sydney University (WSU). The aim of this one-year project is to evaluate how school leaders can support staff in maximising the professional development opportunities within the NSW DoE Performance Development Plans (PDPs) and what barriers teachers and leaders encounter in doing so.

You have been invited to join the research project because you are a current teacher at Katoomba High School and completed the PDP process in 2017. This study has been granted ethics approval from the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval No.) and the NSW Department of Education. For teachers who agree to volunteer to participate, your participation will involve:

- Completing an online survey in February 2018 and another in August 2018. The surveys include questions regarding your experience of the PDP process.
- You will not be identified in this survey.

Your assistance in this study is voluntary. There will be no adverse consequences should you choose not to assist. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent at any time without prejudice to your relationship with the researchers now or in the future.

- Yes, I am happy to continue. (1)
- No thanks, I do not want to be involved. (2)
- 

Q2 Did you start a Performance Development Plan in 2017?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
-

*Display This Question:*

*If Did you start a Performance Development Plan in 2017? = Yes*

Q3 Did you finish your 2017 PDP at Katoomba High School?

- Yes (1)
  - No (2)
- 

Q4 Did you complete your PDP in 2017?

- Yes (1)
  - No (2)
- 

*Display This Question:*

*If Did you complete your PDP in 2017? = No*

Q5 Please indicate which sections of the PDP you DID complete

- Professional Goals (1)
  - Self-Assessment (2)
  - Observations (3)
  - Review (4)
-

Q6 The Performance Development Framework lists several aims of the PDP and the framework. Can you please indicate how well you UNDERSTAND what is meant by the following phrases:

	Extremely well (1)	Very well (2)	Moderately well (3)	Slightly well (4)	Not well at all (5)
A positive culture of ongoing learning (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A collaborative and supportive environment (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Well-resourced and timely professional learning (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence will be systematically collected and considered holistically (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence should be authentic and reliable (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive and constructive professional feedback (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Carry Forward Displayed Choices from "The Performance Development Framework lists several aims of the PDP and the framework. Can you please indicate how well you UNDERSTAND what is meant by the following phrases:"*



Q7 Please indicate how well these aims were met in your experience of the PDP process in 2017

	Extremely well (1)	Very well (2)	Moderately well (3)	Slightly well (4)	Not well at all (5)
A positive culture of ongoing learning (x1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A collaborative and supportive environment (x2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Well-resourced and timely professional learning (x3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence will be systematically collected and considered holistically (x4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence should be authentic and reliable (x5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive and constructive professional feedback (x6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8 Please discuss any concerns you have about how the aims of the PDP were not met for you.

Q9 How were the aims of the PDP met for you in 2017



---

Below is an excerpt from the Performance Development Framework on methods of collecting evidence to complete your PDP. Please indicate any words or phrases you think are appropriate for the collection of evidence of performance and those that you think are not appropriate.

Appropriate

Inappropriate

- data on student learning and development outcomes (including but not limited to formal student assessment data). Student outcomes should be broadly defined in ways that include student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing; that avoid simplistic approaches that tie evaluation of teaching directly to single outcome measures; and that acknowledge that these can be assessed in a variety of ways including teacher professional judgement.
  - feedback from direct observation of teaching, through agreed, collaborative lesson observations. This could be by a peer or supervisor.
  - results of collaborative practices with colleagues (for example, curriculum and assessment development, feedback and evaluation from whole school and other professional learning activities.)
  - self-reflection on the impact of professional learning.
-

Q11 Please indicate whether you were more or less involved in the following professional activities in 2017 than in previous years. Then, please indicate if you believe this was because of the PDP process

	Frequency				Because of PDP		
	More (1)	Same (2)	Less (3)	Unsure (4)	Yes (1)	No (2)	Unsure (3)
Goal Setting (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional learning Activities (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having my class observed (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observing a colleague's class (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self reflection on teaching practice (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of the Professional Teaching Standards (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group conversation about teaching (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12 Please pick a statement that best reflects your feelings about the PDP process in 2017. You may select more than one. If there is no statement that reflects your feelings, please write your own

- A sensible way to evaluate teaching practice (1)
  - A bureaucratic chore with no real meaning for my job (2)
  - An increase in surveillance of my work (3)
  - Has the potential to be useful, but hasn't been so far (4)
  - A process that really encouraged more collaboration and conversation (5)
  - It has some good parts, but I mostly forgot about it in the busyness of school life (6)
  - My supervisor did not take it seriously (7)
  - Too much time was spent on it during faculty time (8)
  - Not enough time was spent on it during faculty time (9)
- 

Q13 Please write any further statements which express your feelings regarding the PDP process in 2017.

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Q14 Please indicate below if you are interested in working with Emma on a small group case study as part of your PDP process in 2018. If you are, please complete an expression of interest form which can be found next to the sign on book and place it in the box in the front office

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

End of Block: PDPs

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**KHS PDP Post Survey**

Q1 Evaluation of the Implementation of the Professional Development Plans (PDPs) at Katoomba High School

We wish to invite you to be involved in a research project conducted by Emma Le Marquand under the supervision of Associate Professor Susanne Gannon, Centre for Educational Research, Western Sydney University (WSU). The aim of this one-year project is to evaluate how school leaders can support staff in maximising the professional development opportunities within the NSW DoE Performance Development Plans (PDPs) and what barriers teachers and leaders encounter in doing so.

You have been invited to join the research project because you are a current teacher at Katoomba High School and completed the PDP process in 2017. This study has been granted ethics approval from the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval No.) and the NSW Department of Education. For teachers who agree to volunteer to participate, your participation will involve:

- Completing an online survey in February 2018 and another in August 2018. The surveys include questions regarding your experience of the PDP process.
- You will not be identified in this survey.

Your assistance in this study is voluntary. There will be no adverse consequences should you choose not to assist. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent at any time without prejudice to your relationship with the researchers now or in the future.

- Yes, I am happy to continue (1)
- No thanks, I do not want to be involved. (2)
- 

Q2 Did you start a Performance Development Plan in 2018?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
-

Q3 Did you complete your mid year PDP in 2018?

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Q3 = No*

Q4 Please indicate which sections of the PDP you DID complete

Professional Goals (1)

Self-Assessment (2)

Observations (3)

Review (4)

---

Q5 The Performance Development Framework lists several aims of the PDP and the framework. Can you please indicate how well you UNDERSTAND what is meant by the following phrases:

	Extremely well (1)	Very well (2)	Moderately well (3)	Slightly well (4)	Not well at all (5)
A positive culture of ongoing learning (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A collaborative and supportive environment (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Well-resourced and timely professional learning (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence will be systematically collected and considered holistically (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence should be authentic and reliable (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive and constructive professional feedback (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-----  
Carry Forward Displayed Choices from "Q5"



Q6 Please indicate how these aims were met in your experience of the PDP process in 2018

	Extremely well (1)	Very well (2)	Moderately well (3)	Slightly well (4)	Not well at all (5)
A positive culture of ongoing learning (x1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A collaborative and supportive environment (x2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Well-resourced and timely professional learning (x3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence will be systematically collected and considered holistically (x4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence should be authentic and reliable (x5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive and constructive professional feedback (x6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 Please discuss any concerns you have about how the aims of the PDP were not met for you.

Q8 How were the aims of the PDP met for you in 2018

Below is an excerpt from the Performance Development Framework on methods of collecting evidence to complete your PDP. Please indicate any words or phrases you think are appropriate for the collection of evidence of performance and those that you think are not appropriate.

Appropriate

Inappropriate

- data on student learning and development outcomes (including but not limited to formal student assessment data). Student outcomes should be broadly defined in ways that include student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing; that avoid simplistic approaches that tie evaluation of teaching directly to single outcome measures; and that acknowledge that these can be assessed in a variety of ways including teacher professional judgement.
  - feedback from direct observation of teaching, through agreed, collaborative lesson observations. This could be by a peer or supervisor.
  - results of collaborative practices with colleagues (for example, curriculum and assessment development, feedback and evaluation from whole school and other professional learning activities.)
  - self-reflection on the impact of professional learning.
-



Q10 Please indicate whether you were more or less involved in the following professional activities in 2018 than 2017. Then please indicate if you believe this was because of the PDP process

	Frequency				Because of PDP		
	More (1)	Same (2)	Less (3)	Unsure (4)	Yes (1)	No (2)	Unsure (3)
Goal Setting (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional learning Activities (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having my class observed (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observing a colleague's class (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self reflection on teaching practice (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of the Professional Teaching Standards (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group conversation about teaching (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 Please pick a statement that best reflects your feelings about the PDP process in 2018. You may select more than one. If there is no statement that reflects your feelings, please write your own

- A sensible way to evaluate teaching practice (1)
  - A bureaucratic chore with no real meaning for my job (2)
  - An increase in surveillance of my work (3)
  - Has the potential to be useful, but hasn't been so far (4)
  - A process that really encouraged more collaboration and conversation (5)
  - It has some good parts, but I mostly forgot about it in the busyness of school life (6)
  - My supervisor did not take it seriously (7)
  - Too much time was spent on it during faculty time (8)
  - Not enough time was spent on it during faculty time (9)
- 

Q12 Please write any further statements which reflect your feelings regarding the PDP process in 2018.

End of Block: Default Question Block

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## Focus group 1 - Group Goal Setting Conversation

### Questions

Focus group discussion questions will be semi-structured and open-ended and will concentrate on valuing and supporting a range of perspectives, interests and goals.

1. How did you go about setting your goals this year? Did you consider the following:
  - a. Your experiences in 2017
  - b. Your classes in 2018
  - c. The school goals
  - d. Ideas/language/terms you have been hearing around
  - e. Some PL or other experience you'd had
  - f. Faculty goals
  - g. Likely ability to get the support to meet it
  - h. Time constraints
2. What aspects of your work life helped you decide it is possible to meet these goals?
  - a. School culture
  - b. Resources
  - c. Time
  - d. Classes
  - e. Physical resourcing
3. Which aspects maybe made you revise or limit your goals?
4. How would you like things to be different so you could set whatever goals you want
  - a. Different school priorities
  - b. Different school conversations
  - c. DoE priorities
  - d. Faculty

## Focus group 2 - observations

### Questions

Focus group discussion questions will be semi-structured and open-ended and will concentrate on valuing and supporting a range of perspectives, interests and goals.

1. How did you determine who would observe you in 2018?
2. Was this different to 2017? If so, how?
3. What practices did you put into place around the observation eg negotiated goals, how long the observation would last, how it would work etc
4. Have you observed other people? Was this different?
5. How did these factors influence your decisions in who observed you and which class they observed when?
  - a. School culture
  - b. Resources
  - c. Time
  - d. Classes
  - e. Physical resourcing
6. How do you feel about the idea of observations generally?
7. Are there changes you would like to see to how observations operate at KHS?

## Focus group 3 – Self -reflection (mid-year review)

Focus group discussion questions will be semi-structured and will concentrate on valuing and supporting a range of perspectives, interests and goals.

1. Has the PDP process been something you feel has affected your practice this year?
2. Has it been something that has affected conversations you've had in the faculty?
3. Has it guided any of your PL decisions
4. What has self-reflection looked like for you?
5. Has it happened individually or have you had conversations with others?
6. How were these conversations initiated, where they minuted, formal/informal
7. Did different self-reflection in different contexts make you respond differently
8. Do you value self-reflection
9. Do you value self-reflection as part of the PDP process